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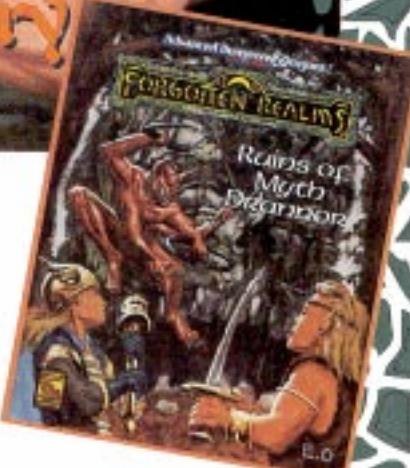
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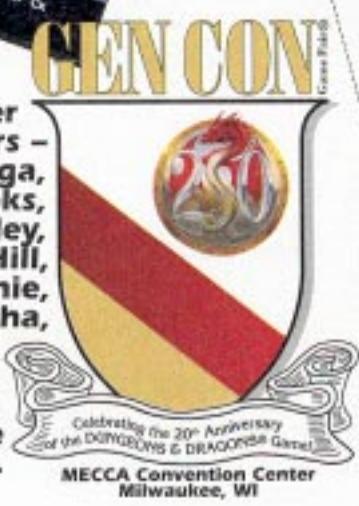
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When a magical item won't do, use a nonmagical one that's twice as valuable.

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Robin Wood welcomes spring into our gaming world with her painting for this issue, "Songbirds." According to her, "the elf's name is Jandari, and there are 27 animals in the picture not counting the elf, the wolf, and the birds. Only the last bird is real, by the way." Good luck to everyone on finding them all. For information on prints, contact: Robin Wood, 15529 Longmeadow Drive, Dearborn MI 48120-1023.

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LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

The big brush-off?

Dear Dragon,

I have a few comments and questions regarding DRAGON issue #188. First off, I would like to take a second look at [Dale Donovan's] editorial. It sounds like a cry for help. Let's face it: Your magazine isn't what it used to be. Writers aren't producing material that can be integrated into everyone's campaign. This is because there are so many campaigns produced by TSR, Inc. Whatever happened to a Dungeon Master creating his own campaign? Anyway, it seems like you are not interested in any articles "aimed specifically at the AD&D original edition game." I get the feeling that this means you don't want anything that can be integrated into an existing campaign because you would rather have something for the SPELLJAMMER®, DARK SUN™, or AL-QADIM™ settings so readers would have to buy that campaign to use it. Also, if you don't promote the AD&D 1st Edition game, why do have pictures of its books on pages 10 and 17 of issue #188?

You also do not want "articles on the theory of magic or other fantasy elements." May I remind you that in DRAGON issue #106, there was an article called "The Laws of Magic" that revealed the difference between clerical and mage magic. I enjoyed that article and would like to see more along the same topic. In DRAGON issue #143, you had an article that dealt with fantasy [*"The Highs and Lows of Fantasy"*].

I am greatly disappointed when you brush the AD&D 1st Edition game aside. It seems that my group is the only one left that abides by the 1st Edition's rules only. I would like the readers to know that just because something is new it doesn't mean it's better. I would encourage playing the 1st Edition game to anyone who has never tried it.

Jason LaLonde
Methven MA

Since you specifically mention my editorial, I want to respond to your letter. In one way, my editorial was a plea for aid. A lot of people make the same mistakes when submitting articles to DRAGON Magazine, and the point of my editorial was to make authors aware of those mistakes and thus avoid them. Hence the editorial's title, "Make my life easier."

I do take issue with your assertions that DRAGON Magazine and TSR in general are out to promote our published campaign worlds at

the expense of "home-grown" campaigns everywhere. The PHBR, DMGR, and HR series of books and the "Challenge" series of modules are examples of "generic" AD&D product lines that TSR produces. Also, let's look at the issue of DRAGON Magazine you mention, #188. The theme section contained three articles devoted to advice for players of role-playing games in general, not just those who play in TSR's published game worlds. "The Wizards Three" contained spells and monsters that are adaptable for use in any AD&D game (or to a D&D campaign, for that matter). Speaking of the D&D game, "The Voyage of the Princess Ark" detailed the race of phanatons—a race that can be translated easily to either edition of the AD&D game. "Bazaar of the Bizarre" gave 10 magical swords which, while being labeled as having come from the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting are eminently usable in any campaign. "Mind Over Matter" discussed the best ways to run a psionicist character in any AD&D game. "Sage Advice" answered readers' questions on PHBR5 The Complete Psionics Handbook, a generic product. "Forum" discussed the roles of the fighter class and its sub-classes in the AD&D game.

As has been stated here before, readers need to look past the labels on gaming articles and products to the core concepts beneath—the concepts that can, with a little work, be applied to many campaigns. For more on the "world-specific vs. generic product" debate, see "Sage Advice" in issue #189, page 100.

The reason we don't want articles written specifically for the AD&D 1st Edition game is because the AD&D 2nd Edition game is now entering its fifth year on the market, and the majority of AD&D gamer players today play the AD&D 2nd Edition game. Should TSR ignore that majority? That's not good business. TSR does its best to keep its loyal gaming fans happy by publishing a wide variety of high-quality products (including, we like to think, this magazine). There is no grand corporate conspiracy to strip gamers of their cash by "forcing" them to buy our products, be they campaign settings or otherwise. Besides, the changes made in the AD&D 2nd Edition game were not so drastic as to make most material for the current game unusable with 1st Edition campaigns.

I should have added the word "esoteric" to the phrase, ". . . magic and other [esoteric] fantasy elements" in my editorial. I enjoyed both the articles you cite, but they were the exceptions to the rule. Almost all of the articles we receive along the lines I mentioned quickly descend into metaphysical philosophizing on the abstract nature of magic, etc., quickly losing any direct gaming applications. We'd much rather publish articles that have direct effects or applications to campaigns, like the articles listed above and the pieces on exotic weapons and armors, Oriental and bardic character kits, and the African campaign setting in issue #189 and those on ready-to-use equipment packs, specialist-mage personalities, psionicist kits, elven and African

deities, swords, horses, and faerie creatures in this issue. DRAGON Magazine publishes the articles that present the best ideas in the best manner that appeal to the largest portion of our readership.

We're not "brushing aside" anything. I've played the AD&D game for over a decade, and I'm as loyal to it as you are. However, the AD&D 2nd Edition game is better organized than, more readable than, and just as much fun to play as the 1st Edition game. May I remind you that the AD&D 1st Edition game was derived from the D&D Original Set, making that AD&D game in reality a "second edition" itself. New isn't necessarily better, but neither is progress necessarily bad.

Dale

Getting the tapes

Dear Dragon,

When I received the November 1992 issue, I came across the letter "Cartoon kids!" on page 4. This is the one that asked if the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® cartoon series was going to be re-released on TV or if it was available on video. Your answer was yes, it is on video. I was rather excited, since I really liked the series when it was on the air, so I called the video company, Best Film & Video, the next morning. Well, it seems that Best Film & Video has only one episode, "In Search of the Dungeon Master," which isn't even the first episode.

According to the people that I talked to, the company plans to release a quantity of tapes after the first of the year, but they don't believe any other D&D cartoons will be made available due to lack of demand! Well, I think that readers of this magazine could fix that little problem. Let's start demanding!

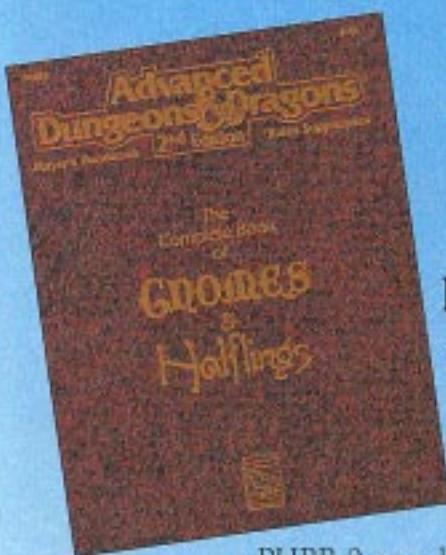
If you want to get this great series out on tape, let the company know! Just in case anyone missed the last issue, here is the address: Best Film & Video, 108 New South Road, Hicksville NY 11801. The phone number is (516) 931-6969. Ask for customer service.

Matt Stipicevich
Burlingame CA

Your editor spoke with the company this morning and can now offer a toll-free number to call them in requesting catalogs, ordering information, and so on: (800) 527-2189. By all means, if you want to ask for more episodes to become available, be polite. You might also put your request in writing. If enough people ask for the episodes, perhaps more will appear. It worked for "Star Trek," after all!



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EDITORIAL

It's hard to be good



Many years ago, I played a paladin character in an AD&D® game. It was the only time I've ever done it. All I remember about my paladin now is that he was awfully hard to play because I had to think all the time about acting and thinking Good, and that was almost impossible to do when I wanted nothing more than to sneak into a monster lair and steal its treasure after a hundred rounds of hack-

ing and slashing and being hacked at in return. I also didn't feel right about my paladin disguising himself as anything other than a knight in shining armor, and everyone knew he was a paladin from the way he looked just as sure as they knew the guy who claimed to be a fighter but wore leather armor was a thief. Being a paladin was really sort of dull.

Paladins are a real pain to play because

our concept of Lawful Good in the AD&D game is all mixed up with real-life issues of justice vs. the letter of the law, individual rights vs. the rights of society historical accuracy vs. romantic chivalry, and so on. Just what exactly can a lawful-good person get away with? What is a lawful-good person expected to do? What should a lawful-good person *want* to do? It's a very personal and controversial issue, and

it is not unknown for it to generate arguments right in the middle of role-playing games (see DRAGON® issue #187, page 57, for a "Forum" letter on that topic).

That's nothing, however, compared to the troubles involved in simply role-playing a paladin. When I think of "paladin," I usually think of Dudley Do-right, someone high-minded but shockingly naive and lacking in common sense, what some gamers call "awful good" instead of "lawful good." That can't be right, of course, because anyone who fights evil as relentlessly as a paladin can't be naive. Besides, a paladin is supposed to be someone we look up to, not laugh at. But if we can't relate to the paladin in more than two-dimensional terms, the knight in shining armor will always be a comic figure.

One solution might be for anyone wanting to role-play a paladin to write down that character's basic goals, with some explanation as to why these goals are kept. Is her ultimate goal to destroy all undead she encounters, as part of a long-term war between her religion and a necromancer-lich arch-foe? Is he a questing paladin, searching for magical items that could be used by his liege to strengthen the kingdom for a coming battle against migrating humanoid hordes? Is she a dual-classed mage/paladin who dresses as a peasant and works to overthrow an evil tyrant? Is he a guardian paladin who must defend an island colony from a score of foes, including the ravages of nature? Think about what the paladin is supposed to do, and not so much about what the paladin is supposed to think. The latter will come naturally during play, and deeds speak louder than words.

The paladin player should also work with the Dungeon Master to develop a list of general "dos and don't" for the character, based upon the paladin's religion, culture, and personal beliefs. This list should be brief, no more than 10 items long, clarifying what is done with helpless but evil prisoners, what should be done with treasure, who may be associated with, how to handle crimes, and so forth, to avoid trip-ups during play.

Focusing on what the paladin opposes often strengthens the image of what the paladin supports. A heroic but possibly doomed struggle against terrible odds will greatly deepen a character's role-playing. The heavy cloak of responsibility smothers out the silliness that some may feel with such characters, giving them a welcome seriousness not wholly devoid of humor.

Look at possible quirks for the paladin, things that set that character out of the ordinary. Does this paladin use firearms, perhaps even a magical holy blunderbuss with blessed ammunition? Does he refuse to wear armor, relying on magical rings, cloaks, and bracers to allow for free movement? Does she come from a seafaring background, using a net and trident

and being familiar with evil sea-dwelling races? What of a paladin from a Viking, African, Oriental, Native American, Arabic, or Indian background, which affects her dress, mannerisms, and speech? Did this paladin start out as a cleric, boosting his number of clerical spells and allowing him to use clerical magical items? Does she have a wild psionic talent? And what of a paladin who travels wildspace to defend his world and its colonies with his own spelljammer? Is he an AD&D 1st Edition cavalier-paladin, as per *Unearthed Arcana*, or does he use a kit from the AD&D 2nd Edition *Complete Fighter's Handbook* (Amazon, Cavalier, Noble, etc.)? Does she use a different set of virtues and codes than the list given in *Unearthed Arcana*, page 16? Is this paladin from the RAVENLOFT® GREYHAWK®, DRAGONLANCE®, FORGOTTEN REALMS®, or other setting, with appropriate attitudes, goals, and skills?

Consider, too, the use of quasi paladins, characters who are not true paladins but act and function like one in many ways. A dwarven hero, an elven knight, a halfling sheriff, and even a good-aligned thief could take on the aura (if not the reality) of paladinhood, given the proper combination of classes (fighter/cleric is best), goals, magical devices (a goad sword helps), skills, mundane equipment, and role-playing. I had a lawful-good charac-

ter named Paladin Brandybuck, a halfling warrior who made good use of potions and other devices to this end.

Borrow material from other role-playing games and media sources to bolster your paladin-playing. The first and foremost source of material in my mind would be the brilliantly designed PENDRAGON* game from Chaosium, which covers the world of King Arthur and his knights. Writers to "Forum" in the past have suggested characters as diverse as Batman, James ("Wild, Wild") West, and James ("007") Bond as prototypical paladins in other settings. To that list, I would add Superman and Captain America, two "lawful good" comic-book heroes, and our modern concept of the ideal police officer.

Paladins are great guys, and playing them well is one of the AD&D game's greatest challenges. It's hard to be good, but it's well worth it.

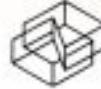
Roger E. Moore

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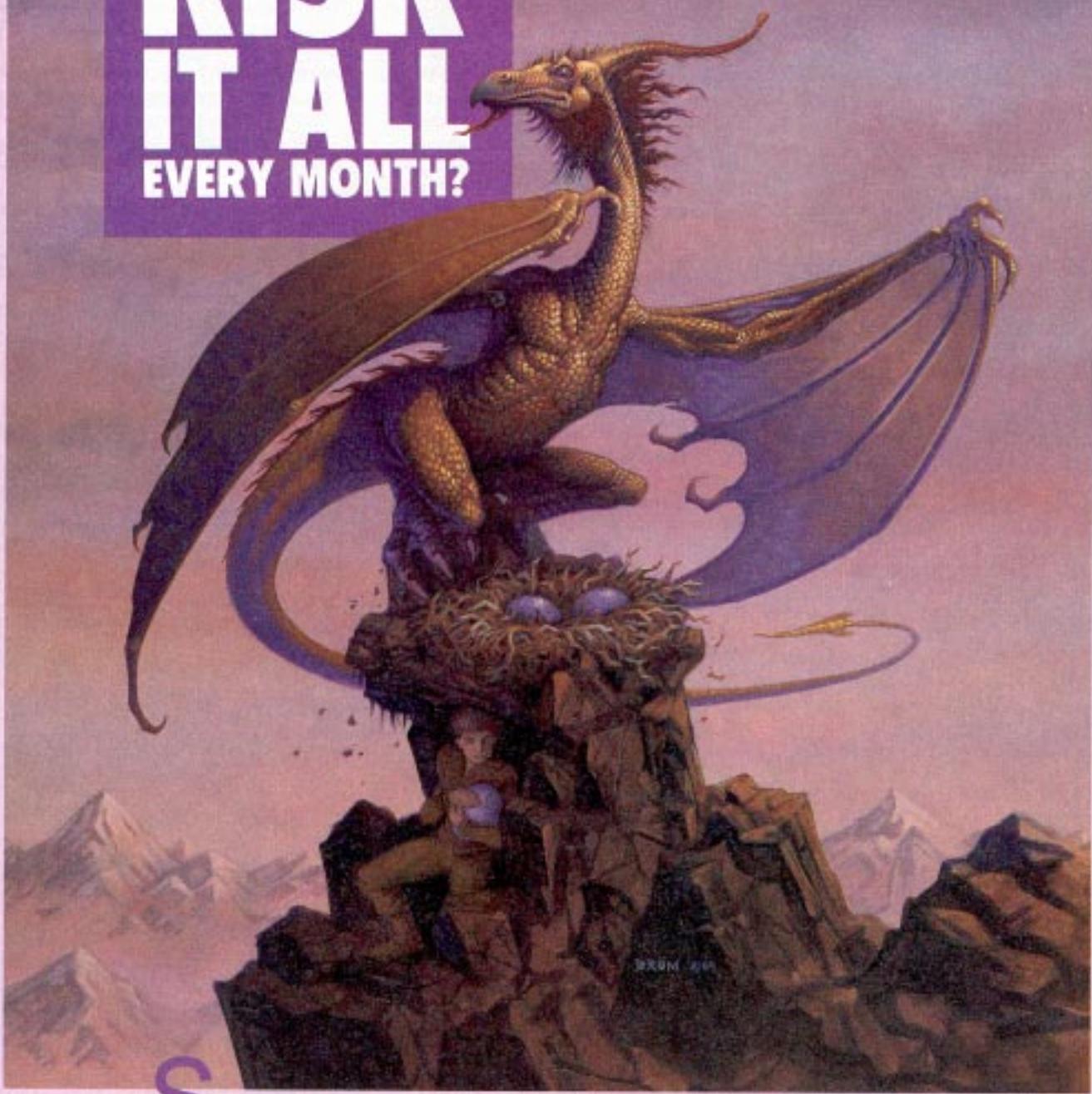
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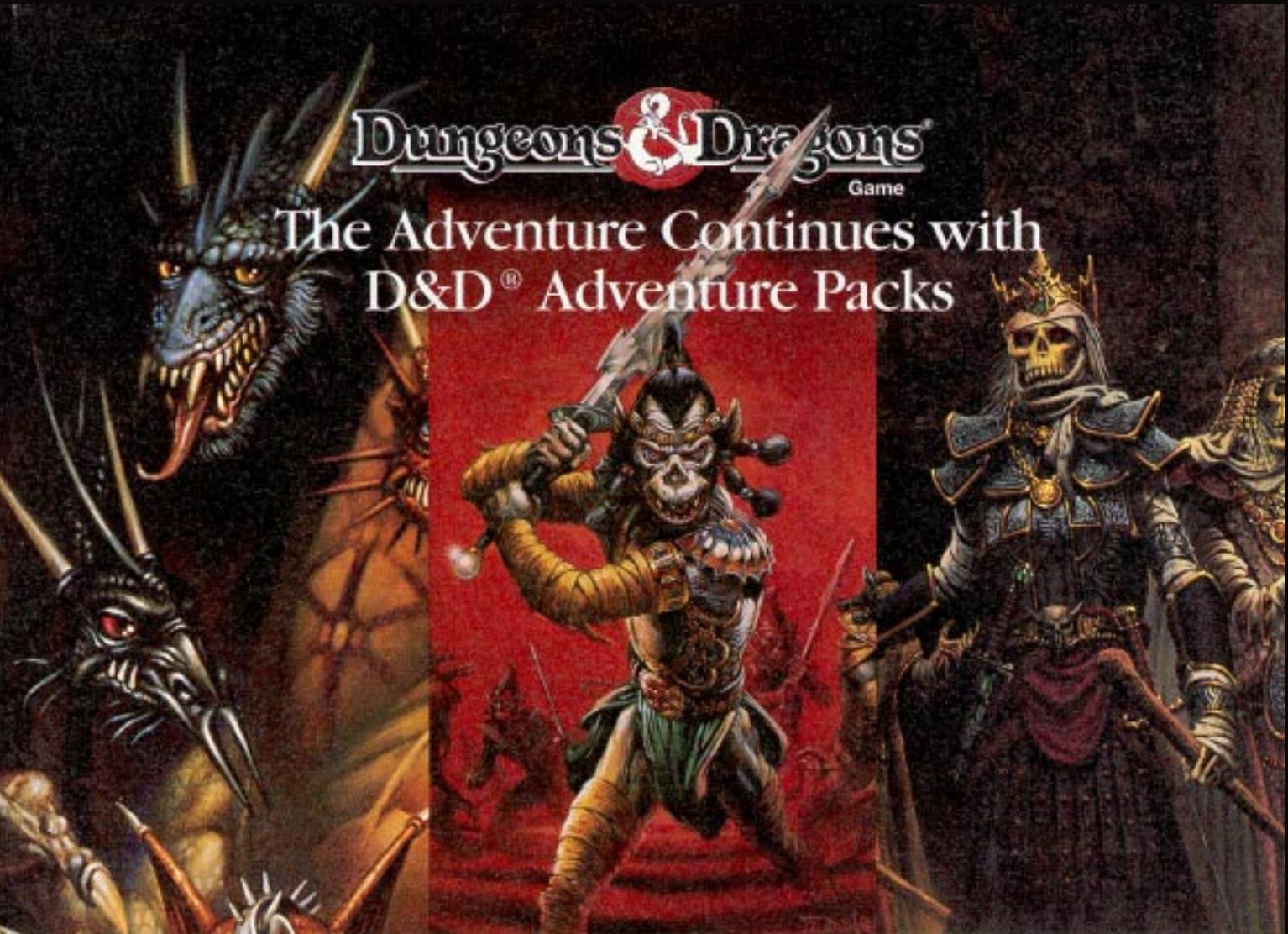
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Horses Are People, Too

More detail for horses in the AD&D® 2nd Edition game

by Gordon Menzies

Artwork by Lissanne Lake



The AD&D® 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide* offers some ways to give horses more individuality and detail (see pages 36-37). The tables in this article give a player the further option to detail a mount's color, markings, height, weight, encumbrance, and jumping capabilities. This article also expands and details the list of possible traits, defines training procedures using a system similar to the Non-weapon Proficiency (NWP) system used for characters, outlines some tricks a horse may learn, and discusses horse care in general.

Appearance

The exact appearance and coloration of any particular horse can be determined randomly, using Tables 1-6, or can be chosen from those tables by the player at the DM's discretion. The tables are also useful for a DM who wishes to create and maintain information on breeds of horses unique to her own campaign world. These animals would have a typical appearance and possibly common traits, depending on the environment they occupy and the people who breed them. For instance, the dwarves of a particular region might maintain herds of strong, sure-footed ponies that are usually gray and shaggy-coated. These animals would be exceptionally strong to carry heavy loads (food supplies brought up from the valleys, raw ore, etc.) and may also be consistent in size and temperament.

Movement

Table 7 gives movement statistics for horses. When traveling, horses usually move at a walk or trot, and the rider must stop often throughout the journey to feed, water, and rest the animal. Faster speeds may be attained when necessary, these being the canter and the full gallop. As stated in the DMG (page 123), a horse moving at its normal rate may cover up to 30 miles a day; moving at a canter doubles this rate, but forces the animal to make a saving throw vs. death, failure indicating the animal has become lame or is spent and cannot move any farther for a full day. Finally, at full gallop, a horse triples its normal daily movement rate, but must again make the saving throw vs. death, this time at -3 on the die roll; failure indicates death from exhaustion.

Galloping speed can be maintained for one hour without harm to the animal, though the animal must thereafter walk for an hour before it can gallop again. A canter can be maintained for two hours without harm, but again the animal must be walked for a full hour before speed can again be increased. Bursts of speed like this are useful for putting distance between the rider and any enemies in pursuit.

The saving throws for increased daily movement are for normally encumbered animals. If the horse is encumbered to slow it to half its normal movement rate, the saving throw should be at -2 on the

die roll, and at -4 if encumbered to one-third of its normal rate.

Encumbrance

Horses are useful for carrying baggage and supplies, and Table 8 lists the maximum rates according to the type of animal. Keep in mind the weight of the character, as everything he carries must also be applied when he rides the animal. As noted above, encumbrance affects how hard a character can push his mount when attempting to increase his normal daily movement rate.

Height

The height of the animal (determined by Table 9) must be known so that the character can calculate the amount of food the horse needs on a daily basis.

Jumping

Every horse is capable of a maximum height and length when it comes to jumping (see Table 10). Some are particularly adept at this (see Table 11), while some refuse to jump at all. Whatever an animal's capabilities, they should be kept on record so that both the player and the DM know the ability of the horse, and can weigh it against the immediate needs of any particular situation. Keep in mind that draft horse, mules, ponies, and the like are certainly not given to high performance jumping, so Table 10 is unlikely to apply to them.

Table 1
Overall Coloring and Appearance

1d20	Color	Comments
1	Black	Black pigment is present throughout, including both skin and hair.
2	Brown	The coat is a mixture of black and brown hair.
3	Black-brown	Black is the predominant pigment, but the muzzle, and sometimes the flanks, are brown.
4	Bay	The color varies from a dull reddish-brown to a golden shade that is nearly chestnut.
5	Bay-brown	The predominant pigment is brown but the muzzle is bay. The legs, mane, and tail are black.
6	Chestnut	A red-gold color with a number of varying shades.
7	Cream	This color is a result of unpigmented skin. The eyes of these horses are always pink or blue in color.
8	Dun	This is a primitive coloring that is characteristic of wild horses. It can be either a yellow dun (a sandy sort of yellow) or a blue dun. In the latter instance, the skin of the horse is black. The mane and tail are usually dark.
9	Gray	This is a varied mixture of black and white hairs on a black skin.
10	Blue roan	This is a blue-tinged gray that is a result of white hair on a body with black or brown pigmentation.
11	Red roan	An earthy red the result of bay or bay-brown body color with a mixture of white hairs overall.
12	Strawberry roan	This is a dusty or smokey rose color that is the result of a chestnut body color with a mixture of white hairs.
13	Piebald	The coat of these horses is made up of large, irregular patches of black and white, similar in appearance to common milk cows.
14	Skewbald	This is the same as the piebald, except in this instance the black coloring is replaced with any other color.
15	Odd-colored	This type is any coat that has more than two different colors.
16	Palomino	A rich yellow-gold coat with a white mane and tail.
17	Liver chestnut	This coat is the dark red color of raw liver.
18	Dapple gray	Dapple gray is a storm cloud gray, darker than a usual gray, with small patches and flecks of lighter coloring on the chest, belly, and hindquarters.
19	Sorrel	A sorrel is a chestnut red-brown coloring somewhere between bright bay and yellow chestnut. The mane and tail are both white or reddish in color.
20	Albino	An all-white animal, an albino is the result of a complete absence of pigmentation in both the skin and hair. These horses are always pinkeyed.

Table 2
Coat Pattern

1d100	Pattern	Comments
01-70	Whole/Solid coloring	Coat is completely regular.
71-80	Flecked	Coat contains small, irregular groupings of white hairs throughout.
81-90	Flea-bitten	Coat contains specks of brown hairs throughout, common with gray-colored and older horses.

Table 3
Leg Markings

1d100	Marking	Comments:
01-70	None	Leg is a solid color or pattern matching the rest of the animal's body.
71-85	Stocking	Leg has a white area between the hoof and the knee or hock.
86-00	Sock	Leg has a white area extending from the hoof halfway to the knee or hock.

Table 4
Body Markings

1d100	Marking	Comments
01-80	None	The coat contains no unusual markings.
81-90	Flesh marks	These are areas of unpigmented hair and skin, usually around the belly, flanks or legs.
91-00	Zebra marks	These bars or stripes on the legs or flanks are a throwback to the primitive camouflage of early breeds of wild horses.

Table 5
Muzzle Text

1d100	Marking	Comments
01-70	None	There is nothing unusual about the muzzle.
71-80	Snip	White markings ring the nostrils of the horse.
81-90	White muzzle	The muzzle and nostrils are white.
91-00	Lip marks	The lips are white.

Traits

As stated in the DMG, each horse has a total of 0-2 (1d3-1) traits that define the animal's personality. Though Table 11 was originally divided into two columns—one applying to bags, broken-down, and average-quality horses, and the other to high-spirited horses and chargers—it has not been done so here. Rather, it has been left to the DM to apply as he sees fit. Some of these traits are beneficial, others generally hamper characters in some way, and still others are just plain annoying. Many of the positive traits can be enhanced through formal training, which is discussed later. Some breeds of horses are known for having common traits that can make them either desirable or undesirable, and the DM should keep this in mind when creating different types of horses to populate his game world, ascribing one or two traits to a particular breed (these traits being independent of the random 0-2 rolled for above).

Training

Formal training for most horses begins at age three. These first few years have been spent getting the animal used to human (or demihuman, etc.) contact, and now it is ready to be trained to carry weight upon its back—either heavy baggage or a rider. A total of 11-17 (9+2d4) weeks are spent teaching this to the ani-

mal. A character must either seek out an individual with the Animal Training NWP to do this work, which costs 10 gp per week of training, or do the training herself, during which time she must limit all other activity or fail in the training attempt, as the animal requires constant attention. For every day the character misses, a cumulative -1 penalty should be applied to his proficiency check to determine the success of training the animal. Naturally, if the character trains her own horse, it cost her nothing beyond the usual care and feeding fees.

The basic training of wild or untrained adult horses requires the same training described above, but it takes a little longer, usually 15-20 weeks (14+ 1d6) and costs twice as much (20 gp/week) as it does to train a three-year-old.

Training for specific tricks (see Table 12) requires constant work of an even more intense nature. It requires the daily attention of either the trainer or the character, and if a single day is missed, the training automatically fails and must be started anew. All war horses, riding horses, and wild horses can be taught 2-8 specific tricks, plus one for each point of the animal's Intelligence. Draft horses, mules, ponies, and the like can learn only 1-4 tricks. The number of tricks any animal may learn is determined only once, and that number is the maximum number of

tricks the animal can ever learn. Learning to carry baggage or a rider does not count as a specific trick; it is considered to be separate training.

Each specific trick requires 1-4 weeks of training, at a cost of 25 gp per week, unless the character is training the animal himself. At the end of the allotted time, the trainer or the character makes his NWP check to determine whether the horse has learned the desired trick. No more than one trick may be taught to a horse during any training period. Exceptionally intelligent horses (see Table 11) add a +1 bonus to the animal trainer's proficiency check for every point of Intelligence over one.

Breeding

Horses are mature at three years of age and are considered adults at the age of five. The gestation period is approximately 11 months. After mating, a mare generally gives birth to a single foal (85%), twins (10%), or triplets (5%). Foals are weaned after six months.

If horses are worked hard, they are rarely useful past the age of 12, though if they are well cared for they can be good for more than 20 years. The usual life span of a horse is 30-35 years, though rare exceptions have reached the age of 50 (see Table 13).

Table 6
Facial Markings

1d100	Marking	Comments
01-50	None	There is nothing unusual about the face.
51-60	Blaze	A wide band of white ranges from the top of the horse's head to the tip of his nose.
61-70	Star	A white diamond is set on the horse's forehead, right between the eyes.
71-80	Stripe	A narrow band of white ranges from the top of the horse's head to the tip of his nose in an elongated diamond shape.
81-90	Star/Stripe	There is a small white diamond on the forehead between the eyes and a short, narrow band in the shape of an elongated diamond down toward the animal's nose.
91-00	White face	A large white patch covers the horse's entire face, including both eyes and the muzzle.

Table 7
Movement Capabilities

Type	Walk	Trot	Canter	Gallop
Draft horse	6	12	18	24
Heavy war horse	6	15	21	27
Medium war horse	9	18	27	36
Light war horse	12	24	36	48
Pony	6	12	18	24
Wild horse	12	24	36	48
Riding horse	12	24	36	48
Mule	6	12	18	24

Table 8
Encumbrance Statistics

Type:	Normal	One-half	One-third
Draft horse	260	390	520
Heavy war horse	260	390	520
Medium war horse	220	330	440
Light war horse	170	255	340
Pony	160	240	320
Wild horse	170	255	340
Riding horse	180	270	360
Mule	250	375	500

Care and feeding

The natural food for horses is the grass and clover that grows on the open plains, where equines evolved. Domesticated horses, however, are fed a diet of hay (bulk food) and grain (concentrated food). The basic guideline for the proper feeding of horses is that they should be given small amounts of food on a frequent basis throughout the course of a normal day, simulating a life of periodic grazing in the wild.

Hard-working horses need a greater degree of concentrated energy food (grains) in their diet than those that are inactive, but otherwise eat a larger amount of bulk food (grass and hay). Types of concentrated foods include oats, barley, corn, and bran. To round off a diet, fresh vegetable and fruit such as carrots, turnips, and apples should be offered as well to keep the animal healthy and happy. Hard-working horses are those animals that travel encumbered, plow fields, pull carriages, or are engaged in similar activity. Inactive horses spend most of their time in the stable and farm-

yard corral or are involved in leisurely, unencumbered travel (see Table 14).

Note that both traveling and stabled horses must be given either a suitable amount of hay or access to adequate grazing land for them to be able to get the required amount of bulk food in their diet. This required amount equals the total pounds of food needed per day minus the required amount of concentrated food.

Horses also require an average of eight gallons of water per day. A good guideline is one-half gallon per hand of the animal's height. An animal that does not receive the necessary daily amounts of food and water will suffer and eventually die, but the effects leading up to this must be defined by the DM according to the situation at hand during play. [Previous articles on horses include: "From the Sorcerer's Scroll: Warhorses and Barding," in issue #74; "Let the Horse Buyer Beware," in issue #92; "A Saddle's Not Enough," in issue #113; and "The Dragon's Bestiary," in issue #149.]

Table 9
Height in Hands

1d100	Height of animal
01-15	14 hands**
16-40	15 hands
41-80	16 hands
81-90	17 hands
91-00	18 hands

* This table should be applied only to riding horses and wild horses. Draft horses are usually 17-18 hands high; heavy, medium, and light war horses 18, 17, and 16, respectively; and ponies, mules, donkeys, and the like, 14 and under.

** One hand equals 4".

Table 10
Maximum Jumping Capability

1d100	Height	Length
01-20	4'	12'
21-50	5'	14'
51-75	6'	16'
76-95	7'	18'



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Table 11
Horse Traits

1d100	Trait	Notes
01-03	Bites	The horse is 20% likely to attempt to take a chunk out of anyone within biting range.
04-06	Ricks	The horse is nervous and kicks out at anyone who is too near to its hindquarters.
07-08	Steps on feet	If the person leading the horse stops, or if anyone is within range, the horse deliberately steps on that person's foot 20% of the time, causing 1-2 hp damage.
09-10	Refuses to gallop	Unless beaten with a riding crop, spurred, or otherwise encouraged, this horse never attempts to reach its full galloping speed.
11-13	Chews fences	This may be just an annoying habit, but it can be an indicator of parasites in the horse's stomach or simply a poor diet.
14-16	Stops unexpectedly	This horse just isn't into exerting itself and simply takes random "breaks" during any journey. Check each hour to see if this has happened. If encumbered normally, the chance is 25%; if encumbered to half speed, 50%; and if encumbered to one-third speed, the chance is 90%. The horse delays its rider for a full turn at a time, snorting angrily and adamantly refusing any attempts to get it to continue moving.
17-19	Rubs against fences	This horse lives for pleasure and probably is just dying for a good grooming as well. Other than this and the possibility the animal is infested with fleas, ticks, mites or lice, it is not a particularly detrimental trait.
20-21	Bucks unexpectedly	There is a 10% chance per hour that this horse bucks for no particular reason. The rider must make a Dexterity Check to remain in his seat and keep the animal under control.
22-23	Rears unexpectedly	This trait is handled the same as "Bucks unexpectedly," above.
24-25	Bone-jarring gait	Poor alignment of the shoulders causes this animal to be particularly uncomfortable to ride. The rider must stop for a full turn each hour to rest and stretch and give himself a break from this torture; failure to do this puts the rider at -1 to hit for 10 minutes after dismounting.
26-28	Single rider only	This horse refuses to be overburdened and simply won't take a second passenger, fighting and protesting if this is attempted. Similarly, it won't allow itself to be encumbered to the point of affecting its normal movement rate.
29-31	Headstrong	There is a 25% chance each hour of being ridden that this horse either attempts to head in a direction different than the rider desires, or that it pauses to either eat or drink for a full turn, ignoring all attempts to make it do otherwise. Increase this chance by 50% for passengers who are not proficient in Land-Based Riding. Those who are proficient can make a proficiency check to determine whether or not they can regain control of the animal immediately.
32-34	Exceptional leaper	When determining the maximum heights and lengths this animal can clear, add 1' to the former and 2' to the latter. When an animal makes its maximum leap in either case, the rider should make a proficiency check to determine whether he has kept his seat or fallen off upon landing.
35-36	Accepts master only	Unless the master is in the saddle, this horse accepts no other rider or passenger.
37-39	Robust	This horse has a powerful constitution and can move at great speeds longer than an average animal might.
40-42	Exceptionally fleet	The horse receives a +3 on its saving throw vs. death when being forced to double or triple his normal overland speed.
43-45	Fearless	Add 1-6 points to this horse's normal speeds for walking, trotting, cantering, and galloping.
46-48	Skittish	A fearless horse has exceptional morale. It will thus be average (8-10) 65% of the time; steady (11-12) 20% of the time; elite (13-14) 10% of the time; and champion (15-16) 5% of the time. Loud noises, sudden movement, etc. rarely upset this animal.
49-51	Strong	This horse has an exceptionally low morale rating of Unreliable (2-4). These types tend to balk at the first sign of danger, loud noise, sudden movement, etc. and will then either buck, rear, flee, or freeze.
52-56	Stable	This animal is powerful and gets to add 10-100 units to his normal encumbrance rates right across the board.
57-60	Gentle	Not quite fearless, this animal is still confident and not often frightened by loud noises and sudden movements, and it receives a +3 bonus on any morale check.
61-64	Sure-footed	The animal has a kind and tolerant temperament, making it a good horse for new or inexperienced riders, as well as children and ladies of gentle birth.
65-68	Loves particular food	A good animal to have when traveling through mountainous areas, this horse receives a +3 to all Dexterity checks or saving throws when footing is precipitous or unstable.
69-71	Intolerant of poor handling	The animal is fond of a particular type of food—sweet grass, apples, carrots, etc. It can sometimes be easily coaxed with such offerings.
72-75	Affectionate	These high-bred types won't put up with an inexperienced rider or handler and are quite likely to bite, kick, buck, or rear at the indignation of being subjected to such a situation. There is a 75% chance of this each turn the horse suffers abuse.
76-78	Vengeful	This animal is particularly fond of its master or any other individual with whom it normally comes into contact. A +3 bonus should be applied to any proficiency checks this person needs to make when working with this animal.
79-80	Exceptional intelligence	This animal does not easily forget wrongs that have been done to it and seeks to strike back at those who have abused it when it has the opportunity.
81-83	Sickly	This animal is particularly clever. The majority of these types (75%) are semi-intelligent (2-4) and the rest (25%) have low intelligence (5-7). For each point of Intelligence the animal gains an additional "slot" to use toward learning tricks during training.
84-85	Freezes when frightened	This animal has a poor Constitution and is prone to sickness. A penalty of -3 should be applied to all saving throws vs. death this animal must make when forced to move at double or triple speed.
86-87	Desires freedom	The majority of horses tend to flee if they experience a failed morale check, but this type freezes on the spot, refusing to move. Only a rider who has the Land-Based Riding proficiency can get the horse moving again.
88-89	Dislikes certain individual	Only a rider who has the Land-Based Riding proficiency can get the horse moving again.
90-91	Dislikes certain sex	This animal wants its freedom very much and seeks it at every opportunity. If the animal is not tethered or hobbled when not being ridden, it certainly makes a break for it. It won't openly fight a rider, but it does tend to be uncooperative so the proficiency checks of any rider should be rolled with a penalty of -2 on the die.
92	Dislikes certain animal	This animal won't tolerate being handled or ridden by a particular sex of human, humanoid, or demihuman. It is uncooperative with such a handler and has a 75% chance per turn of bucking or rearing to dislodge such an individual from its back, forcing the character to make a Dexterity check to remain seated.
93	Dislikes certain race	The horse is either hostile to or fearful of a certain type of creature, usually one that is really no threat to its well-being. Dogs, sheep, pigs, birds, and cows are some likely possibilities. The horse acts completely out of character when encountering such creatures, requiring a morale check at -3 to keep it from either bolting, rearing up in fear, or attacking the creature.
94-95	Strong swimmer	Similar to "Dislikes certain sex" above, the fear or hostility in this case is applied to a particular race—dwarves, elves, gnomes, orcs, goblins, humans, etc.
96-98	Fear of water	This animal is adept at swimming and may well enjoy it as well. The DM should take this into consideration and afford the animal certain bonuses when attempting to cross rivers, swollen streams, etc. A +3 bonus is suggested against a predetermined number depending on the strength of the current, etc.
99-00	Won't jump	Horses of this persuasion are terrified of water and neither leap over nor attempt to swim across it. Characters with the Land-Based Riding proficiency may attempt to force the animal to do so, but there is a -5 penalty on the die roll.

Table 12
Specific Tricks

1d20	Trick	Comments
1	Kicks/bites in battle	The horse assists the rider in combat by lashing out with its front hooves and biting during each combat round.
2	Tramples enemy	When charging into combat, the horse deliberately rams into enemies and attempts to trample them beneath its hooves. Enemies under attack must make a Dexterity check or suffer double the damage a normal hoof attack (i.e., both hooves) would do. The horse may trample only one man-sized or smaller enemy per round. This attack form cannot be used in the same round that the horse is using its kick/bite attack mode.
3	Directed with knees	All war horses must be trained to respond to knee pressure, which allows the rider to use both a weapon and a shield while maneuvering the animal.
4	Alerts master of danger	The horse neighs, snorts, and generally makes a ruckus to alert its master to the approach of enemies, a spreading fire, etc.
5	Responds to call	The horse comes to its master when its name is called, when it's whistled for, or when summoned in any other manner, as long as it is within hearing distance.
6	Stops on command	The horse comes to an immediate halt when commanded to do so.
7	Climbs stairs/stEEP incline	The horse is capable of climbing up stairs or steep inclines as long as there is adequate footing. The rider must make a Dexterity check at +2 on the die roll to remain in his seat.
8	Walks backward	This trick is useful on narrow mountain paths and the like.
9	Walks sideways/reverse	This trick can be employed in crowd control to sweep compact groups of people out of the way, using the horse's bulk.
10	Knows way home	At night, or when carrying a weary or injured rider, this horse can take its passenger home if given control of the reigns.
11	Protects master	The horse guards a fallen or injured rider until help arrives, and it attacks all enemies who threaten its charge.
12	Fetches on command	The horse can be sent to fetch a particular item it is familiar with.
13	Counts	The animal can accurately count, using its hoofs to stamp out answers to simple addition and subtraction problems that are given to it.
14	Rears on command	This is a very impressive trick to be used when leading armies or just before riding out of town.
15	Lies down when ordered	This trick is useful for injured characters trying to reach equipment or climb back into the saddle after a fall.
16	Keeps silent on command	The horse uses as much stealth as possible when ordered to remain quiet, walking slowly and avoiding any vocalization for a full turn.
17	Jumps	A horse trained to jump properly adds 1' to the maximum height and 2' to the maximum length it is normally allowed to jump.
18	Pirouettes	The horse can turn in place in a circular motion that is useful to a character caught in a tight place or who wishes to whirl the animal about to face an approaching enemy.
19	Piaffes	This is the ability to perform a spectacular elevated trot in place—impressive to behold.
20	Finds water	The horse can lead its master to fresh water if there is any to be found nearby.

Table 13
Horses' Age Categories

Age	Category	Comments
1-2	Young adult	-3 MV; -100 encumbrance; -2'/4' jumping height/length
3-5	Mature	+3 MV; +100 encumbrance; +2'/+4' jumping height/length
6-20	Middle-aged	Standard
21-35	Old	-3 MV; -100 encumbrance; -2'/-4' jumping height/length
36-50+	Venerable	-3 MV; -100 encumbrance; -2'/-4' jumping height/length

Table 14
Food Requirements

Size of horse	Total lbs. food needed/day	Total lbs. of concentrate needed: inactive/bard-working
14 hands	20 lbs.	1-2/2-4
15 hands	24 lbs.	5-6/10-12
16 hands	28 lbs.	9-10/14-16
17 hands	32 lbs.	13-14/18-20
18 hands	36 lbs.	17-18/22-24



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Open Your Mind

Expand your AD&D® game with kits for the psionicist class

by Michael John Wybo II

Artwork by Karen L. Wann

The AD&D® 2nd Edition game's kit system is a fine way of improving a player's character and enhancing the role-playing possibilities of the game. I was therefore surprised when the *Complete Psionics Handbook* (CPH) arrived and did not contain any kits for the psionicist.

Kathryn Kurtz's Deryni are the most popular fantasy psionics-using characters I've read about. Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader, Obi Wan Kenobi, Yoda, and the Emperor are other popular (if science-fantasy) examples of psionic characters. It is more important to have game templates (i.e., kits) for psionic characters than it is for the more standard AD&D classes, because of this relative lack of previously established role models. [*Editor's note: The CPH does contain a "Related Reading" list on page 113 for further inspiration and examples.*] This article attempts to alleviate this problem by providing several psionics-using character kits to make psionicists more fun to play.

Berranie Seer/Seeress

Description: The Berranie (pronounced bear-ran-EE) Seers are the spiritual and temporal guides for nomadic gypsy tribes such as the Romanies or the Rhenee of Oerth. These gypsies are flamboyant free traders who wander the land. They are free and frivolous, often having very little regard for the laws of the nations that they pass through. These gypsy tribes make their way in the world through quackery, entertainment, mercantilism, tinkering,

confidence games, and outright theft.

The gypsies are supposedly protected by a curse that strikes down any who attempt to do them harm for selfish or unjust reasons. This may be true or, as is more likely, it may be a rumor started by the gypsies themselves (who have been known to shade the truth from time to time).

Like their nonpsionic brethren, the Berranie Seers dress in outlandishly garish clothes, have a loose interpretation of personal property, and are extremely passionate people who can be violent when roused to anger.

All gypsies who possess psionic ability are called Berranie. The most experienced Berranie of each clan is chosen as the gypsy leader's advisor. Another Berranie is allowed to travel with each clan as an apprentice, but all others of marrying age or older are sent from the clan to gain experience in the wide world. When the advisor dies, all Berranie born of that clan are summoned to choose a successor. It is unknown how the gypsies choose which seer is the most qualified, but the decision is never questioned.

To be a Berranie Seer, a psionicist must have a minimum Charisma of 12 in addition to the normally required Constitution of 11, Intelligence of 12, and Wisdom of 15 for psionicists. The added requirement reflects the outgoing nature of the gypsies. The seer must also be neutral in alignment.

The Berranie kit cannot be abandoned. Preferred disciplines: Berranie Seers



prefer the Clairsentience and Telepathy disciplines. These must be the first two disciplines chosen, although the order in which they are chosen may be determined by the player.

Suggested devotions: Danger Sense, Know Direction, Know Location, Radial Navigation, Attraction, Empathy, ESP, Truth Ear.

Suggested sciences: Any Clairsentient science, Probe, Mindlink.

Barred disciplines: None.

Role: To the gypsies, the Berranie is a respected member of the clan (regardless of the seer's age) and will be treated with respect by all gypsies, regardless of clan. A clan will offer a Berranie Seer hospitality for no longer than a single night; however, unless the Berranie in question is the advisor or apprentice advisor to that clan.

Outsiders' opinions of Berranie varies. They are seen as anything from villainous charlatans to lovable rogues, depending on the attitude taken toward the gypsies as a group.

Secondary skills: The secondary skills of Gambler, Hunter, Trader/Barterer, or Woodworker/Carpenter are all acceptable for Berranie characters. The above choices may vary among game worlds, depending upon the culture of the gypsies of your DM's world.

Weapon proficiencies: Required: None; Recommended: dagger, knife, scimitar, short sword.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Bonus: Animal handling or Riding, Land-Based; Recommended: Musical instrument, Gaming, Juggling, Tumbling, Fire-Building, Direction Sense, Appraising, Carpentry, Hunting, Tracking, Astrology

As noted above, these are recommended for standard Berranie characters. The DM may substitute others based on the culture of the gypsies of his world.

Special benefits: The Berranie may learn any rogue proficiency at normal cost.

Special hindrances: Most law-enforcement officials and authority figures have an aversion to gypsies in their jurisdiction. This translates into a -1 to reaction rolls when dealing with officials, guardsmen, clerks, and sheriffs in their official capacities.

Wealth options: As normal.

Races: Humans, elves, half-elves, gnomes, and halflings may be Berranie characters.

Thought Agents

Description: Thought Agents are members of a psionic fraternity of sheriffs, bounty hunters, spies, and vigilantes who have been trained to use their mental powers to aid them in their chosen fields.

This group has no political affiliations or biases with regard to good or evil. Their members may take jobs as "peacemakers" (a sheriff for uncivilized or wilderness settlements), information brokers, treasure

finders, monster or witch hunters, inquisitors, or any other job that requires stealth, intuition, and cunning.

To be a Thought Agent, a character must have an Intelligence of 13 or better, and a minimum Wisdom of 16. Thought Agents must also be of lawful alignment, in addition to all other normal requirements.

Preferred disciplines: Thought Agents prefer the Telepathic, Clairsentient, and Psychometabolic disciplines.

Recommended devotions: ESP, Inflict Pain, Truth Ear, Body Equilibrium, Catfall, Chameleon Power, Double Pain, Ectoplasmic Form, Heightened Senses.

Recommended sciences: Probe, Mindlink, Aura Sight, Shadow-form, Metamorphosis.

Barred disciplines: None.

Role: The individual members of this order have as little in common with other members as they do with nonpsionic beings. Each is a loner, knowing only a few other members, including one Thought Agent who acts as a trainer. Each Thought Agent must pick a specialty based on her alignment.

Lawful-good specialties

Peacemakers: These are wandering judges similar to judges of the American Old West. If a peacemaker settles in one area, he is known as a sheriff. His job is to judge, sentence, and in some cases, track down and execute those who break the laws of the land. They receive a +1 bonus to reaction rolls from the common folk of the land.

Treasure finders: These are adventuring Thought Agents who take on missions to recover lost or stolen items for an employer. They often accompany adventuring parties on their excursions. Treasure finders may detect secret and hidden doors like an elf. If the treasure finder is an elf, she receives an additional +1 to her chances of finding such portals and may find secret doors merely in passing on a roll of 1 on 1d8.

Monster hunters: These are specialists in tracking down and defeating a certain type of monster. There are dragon hunters, vampire hunters, giant hunters, etc. Each sort of hunter knows the lore about his intended quarry and will choose weapons and equipment that is appropriate. Monster hunters receive a +1 to attack their chosen nemesis and know their general strengths and weaknesses. For example: Targ the vampire hunter knows that, generally, vampires may be killed through beheading, burning, stakes through the heart, or exposure to direct sunlight. The vampire he is currently chasing is named El Cahon and is only prone to one of the above methods of destruction. However, Targ has no way of knowing which one simply by being a vampire hunter.

Lawful-neutral specialties

Spy: The spy's role is described in the *Complete Thief's Handbook* (CTH) under the thief's kit of the same name. A Thought Agent uses his psionics skills to aid him in his profession. A similar vocation is the information broker. The sole difference between an information broker and a spy is that an information broker is in the business of collecting information of a general interest that she may later sell, rather than having been hired to collect information of a more specific sort by an employer. Thought Agent spies (and information brokers) never possess any thieving skills.

Witch hunter: A witch hunter is a Thought Agent who searches out, identifies, and captures or exterminates renegade spellcasters. He is similar in profession to a bounty hunter and in philosophy to a monster hunter in that he hunts a quarry for a bounty, but only those who are dangerous to public safety. A witch hunter's psionics abilities are well suited to combat with magic-wielding assailants. A witch hunter is granted the Spellcraft proficiency at no cost.

Lawful-evil specialties

Assassin: Assassins are fully described in the CTH. They are trained to use their psionics to aid them in this pursuit. Make use of the "Role" section of the kit in particular. Again, psionicists choosing this kit cannot possess thieving skills.

Bounty hunter: Bounty hunters are also fully described in the CTH. Use the "Role" section found there for inspiration.

Inquisitor: The actions of inquisitors are lawful evil, even if they profess otherwise ("religious cleansing," "purification," etc.). They may be misguided fanatics or self-serving followers of a particular religious leader or deity. Whatever their motivations, they search out and eradicate those they claim are heretics, unbelievers, and heathens, including priests of "outlawed" faiths and religious minorities.

Secondary skills: Any.

Weapon proficiencies: Required: None; Recommended: Any.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Bonus: Observation, Information Gathering; Recommended: Tracking, Alertness, Meditative Focus, Local History, Direction Sense, Disguise.

Equipment: Equipment varies according to the specialization taken. Common sense and the CTH can aid in the decision-making.

Special benefits: As noted above.

Thought Agents who make use of kits from the CTH do not receive the special benefits listed (they are psionicists, not rogues).

Special hindrances: All Thought Agents, regardless of specialty, must serve an employer or a master, even if the master is

only the agent's own duty to his religion or community. He may not go on adventures if they are not in direct pursuit of his duties or an employer's wishes,

Wealth options: As normal.

Races: Humans, dwarves, gnomes, and halflings may become Thought Agents.

Ascetic Warrior

Description: The Ascetic Warriors came from a distant land where they were the elite fighting force in a war against a chaotic wizards insane magical breeding experiments. Some believe they belong to a semi-religious sect dedicated to the perfection of the mind, body, and spirit of its adherents. These mysterious, self-reliant warriors are a force to be reckoned with. They keep their abilities and rituals in strictest secrecy.

The Ascetic Warriors employ strange and often foreign fighting techniques, weapons, and customs. They are recognizable by their shaven heads, bare feet (even when crossing burning desert sands), spartan garb, and the tattoo of an Oriental dragon on their chests.

To be an Ascetic Warrior, a character must be lawful in alignment to reflect the years of discipline and training endured to achieve their martial prowess.

Preferred disciplines: No particular disciplines are favored by Ascetic Warriors.

Recommended devotions: Combat Mind, Adrenalin Control, Body Control, Body Equilibrium, Enhanced Strength, Heightened Senses, Immovability, Catfall, Mind Over Body, Mind Bar, Astral Projection, Martial Trance, Danger Sense, all Telepathic attack modes.

Recommended sciences: Aura Sight, Telekinesis, Project Force.

Barred disciplines: None.

Role: The Ascetic Warrior is a mysterious being who generates awe from the peasantry and adds a touch of the exotic to a campaign. His martial and mental prowess coupled with his quiet, self-reliant nature make him an unfathomable adversary.

Secondary skills: The Scribe skill is the only one appropriate to Ascetic Warriors.

Weapon proficiencies: *Required:* At least half of the weapons chosen must be from the following list: staff, blowgun, dagger, dart, javelin, knife, mancatcher, sling, and staff sling.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Bonus: Reading/writing; *Recommended:* Harness subconscious, Meditative focus, Religion, Blind-fighting, Endurance, Running.

Equipment: Other, more exotic weaponry may replace those listed above. See the AD&D 1st Edition *Oriental Adventures* book and DRAGON® Magazine issue #189 for many unusual weapons.

Special benefits: The Ascetic Warrior is able to learn the Punching, Wrestling, and Martial Arts skills as detailed in the *Complete Fighter's Handbook*, and may spe-





cialize in these skills as if they were single-class fighters.

Special hindrances: Ascetic Warriors never wear armor, as it goes against their code of self-reliance. As mentioned above, the Ascetic Warrior must use half his weapon proficiencies, including any bonus proficiencies due to high Intelligence, on recommended weapons or unarmed combat skills. The Ascetic Warrior must donate all excess starting money and all monies gained, beyond normal living expenses, to his order or to needy recipients. He may keep one of each type of magical item that he is able to use by his class and kit (i.e., one ring, one wand, one weapon, etc., but no armor), and must donate all others that are his share of treasure to his order or to the needy. The "needy" mentioned above never refers to other PCs, not even other PC members of the Ascetic Warrior's order.

Wealth options: As per normal, but she cannot keep any excess monies as noted above.

Races: Only humans may become Ascetic Warriors.

Healer

Description: The healer is a psionicist dedicated to the health and well-being of all human, demihuman, and humanoid patients. She may do this in service to a deity, in empathy over the plight of the suffering, or simply as a professional who does what she has been trained to do. There are religious orders who support schools for psionics-using Healers, but the majority either stumbled upon their talents or were trained in them by another Healer.

A Healer wearing her distinctive red-and-white striped robe is welcome almost everywhere, even on a battlefield involving humans, humanoids, or demihumans, as both sides count on Healers to supplement the healing of clerics, especially if clerics are rare or nonexistent in a campaign. This kit may be dropped with the penalty of a -2 penalty to all reaction rolls in any area where she previously operated as a healer. There are no prerequisites for this kit except that of a nonevil alignment.

Preferred disciplines: The Psychometabolic discipline must be the first choice of any Healer.

Recommended devotions: Poison Sense, Control Body, Absorb Disease, Cell Adjustment, Lend Health, Share Strength, Suspend Animation, Empathy, False Sensory Input, Life Detection.

Recommended sciences: Complete Healing, Psychic Surgery.

Barred disciplines: None.

Role: Healers are the Red Cross, country doctors, and psychic surgeons of their worlds. Some move about quite a bit in order to spread their rare talents across a greater area. They work to prevent or contain plagues, deal with insane individuals,

and alleviate suffering as much as possible. Although highly respected by the common citizenry, a Healer is not immune to hardships. Those Healers who do not wear the red-and-white distinctive robes, for whatever reason, are not recognized as Healers and will generally be treated like everyone else. Similarly, a non-Healer who wears the Healer's robes will soon be asked to provide her unique skills. If she cannot do so, she may be stripped of the robes and may even be considered a criminal for her imposture.

Secondary skills: Any secondary skill may be appropriate for healers.

Weapon proficiencies: Required: None; Recommended: dagger, knife.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Bonus: Healing; Recommended: Brewing, Cooking, Fire-building, Herbalism, Languages, Reading/writing, Rejuvenation, Religion.

Equipment: A knife, herbs for healing, bandages, some needles and thread, and simple medicines are required equipment for Healers. A "Healer's bag" of such materials costs 30 gp.

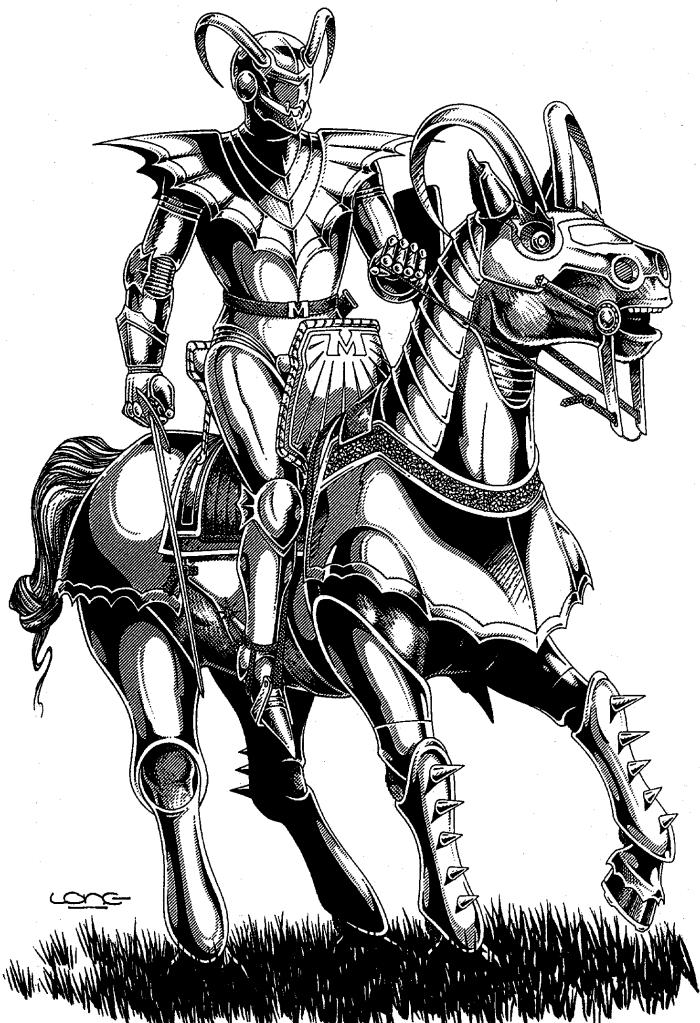
Special benefits: As Healers are well respected by most human, demihuman, and humanoid cultures, a Healer is granted a +1 to all reaction rolls if she wears the Healer's robes.

Special hindrances: All Healers have taken a magically binding oath to never harm another human, humanoid, or demihuman except in self defense. A robed Healer also must take an oath to heal all individuals with no biases, even if the creatures in question are defeated enemies. (This may be one reason a Healer would wish not to wear the robes.) If a Healer breaks an oath, she will be affected as if by a *geas* spell until she atones in a suitable manner (as decided by the DM). She may then choose whether to don the robes once more.

Wealth options: As normal.

Races: Any race may have Healers.





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The Elven Comp

Rillifane, at last, for

by Carl Sargent



One of the trickier parts of writing the AD&D® rules supplement, DMGR4 *Monster Mythology*, was grouping together the 131 gods, avatars, priesthoods, etc. covered therein. For example, Blibdoolpoolp (goddess of the kuo-toal) could have been included in the Underdark chapter as readily as in "Gods of the Scaly Folk." Deep Sashelas, the aquatic-elf deity, could have been included among the elven gods, but found a home in "Gods of the Seas and Skies" because of his relationships with many of the non-elven gods in the latter chapter. And, alas, among the wealth of detail for the gods of giants, dragons, vampires, faerie creatures, humanoids, illithids, derro, and countless others, one deity got lost along the way. Rillifane Ralathil, an elven god, was not included among the elven deities but was slated for inclusion among the sylvan gods—yet managed to slip out somehow. To complete the full reference for all elven deities, his details are given here.

This brief article also gives me the opportunity to credit Roger E. Moore, editor of this magazine, for the work he originally did on humanoid and demihuman deities for the AD&D 1st Edition game. These were originally published in DRAGON® issues #58-63 and were reprinted in *Unearthed Arcana* and the *Best of DRAGON Magazine* anthology, Volume III. These originals formed the basis for the majority of the humanoid and demihuman gods in *Monster Mythology*; others came from the original DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedias or were originals of my own devising. A gremlin in editing removed the credit Roger should have had on the contents page of *Monster Mythology*. I appreciate this opportunity to put the record straight!

The entry here contains abbreviations and statistics that differ slightly from the format used in the AD&D 2nd Edition Leg-

Pantheon— leted!

AD&D® 2nd Edition campaigns

Artwork by Robert Less

ends & Lore. *Monster Mythology* upgrades those original statistics, the most notable case being the TU (turning of undead) statistic for priests of Rillifane. This is given as "Turn at -1 level." This means that specialty priests of this god turn away undead at one level lower than their usual experience level.

Rillifane Rallathil (Intermediate god)

Rillifane Rallathil is the patron god of wood elves, revered also by a few voadkyn (see MC5 WORLD OF GREYHAWK® appendix to the *Monstrous Compendium*, "Giantkin, Voadkyn"). He is a complex figure, considered by his followers to be simultaneously a huge oak tree and a green-skinned elf clad in bark armor. As an oak, Rillifane stands in Arvandor (the High forest of Olympus) with his roots spanning the planes into the countless worlds occupied by wood elves. The great tree draws into itself all the ebb and flow of seasons and lives within the woodlands of the wood elves. At the same time, it defends and sustains those lands against disease, predation, and assaults of all kinds.

Rillifane's major concern is that all living things within "his" woodlands should have the opportunity to live and act out their roles in nature without abusing it. This brings him close to Corellon, the great creator and protector of the elves. It also brings him into opposition with Solonor Thelandira, the elven god of hunting and archery. Solonor does not permit his priests and followers to hunt within woods where Rillifane's brooding, forbidding presence cautions against this, unless their need is great. Rillifane will permit hunting for food by hungry folk; hunting for sport he detests.

Rillifane is closely allied with Emmantiensien, god of treants, and their conversations are many (and seemingly endless



to others, as neither god is given to hasty thought or expression). Many of the sylvan deities know and respect the great Leaflord of the elves (Skerrit of the centaurs being the friendliest), and he is always a respected guest at Titania's Seelie Court.

For himself, Rillifane is quiet, reflective, and enduring over aeons unchanged. He is the least 'flighty' of all elven gods, the least likely to act on a whim, often grave and self-absorbed.

Role-playing Notes: Rillifane rarely sends an avatar to the Prime Material plane, disliking direct action and preferring that his priests carry out his wishes. Rillifane's avatar appears only when major destruction of a wood-elf habitat is threatened. The appearance of such an avatar is heralded by sudden gusts of wind shaking leaves from the trees, a sign unmistakable to his priests.

Statistics: AL cg; WAL cg (wood elves); AoC woodlands, nature; SY oak tree.

Rillifane's Avatar (Ranger 12, Druid 16)

Rillifane's avatar appears as a green-skinned male elf clad in armor of living bark, armed with a great Greenwood longbow. He makes no sound as he moves, speaks very rarely, and fires his bow in silence. The avatar uses spells from the druidic, Sun, Thought, and Time spheres.

He can also use spells from the Elemental (Earth) school of wizard spells as priest spells of the same level.

Str 17	Dex 18	Con 19
Int 17	Wis 20	Cha 16
MV 18	SZ M (6')	MR 40%
AC -3	HD 17	HP 136
#AT 3/2	THAC0 8	Dmg by weapon +1

Special Att/Def: The avatar cannot be harmed by caused wounds, diseases, poisons, gas attacks, or energy drains. He may summon up to 200 HD of sylvan or natural woodland creatures to do his bidding each day. With a wave of his hand, the avatar can cast each of the following effects three times per day: charm person or mammal, fire quench, turn wood, wall of thorns, warp wood. At will, he may cast tree (oak) or employ transport via plants in woodlands, and speak with plants. Magic-use is at 16th level. The avatar's movements in woodlands are 99% likely to be absolutely silent.

The avatar usually carries a staff of the woodlands +2 and a simple quarterstaff +4 for melee purposes, but his most fearsome magical weapon is his longbow. This has triple normal range, and all arrows fired from it are treated as +4 magical weapons for purpose of attack

rolls and damage determination. Any creature struck by an arrow fired from this bow by the avatar must make a saving throw vs. spells; if this is failed, the creature is instantly slain. Otherwise, flight arrow damage is sustained. The avatar usually carries 1d3 other miscellaneous magical items of suitable kind (e.g., ring of elemental (earth) command, staff of swarming insects, wand of flame extinguishing, Quaal's feather token, etc.).

Duties of the priesthood

Rillifane's priests are druidic priests. Their duties include preserving woodlands, maintaining harmonious relationships with sylvan creatures, keeping watch over huntsmen and woodsmen within or close by their lands, and officiating at births, rites of passage, and other key events in wood-elf life (death rites are the province of the gods Sehanine or Labelas, however).

Requirements: AB Wis 15; AL cg; WP club, longbow, quarterstaff, sling, staff-sling; AR leather or magical elfin chain; SP as druids, also Sun, Time; Pw 1) gain one additional Plant sphere spell of each spell level usable; 3) move silently 5%/level in woodlands; 5) speak with plants; 7) wall of thorns; 11) changestaff; TU Turn at -1 level; LL 16; HD d8; Shamans no. Ω

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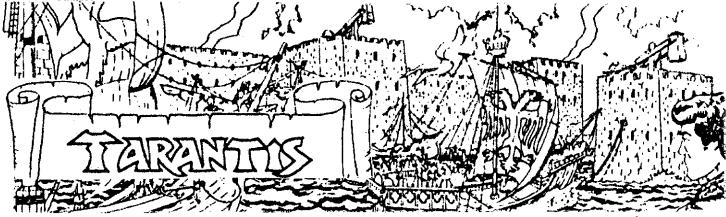
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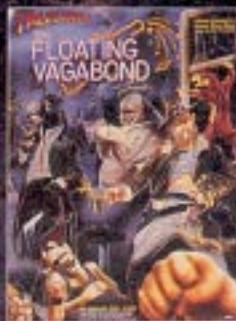
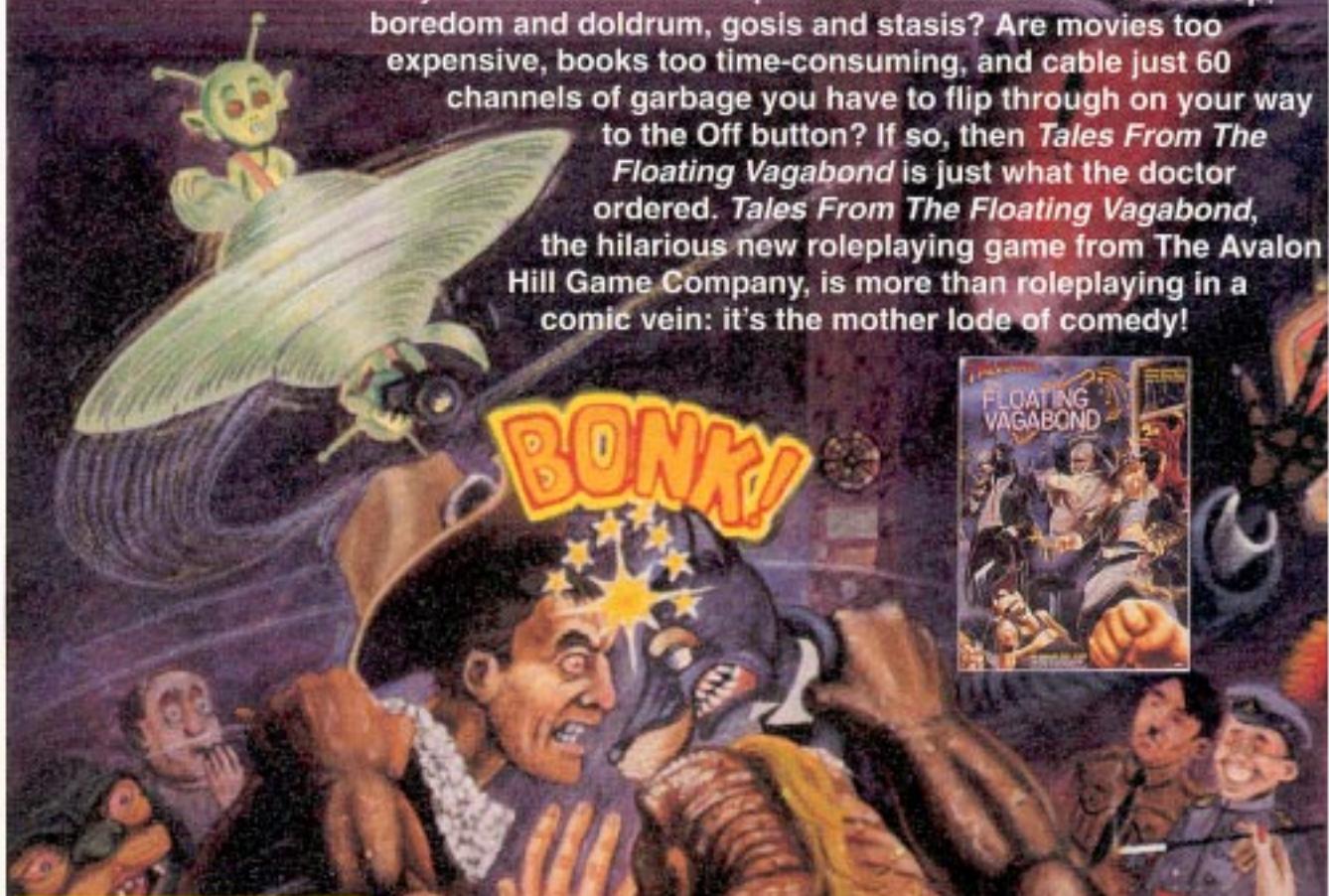
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Basic backpacks for every D&D® game adventurer

by Vince Garcia

Artwork by Joseph Pillsbury

One aspect of creating a new D&D® game character too often treated superficially is that of outfitting the hero with her basic equipment. A new hero making her first venture into the dangerous outlands needs more than arms, armor, and a week's food rations. The well-prepared adventurer takes along the "little things" that aid those of her chosen class out in the wild. The table here has an expanded list of equipment that players may wish to refer to when outfitting new characters, to speed play. Items in italics are new, not shown on the Adventuring Gear Table in the D&D game Rules Cyclopedia (page 69). Also presented are examples of basic adventuring kits for specific D&D game professions.



D&D Game Adventuring Gear Table

Item	Description/Notes	Cost/Enc.
Arrowhead	For use when manufacturing arrows in the wild	1sp/1
Backpack	Capacity of 400 cn (40 lbs.)	5gp/20
<i>Backpack, explorer's</i>	Capacity of 800 cn (80 lbs.)	10gp/80
<i>Backpack, waterproof</i>	Capacity of 300 cn (30 lbs.)	30gp/60
Bandages	Prevents further blood loss; enough for 1 character's wounds from 1 combat	1sp/1
Bedroll	Heavy blanket and small pillow	1gp/50 2sp/5*
Belt		
<i>Block and tackle</i>	Effectively reduces the weight of hauled object to 25% normal, but requires 4 times the amount of rope	5gp/100
Boots, riding/swash-topped		5gp/15*
Boots, plain		1gp/10*
<i>Bow strings, 10</i>		1 gp/1
<i>Candle</i>	Burns 1 hour; sheds light in 10' radius	1sp/1
<i>Chisel</i>	For chipping away stone	2gp/10
<i>Climbing hook, hand-held</i>	Supports up to 250 lbs.	5gp/40
Cloak, long		1gp/15*
Cloak, short		5gp/10*
Clothes, extravagant	Tunic & pants; blouse & skirt; robe; etc.	50+gp/30*
Clothes, fine	See above	2gp/20*
Clothes, normal	See above	5gp/20*
<i>Disguise kit</i>	Includes wigs, hair dye, makeup	20gp/50
<i>Drill, hand</i>	For drilling through wood or metal	10gp/30
Garlic	Useful against vampires	5sp/1
Grappling hook	Holds up to 500 lbs.	25gp/80
<i>Gloves, heavy</i>	Prevents rope burns, assures better grip on slippery items, protects against contact poisons and things that harm exposed skin (e.g., needle traps); impossible to pick pockets or remove traps when wearing these	5sp/10*
<i>Gloves, soft</i>	Protects against contact poisons and other things that harm exposed skin; useless against needle traps	1gp/5*
Hammer, utility	Does 1d3 damage if used as weapon	2gp/10
Hat		2sp/3
Holy symbol	At DM's discretion, may be needed to Turn undead	25gp/1
<i>Holy symbol, inexpensive</i>	Inflicts penalty of 3 to Turning roll	5gp/1
Holy water	Breakable glass vial	25gp/1
<i>Ink, vial of</i>	Enough to write 50 pages of simple text	1gp/20
Iron spike	One spike needed for each 5' of a sheer surface being climbed by a thief or mountaineer	1sp/5
<i>Journal, blank</i>	With fifty 6"x9" pages	20gp/30
<i>Knapsack</i>	Capacity of 250 cn (25 lbs.)	3gp/10
<i>Knife, utility</i>	Does 1d3 damage if used as weapon	1gp/5
Lantern	Burns 4 hours; 30' radius of illumination	10gp/30
<i>Lantern, bullseye</i>	Burns 4 hours; illuminates cone 100' long, 20' base	20gp/30
<i>Lasso, leather</i>		5gp/30
<i>Leather, bulk</i>	One square foot for miscellaneous use	1sp/5
<i>Lockpicks</i>	Optional portion of thieves' tool kit; does not permit trap removal	15gp/5
<i>Magnifying glass</i>	For studying fine details and fire-starting	3gp/5
<i>Map, explorers'</i>	Speculative map of unexplored territory	50gp/10
<i>Map, detailed</i>	Highly detailed map of explored territory	30gp/10
<i>Map, general</i>	General trail map of explored territory	10gp/10
Mirror, hand	Made of steel	5gp/5
<i>Musical instrument, stringed</i>	Lute, mandolin, etc.	20gp/100
<i>Musical instrument, wind</i>	Flute, recorder, etc.	5gp/30
Oil, ceramic flask	Does 2d6 damage or covers 10' square area and burns for 3 rounds	2gp/10
Oil, metal flask	Prevents accidental breakage; cannot be used as missile weapon	1gp/20
Papyrus	One 12"X12" leaf	1sp/1
Parchment	One 10"X10" leaf	1gp/5
Parka	For warmth in cold climates	5gp/40*
<i>Pot, cooking</i>	Two-quart capacity	1gp/50
Pouch, belt	Capacity 50 cn (5 lbs.)	5sp/2*
<i>Quill pen</i>	For writing	5sp/1
Quiver	Holds 20 arrows	1gp/5
<i>Quiver, back</i>	Holds 50 arrows; prevents wearing of pack of knapsack	5gp/20
<i>Quiver, belt</i>	Holds 10 crossbow quarrels	1gp/3
Rations, iron	Week's supply; stays fresh 2 months	15gp/70
Rations, standard	Week's supply; stays fresh 7 days	5gp/200

Rope, 50' length	Supports 750 lbs.; for each 10 lbs. above this, give 5% cumulative chance of breakage	
Sack, small	Capacity 200 cu (20 lbs.)	1gp/1
Sack, large	Capacity 600 cu (60 lbs.)	2gp/5
Salt, 1 lb.	For preserving meat or monster parts for future use; one pound of salt is needed for each 5 lbs. of organs being preserved	10gp/10
Scroll case, waterproof	Holds 1 map, 1 scroll, or 10 leaves of parchment	5gp/20
Sewing kit	For repair of cloth/leather	1gp/10
Shoes		5sp/8*
Spellbook, blank	24"x24"x6"; holds 24 spells	100gp/200
Spellbook cover	Waterproof	10gp/30
Stake, wooden		1sp/1
Tent, Z-man	6'x4'x4'; watertight	20gp/200
Tent, 4-man	6'x6'x5'; watertight	25gp/500
Thieves' tools	Needed for picking locks & removing traps	25gp/10
Tinder box		3gp/5
Torch	Burns 1 hour; sheds light in 30' radius	2sp/20
Twine, 100' ball of	Supports up to 30 lbs.; for each 10 lbs. above this, give 10% chance of breakage	2sp/10
Vial, empty glass	Holds 1 pint (enc. 20 when filled)	1gp/10
Water/wineskin	1-quart capacity (enc. 30 when filled)	1gp/5
Wax	For making impressions	3sp/10
Whistle	For signaling or bird calls	1sp/5
Wolfsbane	To ward off lycanthropes	10gp/1

* If this item is being worn, as opposed to being packed away as a spare, its encumbrance is considered to be 0.

Kits for new characters

New adventurers bring with them varied philosophies and backgrounds that naturally prompt a character to bring certain items most useful to his adventuring class as a whole. The monastery-trained cleric, for instance, is more likely to pack along bandages and holy water than a backwoods fighter who knows the practical value of a block and tackle. Several basic packs follow for quick outfitting, each listing cost and weight factors. Players naturally may add or delete equipment as they deem fit. Note that the weight of the pack itself and bedroll (in most cases) are not considered in the encumbrance contained by the pack.

Cleric

A cleric's purpose is to heal, protect, and represent the interests of her particular order. Her basic kit reflects these aspects of her profession.

Item	Cost/Enc.
Backpack	5gp/20
Bandages (10)	1gp/10
Bedroll (attached to pack)	1gp/50
Clothes, fine (priestly garments)	5gp/20
Garlic	5sp/1
Holy symbol, inexpensive	5gp/1
Holy water	25gp/1
	1 gp/20
Parchment (2 leaves)	2gp/10
Quill pen	1gp/5
Rations, standard (1 week)	5gp/200
Tinder box	3gp/5
Water/wineskin	1gp/5
Total	55.5gp/348

Fighter/Dwarf

Fighters and dwarves are perhaps the

most practical adventurers, wasting very little upon unnecessary items. The professional warrior has few true needs.

Item	Cost/Enc.
Backpack	5gp/20
Bandages (5)	5sp/5
Bedroll (attached to pack)	1gp/50
Oil	2sp/10
Pot, cooking	1gp/50
Rations, iron (2 weeks)	30gp/140
Rope, 50'	1gp/50
Sack, large (3)	6gp/15
Tinder box	3gp/5
Torches (5)	1gp/100
Water/wineskin	1gp/5
Total	51.5 gp/450

Thief

The thief's life is an often risky one. Incumbent upon those who rely on stealth and fleetness of foot is to take no more than necessity requires—for freedom of movement is of paramount importance!

Item	Cost/Enc.
Backpack	5gp/20
Bedroll (attached to pack)	1gp/50
Candles (3)	3sp/3
Climbing hook	5gp/40
Gloves, soft	1gp/5
Hammer, utility	2gp/10
Iron spikes (10)	1gp/50
Magnifying glass	3gp/5
Rations, iron (1 week)	15gp/75
Rope, 50'	1gp/50
Sack, large	2gp/5
Thieves' tools	25gp/10
Tinder box	3gp/5
Total	64.3gp/328

Halfling

Halflings also prefer traveling light, although the industrious little fellows

might pack a variety of items to cover a number of different contingencies.

Item	Cost/Enc.
Knapsack	3gp/10
Bedroll (in knapsack)	1gp/50
Candles (3)	3sp/3
Ink, vial of	1gp/20
Oil	2gp/10
Map, general	10gp/10
Mirror, hand	5gp/5
Parchment (2 leaves)	2gp/10
Quill pen	5sp/1
Magnifying glass	3gp/5
Rations, iron (1 week)	15gp/75
Sack, small (3)	3gp/3
Tinder box	3gp/5
Torch	2sp/20
Wineskin	1gp/5
Total	50gp/232

Elf/Mage

The needs of a spell-caster are many, and it is all too true that the tools of her trade take up much of her available space!

Item	Cost/Enc.
Backpack	5gp/20
Bedroll (attached to pack)	1gp/50
Ink	1gp/20
Magnifying glass	3gp/5
Mirror, hand	5gp/5
Parchment (3 leaves)	3gp/15
Quill Pen	5sp/1
Scroll case	5gp/20
Spellbook	100gp/200*
Rations, iron (1 week)	15gp/70
Scroll case	5gp/20
Torch	2sp/20
Tinder box	3gp/5
Vial, empty glass	1gp/10
Total	147.7 gp/461

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* This is presumed to be the book the character starts play with. If it is stored in other than the pack, its encumbrance is discounted from the total, leaving room for other gear.

Mystic

Austerity is a trademark of the mystic, and rare is the character who bears more than the most essential of items.

Item	Cost/Enc.
Knapsack	3gp/10
Bedroll (in knapsack)	1gp/50
Candle	1sp/1
Ink, vial of	1gp/20
Journal, blank	20gp/30
Quill pen	5sp/1
Rations, iron (1 week)	15gp/75
Tinder box	3gp/5
Total	43.6 gp/192

Item	Cost/Enc.
Backpack, explorer's	10gp/80
Arrowheads (20)	1gp/20
Block & tackle	5gp/100
Bedroll	1gp/50
Climbing hook	5gp/40
Hammer, utility	2gp/10
Iron spikes (10)	1gp/50
Knife, utility	1gp/5
Leather, bulk	1sp/5
Map, general	10gp/10
Parka	5gp/40
Rations, iron (1 week)	15gp/75
Rope, 50'	1gp/50
Tent (2-man)	20gp/200
Tinder box	3gp/5
Torches (2)	4sp/40
Twine, ball of	2sp/10
Water skin (full)	1gp/30
Whistle	1sp/5
Total	81.8 gp/325

Druid/Outdoorsman

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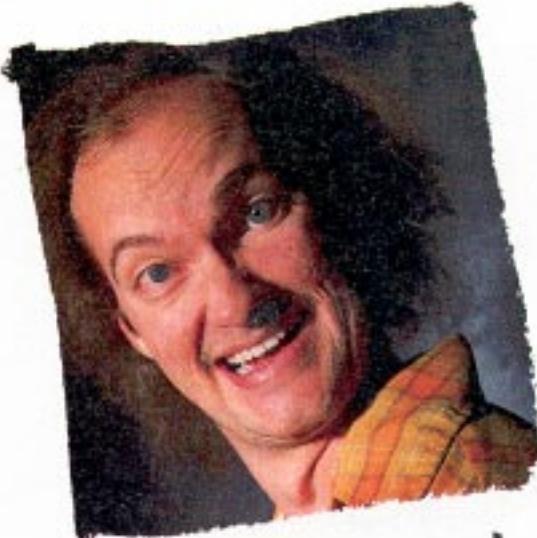
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An African Genesis

by Brady English

Over a thousand years ago, in what is now the rainforests of Nigeria, a civilization developed along the Niger and Ogun Rivers. These people built great cities like Ibadan and Ife, where thousands lived in complex societies. The Yorubas, for example, ruled large tracts of land on which they farmed tuberous crops, made iron tools and weapons, and crafted beautiful terra-cotta sculptures and pottery.

The true center of the Yoruban religion lay in its rulers. They called these men "Obas," and they were considered to be both man and god, much like the Pharaohs of Egypt of whom the Obas claimed to be the descendants. These Obas could call up armies of fanatic warriors from farmers and craftsmen (African people rarely had standing armies, but all males were trained in weapons and martial arts).

According to Yoruban myth, the original founder of the country was an Oba by the name of Oduduwan. His son, Oran

Miyan, who also founded the kingdom of Benin, was considered to be the father of African justice.

These myths also tell of a distant deity that originally created the heavens and the earth. They call this god Olurun, the owner of the sky. At first the world was marshy and watery, used as a playground for the gods. An evil goddess named Olokun ruled the entire earth. One day after Olurun had an argument with Olokun, he decided to create dry land and men. When this was finished, his plan would enable the men to rule the earth. He called his youngest son, Obatala, to construct the dry land portion of the earth. With the help of his older brother, Orunmilla, the god of divination, Obatala accomplished this. When Olurun heard that his earth was finished, he sent his minister, Agemo, to inspect it.

After two trips, Agemo gave his approval. Olurun then began building

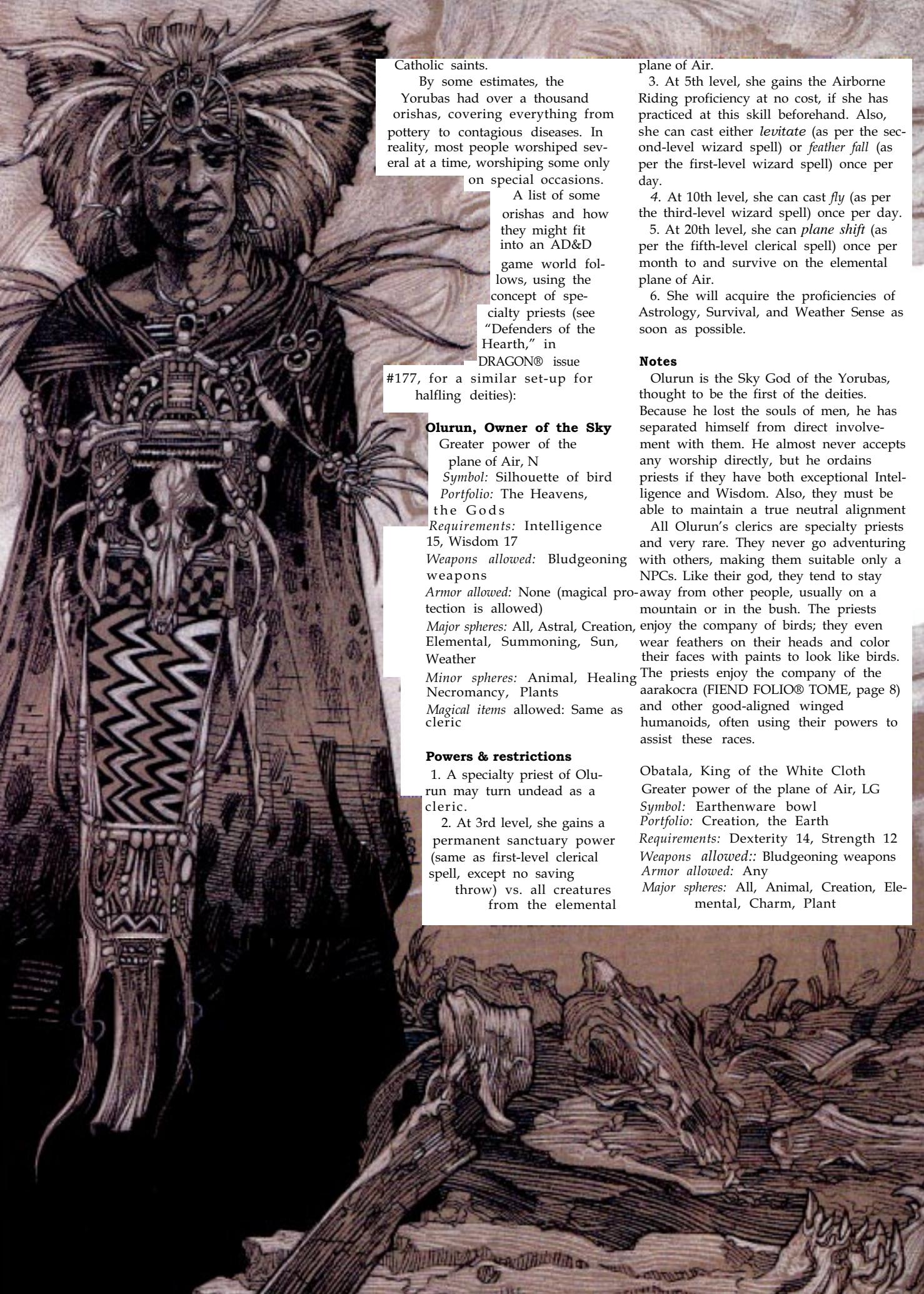
the spirits of men.

Near the land of the Yorubas lived the Ibo people, who believed in Ala, the earth goddess. According to them, Ala created people and looks after them after they died. The fertility of both plants and animals lies in her domain, much as is the case with the Egyptian god, Osiris.

The Jamaicans took the myths even further. Folklore from this Caribbean land says that the earth goddess took the souls of men from the god of the sky. She baked their bodies in her kiln and placed the spirits of men into them. This act of treachery, the Jamaicans claim, caused the split between man and the skygod. Almost all native African myths describe a division between man and the supreme god, which became the justification for so many intermediaries between the supreme god and man. Most of these orishas (gods) were real people who distinguished themselves in life,

much like modern





Catholic saints.

By some estimates, the Yorubas had over a thousand orishas, covering everything from pottery to contagious diseases. In reality, most people worshiped several at a time, worshiping some only on special occasions.

A list of some orishas and how they might fit into an AD&D game world follows, using the concept of specialty priests (see "Defenders of the Hearth," in

DRAGON® issue

#177, for a similar set-up for halfling deities):

Olurun, Owner of the Sky

Greater power of the plane of Air, N

Symbol: Silhouette of bird

Portfolio: The Heavens, the Gods

Requirements: Intelligence 15, Wisdom 17

Weapons allowed: Bludgeoning weapons

Armor allowed: None (magical protection is allowed)

Major spheres: All, Astral, Creation, Elemental, Summoning, Sun, Weather

Minor spheres: Animal, Healing, Necromancy, Plants

Magical items allowed: Same as cleric

Powers & restrictions

1. A specialty priest of Olurun may turn undead as a cleric.

2. At 3rd level, she gains a permanent sanctuary power (same as first-level clerical spell, except no saving throw) vs. all creatures from the elemental

plane of Air.

3. At 5th level, she gains the Airborne Riding proficiency at no cost, if she has practiced at this skill beforehand. Also, she can cast either *levitate* (as per the second-level wizard spell) or *feather fall* (as per the first-level wizard spell) once per day.

4. At 10th level, she can cast *fly* (as per the third-level wizard spell) once per day.

5. At 20th level, she can *plane shift* (as per the fifth-level clerical spell) once per month to and survive on the elemental plane of Air.

6. She will acquire the proficiencies of Astrology, Survival, and Weather Sense as soon as possible.

Notes

Olurun is the Sky God of the Yorubas, thought to be the first of the deities. Because he lost the souls of men, he has separated himself from direct involvement with them. He almost never accepts any worship directly, but he ordains priests if they have both exceptional Intelligence and Wisdom. Also, they must be able to maintain a true neutral alignment.

All Olurun's clerics are specialty priests and very rare. They never go adventuring with others, making them suitable only a NPCs. Like their god, they tend to stay away from other people, usually on a mountain or in the bush. The priests enjoy the company of birds; they even wear feathers on their heads and color their faces with paints to look like birds. The priests enjoy the company of the aarakocra (FIEND FOLIO® TOME, page 8) and other good-aligned winged humanoids, often using their powers to assist these races.

Obatala, King of the White Cloth

Greater power of the plane of Air, LG

Symbol: Earthenware bowl

Portfolio: Creation, the Earth

Requirements: Dexterity 14, Strength 12

Weapons allowed: Bludgeoning weapons

Armor allowed: Any

Major spheres: All, Animal, Creation, Elemental, Charm, Plant

Minor spheres: Guardian, Protection, Healing, Summoning
Magical items allowed: Same as cleric.

Powers & restrictions

1. A specialty priest can turn undead, just as a normal cleric can.
2. He must have the Pottery and Stonemasonry proficiencies.
3. He gains a +4 on all saves vs. earth-based attacks (e.g., *flesh to stone, statue*, etc.)
4. He can cast earth-related spells at twice their normal areas of effect and duration.
5. At 10th level, he can cast *conjure earth elemental* (as per the seventh-level clerical spell) once per day.

Notes

Obatala is the Yoruban god of earth, creation, and creativity. He is given the credit for laying out the plan for the world. It was this that created the enmity between his followers and those of the sea goddess, Olokun.

Priests of Obatala dress in earth colors and prefer a sacred bundle (as per the AD&D 2nd Edition game *Legends & Lore*, page 16) over any other form of protection. Specialty priests take pride in their terra-cotta figurines and earthenware. These priests maintain the kilns used in pottery making, so they are important to the local economies. Priests are quite often wealthy, therefore, and are held in a position of honor in most villages. Add +4 to any priest encounter reaction roll in any village or town where priests of Obatala run a kiln.

Orunmilla, She Who Knows Who Will Prosper

Greater power of the plane of Air, NG

Symbol: Engraved gold medallion

Portfolio: Divination, Art, Knowledge,

Diplomacy

Requirements: Intelligence 10, Wisdom 14

Armor allowed: None

Weapons allowed: Staff, jo stick, bo stick, clubs, sling staffs, slings, stones, whips, and unarmed combat

Major spheres: All, Astral, Charm, Creation, Divination, Protection, Plants

Minor spheres: Combat, Guardian, Sun

Magical items allowed: All clerical and -divinatory

Powers & restrictions

1. A specialty priest cannot turn undead, as can a normal cleric.
2. She can cast all divination-type wizard spells as clerical spells of equivalent level, with the exception of *ESP* (see #3), subject to the usual restrictions on clerical spell-casting.
3. She can cast *ESP* (as per the second-level wizard spell) on any number of creatures per day using palm nuts as a material component. Only one spell such

can be cast on the same creature on the same day.

4. She gains Etiquette, Herbalism, Ancient Language, and Ancient History proficiencies automatically. Ancient History and Ancient Language apply only to the area where the priest was born.

Notes

Orunmilla is the god of divinations and spirits. All specialty priests are extremely sensitive to people's motivations and feelings. About 10% of the total clergy are specialty priests and are used by heads of state to weed out possible enemies from those seeking audiences.

Specialty priests often wear extravagant gold jewelry inlaid with colorful and precious gem stones. Fruits like dates and palm nuts are woven into the braids of their hair. They wear white robes draped over one shoulder.

Specialty priests can read, write, and remember all things they have written. They are generally considered the court historians because of these abilities. Any knowledge normally gained by *legend lore* (as per the sixth-level wizard spell) about the specialty priests' people will be known to the priest.

Olokun, Mistress of the Sea

Greater power on the Prime Material plane, NE

Symbol: Coral necklace

Portfolio: Sea, river, marshes

Requirements: Constitution 16, Strength 10

Weapons allowed: Trident, harpoon, and bludgeoning weapons

Armor allowed: Leather and shield

Major spheres: All, Animals, Combat, Creation, Elemental, Plants, Weather, Guardian

Minor spheres: Charm, Healing, Divination, Protection

Magical items allowed: Same as cleric

Powers & restrictions

1. A specialty priest can turn undead like a normal priest, and he can turn undead created from the bodies of those who died at sea or who are sea- or marsh-related at two levels above his present clerical level.

2. Specialty priests and clerics of this cult must gain Swimming, Seamanship, and Navigation proficiencies as quickly as possible.

3. A specialty priest cannot cast fire-based spells. However, he can cast one extra water-based clerical spell per spell level each day.

4. He gains the proficiency of Water-Based Biding (riding a mount, like a seahorse or dolphin, while swimming on the surface or underwater) automatically at 1st level, even if he has never trained for this skill.

5. At the 3rd level, he can cast *water breathing* (as per the third-level wizard

spell) once per day.

6. At the 10th level, he can breathe underwater indefinitely.

Notes

Olokun is the very vain and selfish Yoruban goddess of the sea. Her specialty priests' and clerics' ceremonial dress are bright colors and creatively dyed clothes with coral jewelry and crowns made of gold and silver.

Churches for this deity would be found in and around waterways and seaports. Many of her followers may be involved in shipbuilding or work along the docks. Their sea-loving nature coupled with their hatred of mankind makes them perfect for supervising the slave trade. Because of this goddess's hatred for the creation of dry land, the main victims of slavery are worshipers of Obatala, Orunmilla, and Ala.

In addition to their involvement in the slave trade, worshipers of Olokun practice human sacrifice. They involve themselves in senseless warfare with their neighboring tribes. They take pride in looting and ransacking the countryside and bringing their plunder to the sea.

All the followers of Olokun are fanatical. Therefore, their churches spring up only where Olokun is worshiped exclusively. Traveling clerics and specialty priests may worship and make sacrifices near any seaport or waterway, but traveling clerics and specialty priests may find it difficult to find believers like themselves. The faith is outlawed almost everywhere outside its own domain. Followers of this faith are subject to the harshest of penalties. As might be guessed, the clerics of this cult work best as NPCs and foes, not as player characters.

Ala, the Earth Goddess

Greater power of Prime Material plane, N

Symbol: Small animal skin

Portfolio: Earth, Fertility, Love, and Death

Requirements: Charisma 15; Wisdom and Constitution 12

Weapons allowed: Footman pick, Horseman pick, sickle, awl, club staff, staff sling, slings, darts, scimitar

Armor allowed: Only natural armor (leather, hide, etc.) and wooden shield

Major spheres: All animal, elemental, healing, plant, weather, necromancy

Minor spheres: Divination

Magical items allowed: Same as cleric

Powers & restrictions

1. A specialty priest can turn undead as if she were two levels higher than a normal cleric.

2. She gains a +4 to her Charisma roll when talking about romance with someone of the same species but opposite sex.

3. At 3rd level, she can identify plants, animals, pure water, and monsters.

4. She can cast any necromantic wizard spells as clerical spells of the same level,

subject to the usual restrictions on clerical spell-casting per day.

5. At 5th level, she can collect the components to create a sacred bundle. She can also tell others what items they need to create a sacred bundle, then cast the proper spells to empower it. (See the AD&D 2nd Edition *Legend & Lore*, page 16.)

6. At 7th level, she *can shape change* once per day, exactly as a druid of 7th level.

Notes

Ala is the Ibo earth goddess. She is the symbol of the African view that life, death, fertility, and decay are all related; none any better or worse than the other, in its place.

Ala's priests are split evenly between clerics and specialty priests. Clerics can be men or women, and all have a healthy respect for life and death. They hold the view that life is the perpetuation of the strong. Ala's specialty priests are almost all women. They are the leaders of the church and must, therefore, maintain a neutral alignment.

All of Ala's priests dress in animal skins and animal masks during ceremonies like the high holy days of planting, harvesting, etc. During other times, they tend to wear hot weather clothing (when the weather permits) or light leather or cloth armor.

Ala is worshiped mainly in the rich delta lands where farming is important. Also, her ways are followed in and near the rain forest, where protection from unforeseen death is required.

Eshu, God of Messengers and Chance

Lesser power of the plane of Air, CN

Symbol: Gold coin

Portfolio: Chance, Trickery, Messengers, and Travelers

Requirements: Dexterity 15, Wisdom 12

Weapons allowed: Sap, club (preferred) and other bludgeoning weapons

Armor allowed: Scale mail or less

Major spheres: All, Astral, Charm, Combat, Guardian, Healing, Necromancy, Protection

Minor spheres: Divination, Elemental

Magical items allowed: Same as cleric

Powers & restrictions

1. A specialty priest cannot turn undead, though a normal cleric turns undead normally.

2. A specialty priest can obtain the rogue's proficiencies of Set Snares, Juggling, Disguise, and Forgery if he wishes, subject to the usual rules for acquiring new proficiencies.

3. He can affect another person's luck once per day. If the character's player designates that this happens before someone else makes a saving-throw, attack, or similar die roll, he can change the roll by 1 point for every three levels the specialty priest possesses (+1 at 1st level, +2 at 4th

level, +3 at 7th level, etc.). This does not affect encounter reactions, loyalty rolls, or proficiency checks. Luck can either increase or decrease the roll, but this must also be designated before the roll.

4. At 3rd level, he can send a telepathic message as many miles as the priest has levels. The message must be to one person only and can be no more than 12 words long. It cannot be interrupted or stopped before the message is complete, or the whole message is lost. For every three levels after the 3rd level, the specialty priest gains another message that he can send (two at 6th level, three at 9th level, etc.). The person receiving the message can mentally "see" the priest and hear him, but is unable to respond to the message.

Notes

Eshu is the Yoruban god of messengers and chance. Therefore, specialty priests must have both Reading/Writing and Astrology as initial proficiencies.

Specialty priests, clerics, and lay people of this cult are self-serving and greedy. They never accept a mission for purely altruistic reasons. If they do anything out of kindness, they must charge for it (even if it is for only one copper piece) or risk excommunication from the faith. If they violate this, they receive no new spells until they have atoned through another priest of Eshu (as per the fifth-level cleric spell, *atonement*).

Shango, Master of Storms

Greater power of the plane of Air, CE

Symbol: Image of lightning bolt

Portfolio: Power, Storms

Requirements: Wisdom 13, Intelligence 13

Weapons allowed: Double-bladed battle-axe and bludgeoning weapons

Armor allowed: All

Major spheres: All, Combat, Creation, Elemental, Guardian, Healing, Necromancy, Weather

Minor spheres: Protection, Divination

Magical items allowed: Same as cleric

Powers & restrictions

1. A specialty priest of Shango can turn undead, as does a normal cleric.

2. At 3rd level, he can cast *lightning bolt* (as per the third-level wizard spell) once per day.

3. At 6th level, he *can cast vampiric touch* (as per the third-level wizard spell) once per day for every three levels he possesses above the 3rd level.

4. At 10th level, he can cast *control undead* (as per the seventh-level wizard spell) once per week.

5. At 15th level, he can cast *energy drain* (as per the ninth-level wizard spell) once per week.

Notes

Shango was a power-mad tyrant in life, who killed himself after his critics rallied

against him. After his death, he was made into the god of the storms. He still hungers for power, and so do his priests. The prime motivation of his followers is personal power and power for the faith (usually in that order). This power is obtained by obedience caused by fear. Because of this, specialty priests tend toward the reversed versions of healing and necromantic spells (e.g., *cause light wounds*, *poison*, *harm*, *cause blindness or deafness*, *cause disease*, *destruction*, etc.) in order to create fear.

Shango's wives — Oya, the goddess of the Niger River, and Oshun, the goddess of the Oshun river — also serve Shango. Their specialty priests have powers identical to Shango's, but only when the goddesses' priests stay within 50 miles of the Oshun or Niger Rivers, respectively. Otherwise, they are normal clerics.

Other deities

In precolonial Nigeria, there were many other deities. The Yorubas alone had over a thousand orishas (deities) on record. A list of some of the more important gods follows:

Ogun: The god of iron, warriors, hunters, and metalsmiths (LN)

Sonponno: The goddess of smallpox and related diseases (NE)

Orisha-Oka: The god of agriculture (NG)

Olu-Igbo: The owner of the bush, the god of the jungle (N)

Osanyin: The god of curative medicine (NG)

Oduduwan: The ancestral father, the first man (LG)

Oran Miyan: The son of Oduduwan, the god of justice and righteous indignation (LG)

Yemoja: The goddess of the Ogun River, the wife of Ogun (N)

These West Africans also worshiped animal spirits, such as:

Leopard: The god of lycanthropes, vampires, and witches

Elephant: The god of strength (LG)

Hare: The god of cunning, deceit, and thieves (CN)

Chameleon: The minister of the gods, god of patience and change (LN)

These animal deities had no clerics or churches of their own, although such could be developed for them. People of other faiths may call on the animal gods when assistance in their specific spheres of influence is needed, but whether or not the gods honor such requests and what, if anything, they will do about it, is up to the Dungeon Master.

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In his article, "Audible Glamour—Not Clamor" (DRAGON issue #184), Mike Shema advises Dungeon Masters to give players "approximate" room and corridor dimensions when their characters don't take time to make accurate measurements. In doing so, he echoes various other sources of DM's advice.

I disagree with this. Characters know everything they can see, hear, smell, taste, and feel, but players know only what the DM tells them. A good DM needs to give players concise and accurate information as to what their characters sense, and putting things in terms of hard and accurate numbers is the best way of doing so. If this gives the players "too much" information, then so be it.

When it comes to mapping, my solution is to always give exact room dimensions even when characters hurry through, but to make the players draw their maps freehand, without graph paper or rulers. This leaves players with an appropriate amount of information without the DM having to lie or withhold data. It also results in player maps that actually look like what an adventurer might draw. (When was the last time you saw an ancient treasure map scribed on graph paper?) Such "realistic" maps enrich the campaign, making it less of an abstract game and more of an adventure.

Erol K. Bayburt
Lindenhurst IL

I am writing this in response to the comments of Maurice Sprague and Brad Allison about psionics in DRAGON issue #184. I think both letters have exaggerated and in some cases misinterpreted the power of psionicists.

First, it is impossible for a 2nd-level psionicist to have the Disintegrate science. Disintegrate has Telekinesis as a prerequisite, and a 2nd-level psionicist has access to only one science, hence he can get Disintegrate only at 3rd level or higher. Prerequisites exist to force psionicists into avenues of advancement that they shouldn't be able to bypass.

The writer also mentions that psionicists do

not have to deal with saving throws. This is not quite true. Many of the more useful powers (e.g., Detonate, Disintegrate, Probe, Mindwipe, Domination, and Psionic Blast) require saving throws. I do believe that many other powers should be limited by including a saving throw; Invincible Foes is a power that quickly comes to mind.

I think the idea of psionic resistance is not out of line. Some creatures, such as undead, are immune to mind-control magic and should not be affected by Telepathic powers. Since most of the volumes of the *Monstrous Compendium* were made before psionics were added to the game, DMs would have to rule on psionic effects on a creature-by-creature basis.

The claim that a psionicist rarely misses a power check is clearly absurd. Most powers subtract 2-4 points from a psionicist's ability score for a power check. Even with maximum ability scores, he will have about a 75% chance to use a power, compared to a 100% chance for a wizard or cleric (with a high Wisdom). If you drop a poor psionicist's scores by four, he will have about a 55% chance to use a power—not very dependable, if you ask me. Psionicists also have to deal with rolling a 20. A result like this can cause problems for a psionicist, though this is balanced by being able to roll a power score exactly and use that power to greater advantage.

When a psionicist uses a power, I treat him as if he were a mage casting a spell. This is fair and in keeping with the traditions of game balance. A psionicist has the ability to wear some armors that mages cannot. His weapon selection is a bit more extensive, especially with the addition of short bow and light crossbow. I like the idea of a psionicist maintaining only one power at a time. This would reduce the power of a psionicist in a reasonable way.

I find it hard to believe that a 16th-level paladin could have killed two of his friends with Control Body. Though the full details of the situation were not disclosed, it seems stupid that the paladin's two friends stood around and took the abuse. They could have retreated and tried killing the evil psionicist with missiles. The maximum power score for the Control Body discipline is 16 (for someone with an 18 Constitution). A paladin, or any fighter type, should be able to match the psionicist quite well with a high Strength score. I would also rule that a paladin's saving-throw bonus would be applicable in this case since he is being forced to do an evil act. In any case, a 1st-level mage could conceivably do the same with his trusty *charm person* spell.

Another hindrance for psionicists is their reputation among NPCs, especially ignorant peo-

lants. Most works of fiction have psionically endowed individuals running for their lives from crazed mobs. This view of psionicists can cause many interesting role-playing situations as well as a nice limitation to the powers of a psionicist PC. Displaying his powers openly could stir fear and hatred from onlookers, and evil NPCs would just love to pin their deeds on the convenient scapegoat.

With a few minor changes, the psionicist is a nice addition to many AD&D game campaigns. A psionicist nemesis for the PCs could bring new life back into a sagging campaign, while a psionicist PC is a great addition to an adventuring party. Psionics does not replace magic; it complements it. Each has its strengths and weaknesses.

Mark C. Francisco
Fonda NY

I wish to respond to Mr. Gilmore's letter (DRAGON issue #178, page 100). He stated that psionics has the potential to unbalance a campaign if used to full potential. My response is: So what? That statement is true of the abilities of any of the "core" classes in the *Players Handbook*. As the psionicist is a relatively difficult class to run, I doubt that the problem would arise.

First of all, while correct about the ranges of many of the powers stated, Mr. Gilmore neglected to see their requirements: Contact. This is where his argument develops holes. He states that a person need not be on the same planet as the victim. Wrong. The *Complete Psionics Handbook* (CPH) states that the maximum range over which a person may be Contacted is 10,000 miles.

Once the person is Contacted, though, the range at which a power may be maintained is "effectively infinite." The exceptions are when: 1) the psionicist runs out of PSPs, 2) the psionicist is forced from the victim's mind, and 3) the victim passes beyond a crystal sphere. Also, nonpsionicists may resist the intrusion, which makes it tougher for the psionicist.

Also, range does present a problem. There are penalties to the score required to Contact a being depending on how far away the being is. There are also modifiers for Contacting nonhuman minds. Finally, it is stated (CPH, page 81, first paragraph) that a psionicist cannot Contact a subject whom he knows nothing about. In other words, he can't use this power to scan around and "see what's out there." He must either have his subject in sight or know specifically who or what he is looking for.

Furthermore, mages and clerics have spells that have infinite range or duration. Many of these require only that the spell be cast. The

spell-caster does not need to maintain them. He is then free to study or pray to recover his spells, while a psionicist who is performing a psionic function may not recover PSPs.

Finally, most spells may be cast without risk of detrimental effects to the caster, except in certain cases (e.g., wild mages), whereas the psionicist runs the risk of a "mistake" with his power or, worse yet, not having an effect occur at all. This makes for a very nervous time in combat.

Example #1: Geran Firemind (5th-level psionicist with 20 hp) is in the thick of battle. Seeking to gain an edge, he employs his Adrenalin Control power. He readies himself and attempts the power (player rolls 1d20). But something has gone horribly wrong (player rolled a 20!); his body is racked with pain and he loses consciousness (failed save, suffered loss of 50% of current hit points, and passed out for 1d8 hours). He's about to become lunch for some ravenous troll.

However, Conalis the Mage cowers in the rear of the party and casts *fireball*, incinerating numerous trolls (and, if he's not careful, allies).

Example #2: Geran Firemind (luckily rescued after his last fiasco and partially recovered) decides to do something nice for the mage and attempts to use Cell Adjustment on some of the mage's scrapes and singes. Again, the poor man experiences agony and collapses (player rolled a 20 again, and the character lost his last 10 hp), leaving his player wondering, "Where were these 20s when I was rolling to hit?"

Meanwhile, Melville the Megaholy heals the entire party, uses *raise dead* on his fallen companions, and brightens everyone's day. And look, Ma—no side effects!

Another problem is that while psionicists have a wide selection of powers available even at low levels, they are limited in numerous ways. If a psionicist has access to only the Telepathic disciplines, he is of little use in enhancing combat skills, healing other party members, helping get to a remote location, etc. So he can read a mind or two—big deal! So he can dominate a demon. No demons in this neck of the woods! At most, psionicists receive 40 semi-reliable powers, if they don't "specialize" in a power.

Wizards have scores of spells from which to choose (310 in the *Player's Handbook* alone) and can choose from many highly potent effects. Why deport a demon to the nearest lower plane when you can blow him up? Priests (especially the "generic cleric") are even worse, as they have access to most or all of the 174 spells listed, and can choose from among many effects at a given moment. Psionicists have energy conservation, but spell-casters have variety and flexibility.

As to Mr. Gilmore's Psychic Drain example, maybe—if the psionicist has Contacted (there's that darn Contact again) *all* of the victims, if the psionicist has the other powers mentioned and required (ESP and Telepathy), if he has enough PSPs to initiate all of these actions, if there are only six members in the intended party of victims, if the victims sleep and do not take watch over each other, if the victims are not awakened (e.g., by an inept thief, innkeeper checking up on his guests, etc.), if the malicious little psionic rotter makes his power check (he could fail several times or could conceivably reroll a few power scores and drain them completely with no ill effects to the party mem-

bers), and if he can get into each of the party's rooms unnoticed.

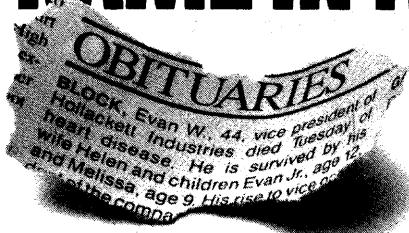
If a few of these events occur (power scores rolled, more than six party members present) or fail to occur (victims don't sleep, psionicist unable to get in rooms for any reason) the lousy so-and-so could find that brain he prizes so highly splattered all over someone's mace. Remember, the PSPs he steals cannot be saved or conserved, except to replenish the psionicist's reserves, which are most likely nonexistent at that point. He needs to find some way of using the PSPs as fast as they come in. Thus, Psychic Drain is not really an efficient tool for weakening opponents.

Mr. Gilmore suggests having a monster with magic resistance have an equal "psionics resistance." Get serious! I mean, some of these creatures haven't got the willpower to make a light bulb light up, let alone resist a full-scale psionic invasion! That's why TSR has put out psionic tables on some creatures (DARK SUN™ boxed set; CPH, pages 114-124).

But, if you are a DM who really wants to give some of these monsters a chance, give selected monsters (those you have reason to believe will warrant it) a 1d4% per HD psionic resistance. Let those with Intelligence 12 or higher have a roll to gain a wild talent. I believe I am being generous in assigning a chance to have a wild talent of 5% +2% per point of Intelligence over 12. And give a 5% +1% per four points of Intelligence over 12 to be a practicing psionicist.

Charles E. Borner
Darien IL
Ω

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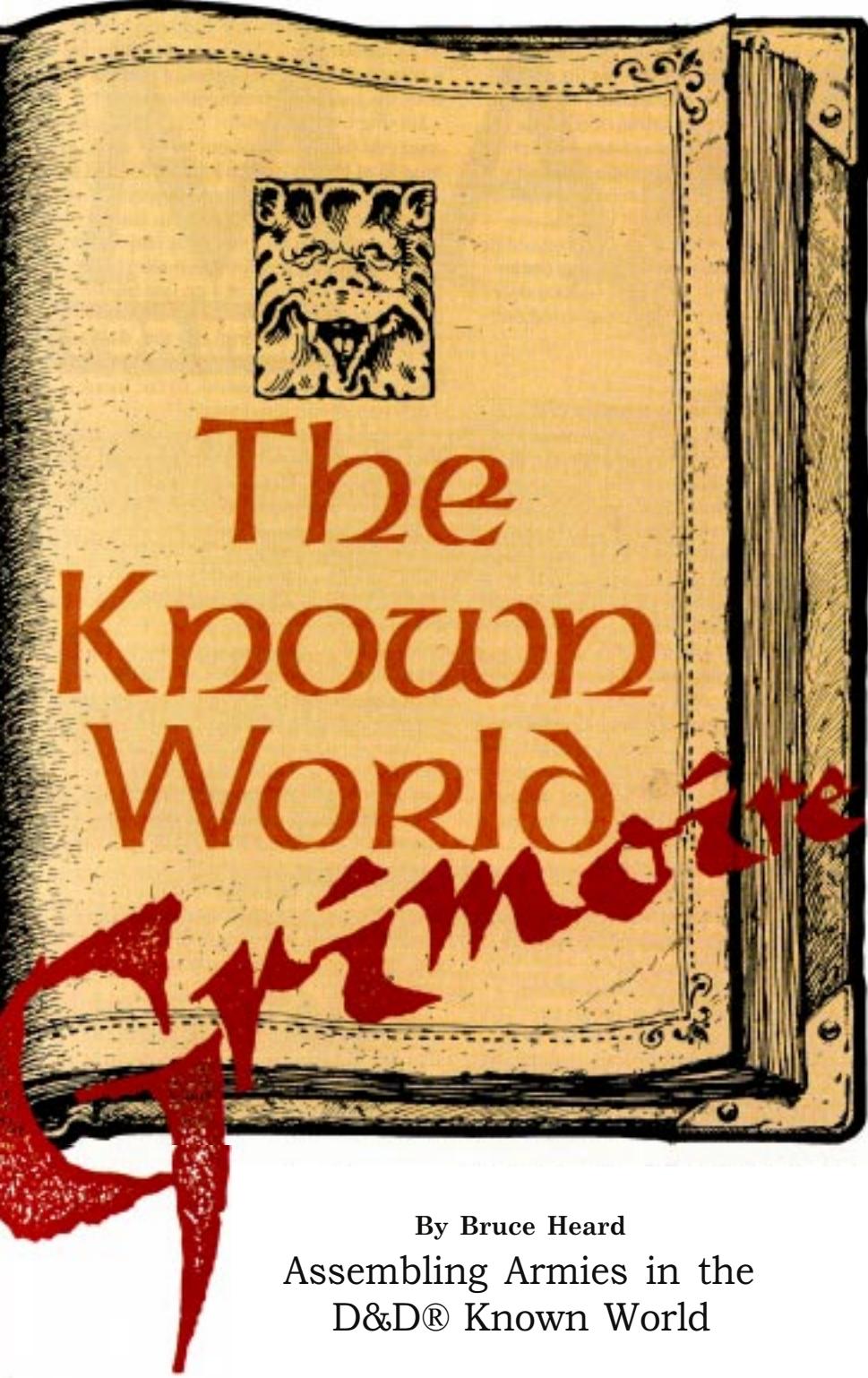
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By Bruce Heard
Assembling Armies in the
D&D® Known World

This regular feature offers suggestions to questions on the D&D® game, its worlds and its products, occasional articles, or "first glance" reviews of D&D game products. The reader is welcome to send questions, suggestions, or criticisms on the game or the material published here. We can't promise all letters will be addressed in this column, but they all will get our attention.

The past "Grimoires" focused on dominion economics. The topic this month,

though, is armies and warfare—the true *raison d'être* of medieval nobility! Here are military and role-playing issues to watch for when ruling a dominion. Ready? *En garde!*

Military criteria

A fundamental difference separates the military backgrounds of the Known World and the Savage Coast. The former relates more to real-world Renaissance Europe (*sans* gunpowder), in that its kingdoms have permanent national armies of pro-

fessional soldiers, while the majority of common civilians often remains unarmed. The Savage Coast has more of a medieval flavor, with feudal armies centered around dominion rulers and their lieges, while weapons remain fairly common in all the layers of society. A monarch's standing army in medieval times is much more likely to be a patchwork of vassals' troop contingents, mercenaries, and royal guards than an army with a strong national identity.

In an early feudal setting, monarchs distributed land from their royal demesnes to key supporters (like dukes), in exchange for their loyalty, services, taxes, and military support. The monarchs owned all the land, their supporters being mere temporary tenants of the fiefs entrusted to them. The land could consist of small pieces scattered in different regions. These tenants then sub-let part of their fiefs to lesser followers (counts, barons, etc.). Simple knights and sergeants were at the bottom of this hierarchy. The knights usually had a manor and some surrounding lands. The sergeants were those of lesser status who were given smaller estates to administrate. Knights, sergeants (or thanes), and demesne lords were required to provide troops to their lieges, who in turn added their own and sent them to their suzerains, and so forth all the way back up the feudal ladder.

In times of war, a ruler could order peasants and freemen living on his lands to arms under his banner. Likewise, lieges required their vassals to send troops and leaders. This was a feudal obligation that did not require payment. This system historically yielded somewhat lackadaisical results. The number of troops that could be levied, their nature, and the time frame involved in mobilizing them were often unpredictable. Most troops, especially peasants, expected to return to their lands within 40 days of being called, precluding long-lasting wars. Up to two-thirds of summoned troops often did not show up at all, sometimes sending money instead (*scutage tax*), enabling the liege to hire mercenaries in their place. All this made feudal warfare impractical. In the D&D game, the setting was modified to reflect the later medieval era (one must pay for all troops, for example) to simplify and balance the game.

Overhead

Before recruiting troops, it is necessary to figure out how much money a ruler may spend. Of all the income a dominion makes, an increasingly larger part should be devoted to the upkeep of the dominion and the ruler's retainers and servants. Whatever the ruler's overhead doesn't cover, donations from landed gentry, townships, or the theocracy will.

One could spend a great deal of time researching all the costs involved (see

"The Voyage of the Princess Ark," DRAGON® issue #188 on the salaries of stronghold retainers and military) and creating a morass of accounting details, but it would be simpler to give a general number, then let the players "play" with the leftovers. These "leftovers" include military costs and special tasks (building or repairing of castles, ships, roads, etc.), or it can be saved for harder times. (Note that investing funds with the intent of making a profit was generally frowned upon in medieval times, but not so in the Renaissance.)

The solution to determining a ruler's available monthly money supply consists in finding out how much total tax income is available. Then, subtract the liege's 20% salt tax and the 10% tithe for the clerical establishment to find the *net income*. Finally, subtract the dominion's *overhead* from that net income, as given in the Overhead Chart, to find how much available money that dominion can count on each month.

Dominion/Kingdom Cost Overhead

Net monthly income	Budget share
up to 500 gp	35%
up to 750 gp	40%
up to 1,000 gp	45%
up to 2,000 gp	50%
up to 5,000 gp	55%
up to 15,000 gp	60%
up to 50,000 gp	65%
Up to 150,000 gp	70%
up to 500,000 gp	75%
Over 500,000 gp	80%

Example: If a ruler controls a dominion that generates the equivalent of 10,000 gp a month in total tax income, 3,000 gp go toward the tithe and salt tax, then a minimum of 4,200 gp (60% of the net 7,000) go toward the upkeep of the stronghold and its retainers. The remainder, 2,800 gp is the available cash the ruler gets to "play" with every month.

The treasury

Should it become necessary to find out how much of the overhead goes toward retainers vs. materials, assume that 60% of the overhead is budgeted for salaries. The rest is spent on food and general daily upkeep. This budget determines who can be hired for each job in the stronghold and at what price. Daily upkeep does not cover special occasions like visits from nobles, festivals, jousts, and other unusual events. Money for these comes from the ruler's available cash. So, it is wise to save some gold every month. A dominion's treasury may also become very handy in any case, especially in the event of unexpected wars—several months-worth of net income might not be a bad idea if one can afford it.

Bankruptcy: Unfavorable historical

events (changes in population, hostilities, etc.) cause income to drop, but the overhead does not. The actual cost (in gp) to run a dominion or a kingdom remains at its highest point, regardless of ensuing income variations. Presumably, one could dismiss some of the dominion retainers for lack of funds, but material upkeep cannot be reduced without causing progressive deterioration of the stronghold or palace, as well as other structures under the ruler's control. Trying to reduce overhead becomes, in part, a role-playing consideration.

Military costs

See the "Voyage of the Princess Ark" column in DRAGON issue #188 for salaries of stronghold retainers and military troops. Otherwise, check the chart on page 133 of the Rules *Cyclopedia*. To simplify the problem of figuring what each military commander gets paid, simply add 25% to the overall cost of troops. This assumes that approximately one of every ten troops is a leader making twice the troops' base pay, and one of every 100 troops is a commander making 10 times the troops' base pay.

Native troops generally get half the mercenary rates, but the dominion ruler must equip and train them in a Renaissance-style setting. In a medieval setting, native soldiers usually owned their own equipment. The problem is that the more demanding a ruler is about his troops' equipment, the harder it becomes to find new troops among the native population who can afford the required equipment (see later).

The cost of equipment (arms, armor, mounts, chariots, war machines, etc.) could be lower, at the DM's option, than the inflated prices adventurers usually pay (three-quarters for a dominion whose population is mostly borderland, one-half if mostly rural, or one-quarter if a city exists within the dominion). This should require ordering at least 100 of the same items, or purchases of at least 2,000 gp of the same items, whichever is lowest.

Recruitment

Should you decide to ignore the feudal way of acquiring troops (40 days free service from the common citizenry, then everyone goes home), troops must then be levied directly from the population and paid on a monthly basis.

Once the setup of a dominion is completed, the ruler should decide which layer of the population military recruitment will primarily target (all layers of population averaged out, or perhaps just borderland farmers, forest elves, or only the town of such-and-such, etc.). The appropriate groups of population are then shifted to the military. This obviously will have an impact on population and farming, and on local economies (especially

when many soldiers are suddenly needed in an all-out war). This is another way for a ruler to have some degree of control over the balance of population.

Levying troops: Assume that light footmen can be levied without too trouble, as long as at least a month's salary is paid as a recruitment bonus. Figure up to 10% of the entire civilian population in the dominion could be levied this way, as long as the ruler can pay for them all. This is based upon payment of 1 gp per month per native footman. For more expensive troops and officers, drop the 10% base levy by 1% for every extra gp of pay. So, finding 20-gp heavy cavalry would, so far, incur a -19% penalty on levy rates!

Administrative ability: However, the base levy increases with the dominion's administrative ability. This could be based upon the ruler's overhead—supposedly, the higher the overhead, the greater the administrative ability. In support of this, each 5% increment spent above the bottom-line 35% overhead (the lowest percentage in the *Overhead chart*) increases the dominion's base levy by 2%. Here's a short-cut: Subtract 35 from the overhead, divide the result by 2%, and then add 10 to find the adjusted levy rate.

Example: The dominion of Mooria has an overhead of 55% which yields a base levy of 18% ($55-35=20$; $20/2.5=8$; $8+10=18$). If the ruler decided to deliberately spend 60% of the net income instead, the base levy would then be 20%. Mooria could thus levy up to 20% of its civilian population as light infantry. The following month, it could levy a maximum of 1% ($20-19=1$) of its civilian population as heavy cavalry.

Mercenaries: Whenever a ruler cannot levy a particular type of troops, the solution lies in hiring mercenaries. Assume they are always available. This was not always true in history—it was often necessary to contact potential mercenary troops many leagues away and make them an offer. It also may be possible to bribe enemy mercenaries either to leave or to switch camps. Spies can help with this, but that's a role-playing issue!

Regional circumstances: Circumstances also affect recruitment success. For example, a region that has been attacked or is at imminent danger of being attacked would be easier to recruit from, with many of its people volunteering for service in their lord's army. In this case, roll 1d4+1 and divide the amount to pay in recruitment bonuses by that result. Likewise, urban folks living a comfortable life away from threatened areas might require a greater reward. Roll 1d100; the result indicates how much more should be offered in recruitment bonuses as a percentage.

Every unpaid percentage point below the indicated recruitment bonus (after regional circumstances are taken into

account) should otherwise apply as a -2% penalty when levying troops. In other words, if a ruler offered recruitment bonuses 10% lower than the expected amount, the levy rate would then drop 20%. When more money is offered, the levy rate goes up as well but at a much slower rate. Each extra 10% offered on the recruitment bonus causes the levy rate to gain 1%. So, if a ruler offered a double reward, the levy rate then would go up 10%. (This approach is generally cheaper than increasing the overhead when the population pays an average 1 sp or more per person in taxes.)

Peasant levies: Peasant levies can be mustered (10-20%, as explained in the *Rules Cyclopedia*, page 142). The Mercenaries Table on page 133 of that book also lists "peasants" for 1 gp per month; it should really list "unarmored spearmen" or "unarmored pikemen" instead—peasants just aren't mercenaries. A sheriff usually commands these troops. Peasants fight with farming implements mounted on shafts (flails, scythes, etc.), and are unable to fight for very long in any kind of a military formation.

For the sake of flavor, it may be better to preserve the original feudal system when levying peasants. In effect, their involvement is free, but only for 40 days. After that, a 2 sp bonus per peasant per month should be offered as an attempt to keep them in an army. Each month this offer is made, the leader must succeed at a Charisma check; otherwise the peasants decide to return home to tend their land. Finally, peasant levies never fight outside the borders of their nation.

Press gangs: A ruler could resort to press gangs, but only *untrained* troops fit to be unarmored spearmen, rowers, or sailors could be "levied" that way. No recruitment bonus is needed. The levy rate is a flat 1% per month (or 20 single individuals of 1 HD or less). A Confidence check is also required each month this practice takes place.

Convicts: There were occasional episodes in history when common criminals fought in an army. For example, upon a promise of freedom, convicted criminals could accept to join in on a dangerous campaign—the classic "Dirty Dozen" scenario. Although risky, it is the cheapest way to acquire troops (though troop quality is totally random). It is also a way to use a rather unproductive and potentially dangerous segment of a dominion's population—yes, war prisoners and other common criminals *should* be counted as a part of the population (perhaps miners or galley rowers).

Organization

Medieval troops weren't organized like modern armies, with rank and pay based on professional ability. Instead, they centered around the men-at-arms, basically

knights and nobles paying for their own troops, with social status being the main factor for authority. In effect, we could have the following structure:

Army: The most powerful dominion ruler or the monarch would be at its head.

Battalions: These are separate army groups (usually a vanguard, a main battle, and a rear-guard). Each is under the command of a prince, an important noble, or a dominion ruler.

Lines: These are the rows of soldiers forming each battalion. Nobles usually command the lines.

Banners: These are units of 25-50 soldiers gathered around the banners of the men-at-arms who command them.

Lances: These are small, tactical units of 5-10 troops, either infantry or cavalry, within each banner. Lances remain under the command of lesser knights or sergeants. (Individual "glaives" also existed, being 2-4 troops, usually a horseman of some type, an archer, and some light infantry with pole arms.)

Feudal ranks: In the Savage Coast especially, men-at-arms could fall into three categories: "the knight banneret," with a square banner, usually reserved for dominion rulers and upper nobility; "the knight bachelier," with a forked pennant, usually a lesser member of a dominion ruler's family or of a noble's family, commanding up to 25 troops; and "the squire," a simple knight (knight, paladin, or avenger as per the standard Fighter class, or someone learning to become a knight), or a bourgeois (a burgher) rich enough to own cavalry equipment and have servants. All knights and squires are expected to have at least two servants (a page or valet who doesn't fight, and an armed guard), proper weaponry, complete armor and bardings, and four horses (one for each of the servants, and a spare horse).

The "sergeant" was also available to command small bodies of infantry, or to hold the lord's banner. Sergeants wear less armor than knights, ride unarmored horses, and usually fight on foot. (Do not confuse sergeants with "sergeants-at-arms," who were part of a monarch's elite personal guard.)

Setting up for battle: Usually, troops of the various dominions meet at a certain point before a battle. The troops are then reorganized in tactical units that are more practical.

For example, a monarch joins a number of his vassals. They all have various retinues of infantry, archers, and cavalry following their respective leaders' banners. A duke and the monarch's son, a prince, are assigned the vanguard and the rear guard. The monarch takes the main battle with three-quarters of all troops available.

The infantry from all dominions forms lines A, B, and C in the main battle, the

archers form lines X, Y, and Z, and the cavalry musters around the monarch's banner. The remainder of the troops is organized in the same fashion in both the vanguard and the rearguard.

Each line would fall under the command of counts and barons. So far, the prince, the duke, the counts, and the barons all qualify as knights banneret. Within each line, troops remain close to the banners of the remaining knights banneret (possibly other barons and landed-knights) or to the pennants of the knights bachelier assigned to command them. Lesser knights (household or landless knights) and sergeants can then command individual lances, using colored pennons to rally the troops.

Of course, in a true medieval setting, a lot of arguing would occur between the barons and the knights about who gets to command what, next to whom, or before whom (who might be a hated rival)! This could affect the outcome of a battle if totally ignored. Finally, it may be a good idea to send a herald to meet the opposing army and set a time and place for the battle. Maps and communication being what they were in medieval times, this approach wasn't unheard of in history.

Modern ranks: Unlike the Savage Coast, armies of the Known World tend to be organized on a more professional basis, "sergeants" replacing squires and feudal sergeants, "lieutenants" replacing knights bachelier, and "captains" replacing knights banneret. Although they all keep their nobility titles, if any, these officers are all paid according to their military ranks. As usual, either a monarch, a prince, or a powerful noble would command a battle or a whole army, or a military "marshall" could be appointed for the task. The more organized mercenary companies would tend to use this setup too, possibly calling their leader a "condottiere" rather than a captain or a marshall. (Condottieri were members of wealthy families who would use their reputations to raise money or to guarantee payment to their troops even in times of unemployment).

Auxiliaries

Combat troops usually come with non-fighting auxiliaries, like a knight banneret's page, an artillerist's mason and carpenter, etc. Auxiliaries also can be ill-armed peasant levies who drive the baggage train of a marching army. A whole slew of civilians could also tag along, such as cooks, surgeons, clerics, blacksmiths, soothsayers, grave-robbers (and other persons of ill-repute), spies, merchants peddling their goods, even the families of some of the soldiers! Some fine role-playing could really frustrate the plans of a would-be conqueror with these people getting themselves in trouble at every opportunity. They could number up to as much as 20% of the

whole army they follow.

Assume that all the auxiliaries form an integral part of the army. So, when one hires 10 swordsmen, assume the "tenth" person is some kind of auxiliary—likewise with their pay. Of course, the ratio should be much lower with common infantry, but it all averages out when mounted knights and high-level warriors have two or three servants each. This explains why the latter are so expensive. For simplicity, assume everything averages out, including actual number of people in the military, their pay, and odds during a battle (all forces present are "presumed" to have some nonfighting auxiliaries among them). So, no mechanical or accounting changes are needed here—just remember the auxiliaries for the sake of role-playing and background flavor!

Militias

It sometimes happened that towns or cities would become independent from local nobility. For example, the monarch may grant such autonomy to towns inside the royal demesne to insure they are properly administered and defended. The monarch could grant a new vassal the lands surrounding a town, then allow the town to become autonomous, thus avoiding the risk of making that vassal a bit too powerful (causing jealousy among other vassals) or of tempting an unruly vassal to seize the wealthy town. Adventurous dominion rulers could give up unproductive lands to become traders in a wealthy city, allowing the town to gain control over the surrounding lands.

The town becomes a dominion of its own, paying salt tax and tithe like other dominions. Its overhead should be higher (+15%) because of all the buildings, streets, and other structures that require upkeep. The town levies permanent troops to act as a police force and garrison the town's walls and fortifications. Its troops can be counted on during a call to arms, but only in defense of the nation. Militias can be every bit as good or even better than conventional dominion troops because of the wealth that their towns can use for better pay, training, and equipment. Town militias use the more modern ranking system.

Supplies

Remember that armed forces do not work in the fields, thus they do not grow food. Troops must draw food supplies from the agricultural community. In a medieval setting, troops were expected to feed themselves. In game terms, we can conveniently assume that the cost of feeding troops is part of their pay. However, this implies certain risks.

During peace, armies are scattered throughout the kingdom, buying food from their local neighborhoods. This is especially important for permanent gar-

risons guarding borderland or rural territories. The local agricultural base should be sufficient for these troops to find food. Using the guidelines on economics provided in this column in recent DRAGON issues, find out how much agricultural population lives within one or two day's ox-ride (12-20 miles) from the troops' position, and whether it can accommodate these troops.

Hunting is an option. Here are some rough guidelines: In a wilderness area with ample wildlife and water resources, figure that up to 100 troops can generate food for 80 people (80%). The remaining 20% represents essentials like grain or salt that must be provided either by local farming or brought in from elsewhere.

For each of the following, decrease the top hunting rate (80%) as indicated: Each extra 50 troops (-10%), borderland (-20%), rural (-40%), moderate wildlife or less than 10% missile weapons among troops (-30% for either), little wildlife or no missile weapons among troops (-60% for either). Troops cannot hunt in suburban or urban areas; otherwise the hunting rate should never be less than 10%.

If the balance is still insufficient, then food supplies must be transported to the troops, at the ruler's cost (1 sp per month and per person).

Planning should prevent this from happening. When garrisoning an oasis, for example, make sure the number of troops there matches what the oasis can support. This will prevent the garrison from depending on regular caravan supplies.

In suburban or urban areas, assume that the military forces there are supplied like the rest of the urban population (e.g., regular arrivals of foodstuffs from the rural lands, caravans, local farming); this is all averaged out in the guidelines on economics. As usual, garrisons in wilderness must be supplied, since the wilderness agricultural base cannot figure in the food mechanics.

Garrisons usually stockpile food and water, sometimes for up to a year in a warlike setting. Unsupplied troops might plunder and pillage the land to feed themselves. Plunder and pillaging wipes out all farming for a month in the affected hexes. If the ruler's troops plunder their own land, a Confidence check should be made for each month of plundering.

Disbanding troops

Sending troops back home can be vastly amusing! After serving a liege, dominion rulers and the commanders of town militias usually return to their lands without making much trouble, but mercenaries might decide to roam the countryside instead, plundering and pillaging everything on the way, until they find another employer. This is almost inevitable if the mercenaries haven't been paid or if a conflict hasn't yielded much war-booty. For-

tunately, it is sometimes possible to buy-off unemployed mercenaries or arrange for them to obtain employment elsewhere.

Native troops being dismissed, especially if they are several hundred who fought together long enough to establish a sense of community, might turn to banditry as well. Using one's military experience to terrorize the countryside is a far more attractive option than returning to famine and utter poverty. This is particularly true if these individuals own their equipment, or if the ruler has been weakened by a conflict. Native renegades are usually the worst since they know the gibbet awaits them if they're caught, compelling them to fight to the death when cornered.

Widespread political chaos is generally favorable to organized banditry. For example, among predatory activities, renegade troops or unemployed mercenaries may resort to demanding exorbitant tributes from defenseless towns, when they aren't simply plundering the land to feed themselves. Some renegade leaders might just try to claim land outright in an attempt to carve themselves their own dominions, with local rulers bowing to their military might—if one can't beat them, one might just accept them as new vassals!

Running a monarchy

What do monarchs do with the salt-tax revenues? If the PC is running a kingdom, with dominions turning in their 20% salt tax, here's what should be done. The monarch could have one or more family estates or dominions gained through marital alliances, generating tax income or troop levies like normal dominions. Likewise, the kingdom should have a royal demesne belonging to the throne. These are lands that the monarch occasionally carves up and gives away to new vassals. Lands conquered by the monarch become part of the royal demesne.

Add up tax incomes from the family estates and the royal demesne, and subtract the 10% tithe. Then add all of the salt taxes from the vassal dominions, if paid in cash. The monarch does not pay the 10% tithe on salt tax received from the vassals. This determines the monarch's net income. The monarch's overhead is calculated from that net income.

A vassal's salt tax paid in merchandise is considered part of the monarch's total income as if it were cash, thus counting against the monarch's overhead one way or the other.

If the kingdom is part of a greater empire, then the monarch's total income is subject to a salt tax, just like a dominion. There can be any number of vassal-liege, liege-monarch, and monarch-emperor layers. The overlord may require the adoption of the same coinage and laws among all vassals.

Military: If a monarch (or a liege in general) requests a vassal to pay the salt tax in troops, add them to the monarch's army. If so, the vassal must provide troops whose pay amounts to 20% of the vassal's total income. The troops must be appropriately equipped to fit the monarch's most prevalent army requirements. Training must be at least as good as that of the vassal's forces. The value of training and equipment does not otherwise count against the vassal's 20% salt-tax figure.

If a vassal is incapable of providing enough troops meeting the liege's standards, the vassal must then pay the difference in cash (or the whole amount if the vassal couldn't provide any of the required troops at all). Mercenaries are not an option in this case. The vassal had better make sure there was an overwhelming reason why these troops could not be provided, or else the liege might consider such a shortcoming willful treachery.

A royal tip: Requesting vassals to send troops rather than cash is a cheap way of acquiring properly equipped and trained troops, and keeping vassals in check. It also helps the monarch keep the throne's overhead substantially lower. On the other hand, the monarch has far less cash available this way. The best advice here would be to acquire whatever troops are needed to protect and further the monarchy, then collect the remainder in cash. This balancing act is a true test for a serious ruler.

Standing army: All of the troops sent by the vassals and the monarch's own household troops constitute the kingdom's standing army. In times of war, the monarch expects vassals and their retainers to join him, with up to 80% of their troops. Likewise, peasants can be mustered (see "Recruitment"). Up to 80% of the theocracy's troops, military orders, and town militias also can be called upon to defend the nation (see "Theocracies"). If that doesn't do it, then throw in a good measure of mercenaries!

The theocracy's point of view

What do the clerics do with the tithe? The clerical establishment runs its various orders, builds temples, supports art and literature conforming to its precepts, feeds and caters for the poor (sometimes), maintains its own troops to defend the clerical estates (often), and meddles with local and global politics for various reasons (always).

A theocracy's income is subject to a cost overhead comparable to that of an autonomous town (+15%). A nation's theocracy might have to send 10% of its own tithe income to some archclericist (or whatever potentate representing the theocracy's highest authority) if outside the nation's border. The theocracy's overhead only includes the daily upkeep of existing temples, clerics, mystics, servants,

and the support of art and literature. Everything else comes from the theocracy's available cash.

If a clerical order does not receive regular tithe income, it can instead generate a net 5 sp cash income per ordained cleric or mystic (including overhead). This income covers work clerics provide and their followers' donations. Assume the clerical work force can always feed itself.

Theocracies literally form autonomous "dominions" inside other nations. They initially control little land other than the hallowed grounds of their temples and the mystics' domains. There could be cases when a monarch or a powerful dominion ruler may cede land to a theocracy as a reward for help or as a result of political pressure. A theocracy could also simply purchase land from a bankrupt dominion, with the liege's permission. A theocracy, however, never pays any salt tax, since its only true liege is the Immortal it serves.

Military orders: Theocracies may also create military orders (of paladins, for example) that live off their members' donations. A military order receives 10 gp per knight in addition to taxes levied on any land it controls. This income is subject to regular dominion overhead and tithe. Although they don't pay the salt tax, they must answer their monarch's call to arms. Military orders are otherwise fairly autonomous from either theocracy or monarchy. They raise their own troops, build castles, and undertake a variety of military or financial activities to further their own interests.

Knights (landless knights, knights-errant, and paladins) join the order on a purely volunteer, unpaid basis. Other troops should be paid; they can be levied on the order's lands or hired among mercenaries. Having knights join the order is a question of situation and role-playing (the leader's Charisma, a need to vanquish some great evil, the order's clout, etc.). Knights joining an order each month may range from 1d4-1 knights in a very unfavorable situation, to 3d6+2 knights in the best case. If the order is being founded, add to the die roll a number of knights equal to twice the leader's maximum number of retainers (see Charisma). Very large orders may become the target of worried monarchs, so beware.

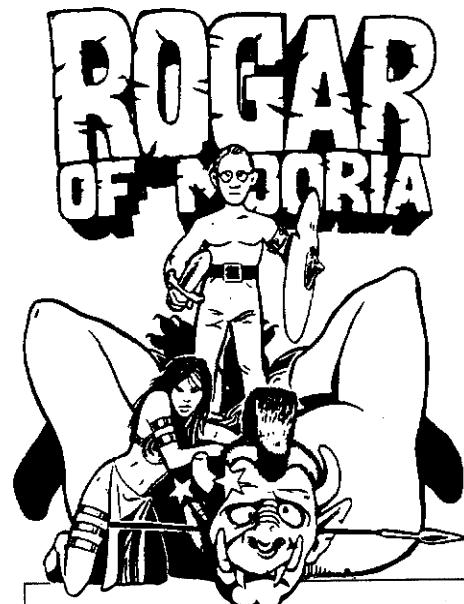
Rival theocracies: The situation can get complicated when several theocracies compete within a same nation. Usually, one theocracy dominates the field, representing one Immortal or a group of related Immortals. This "official" theocracy is the one collecting the tithe. Other unrelated orders make do with donations from their followers, be they commoners, rich merchants, or influential leaders. These minor theocracies, of course, compete for followers, struggling to force the "official" theocracy out of the big picture

in order to become the one collecting the tithe.

Heretical crises: The monarch of a nation chooses which theocracy is the "official" one. It may base purely on the monarch's personal convictions or on what philosophy is predominant in the realm. The latter choice is the safest path, but that can be a hard choice for a monarch with different ideals, especially if the monarch is on the path to Immortality. The former option could lead the population into rebellion, with both military and financial support from the deposed theocracy if the monarch ignores the people's dominating philosophy.

Along the same idea are regional theocracies deliberately splitting away from their higher authorities in an attempt to reform their own philosophy and keep more power and wealth in their own hands. Likewise, powerful military orders may break away from their original theocracies for the same reasons. The political and military consequences of such hostile schisms within a theocracy all become a matter of circumstances and role-playing, in other words, more trouble for the ruler, as it should be! It gets all the more entertaining when the ruler happens to be a cleric, too, but that's the reward for power, glory, and yet another chance for more adventures!

Ω



Were we great or what?

What do you think of this magazine? What do you like best or want to see changed most? What do you want to see next? Turn to "Letters" and see what others think, then write to us too!

SHHH!!

Something's coming...



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A Magical Personality

Role-playing specialist wizards in the AD&D® 2nd Edition game

by Matt Posner

Artwork by Scott Rosema

It takes an unusual person to become a specialist wizard, as the combination of high attribute requirements and intense reliance on a small number of magical effects might suggest. A specialist wizard lives an obsessive sort of life. The balance between great power and great vulnerability between satisfaction and frustration swings unpredictably back and forth depending on the situation. The personality of the wizard might appear unstable as a result (except, of course, to the wizard in question).

Because this is true, the specialist wizard provides an exceptional role-playing

challenge. The crazier and more intense the wizard, the better the challenge. PHBR4 *The Complete Wizard's Handbook* and pages 41-43 of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures* hardbound offer ideas for role-playing this type of character. Here are some more suggestions.

The Abjurer

The abjurer's spells all deal with protection, so he deals not with performing actions but with preventing actions from happening. This means that the abjurer's primary role as a mage is to react to threats and challenges, rather than to

bring these things about. The abjurer is an obsessive defender who gets into his work. The abjurer fills the empty hours by planning, his thoughts always on precautions and protective measures. An abjurer looks ahead in an effort to compensate and prepare for all possible events. He has the skills of a master chess player, and his high Wisdom (minimum 15) makes him a fairly good judge of people. Abjurers are good at laying traps and planning ambushes, and they are cautious at all times. This obsession with caution can harm their personal lives; because they are slow to trust, abjurers often fail to



open up to potential friends—and if they do, they often overplan their behavior for social occasions. In general, abjurers seem nervous and uptight, even when they desperately wish to make a different impression. Because of their orderly, planning natures, abjurers are particularly likely to be of lawful alignment.

The Conjurer

Conjuration and summoning spells are concerned with creating things or bringing them from elsewhere—because of this, the conjurer is always keenly in tune with his environment. He has his eyes open at all times for interesting creatures and objects. Of all specialist wizards, conjurers are the ones most concerned with objects—not only treasure, but all things interesting to them. The conjurer is especially likely to collect things of no special value, but which have caught his attention because of their unusual features. Conjurers are also interested in animals and creatures of all types, and they often choose to have them as companions or keep them for study.

A conjurer is also a careful student of people, though more because their variety fascinates him than because he likes their company. The conjurer's tendency to collect a train of followers and to carry along or store quantities of bric-a-brac can be both a benefit and a hindrance in times of trouble; it also can make for an irksome

companion. Conjurers are often perceived as aloof because they see their companions as curious specimens of humanity as much as they see them as friends or allies.

Because they are covetous, conjurers often have a neutral component to their alignments.

The Diviner

Anyone who becomes a diviner wants to know things very badly. It could be that she thirsts for knowledge in general or has a specific subject she's curious about (retired diviners make great sages). The diviner is willing to sacrifice a lot to know, and it requires a great deal of patience and endurance to suffer the reverses a life of investigation can include. Often the diviner is unable to obtain the knowledge she seeks; she might gain significant knowledge but be unable to make use of it; or a long, draining search might uncover a truth less significant or exciting than she had hoped. Finally, the diviner is often left on the sidelines while others act on what she has learned.

Being extremely wise (minimum Wisdom 16), diviners generally develop a philosophy that helps them deal with the frustrations of their specialization: Of all specialist wizards, diviners are the most calm, emotionally secure, detached, and thoughtful. The down side of this is that little but their own search for knowledge

excites them; they are often too slow and too detached for the satisfaction of their allies and companions.

Because the search for knowledge is often done in an orderly fashion, diviners are likely to be of lawful alignment.

The Enchanter

The enchanter is most powerful when dealing with thinking creatures; because of this, he both likes them and has the insatiable desire to manipulate them. An enchanter can be very personable or very egotistical—either people like him or he merely is convinced that they do. One way or another, the enchanter expects to get his way. If his formidable personality (minimum Charisma 16) won't do the job, he willingly resorts to magic. The enchanter can be very benevolent and good-natured so long as he feels he is in charge of things. When he doesn't get his way, he can be petulant and sullen or angry and vengeful. Enchanters are natural leaders when they are in the right mood; in the wrong mood, they can be annoyingly childish. The sheer force of their mood swings partly accounts for the fascination they hold for others, as anyone whose feelings are so clear and so strong must surely be in the right.

The genuine liking many enchanters have for companionship may often cross boundaries of race and alignment. An enchanter determined to wipe out a group of orcish bandits might first enjoy a night of songs and drinking at their fire-side. Because of this, enchanters are not always readily trusted. The fact that they are known to have power over the thoughts and feelings of others also often makes even friends and companions wary of them.

Because their moods are so many and varied, enchanters tend to be of chaotic alignment.

The Illusionist

An illusionist is an individual who likes to keep the truth in reserve. She likes mystery and intrigue. The less she is understood, or the more she can arrange to be misunderstood, the greater her power over others. Like the enchanter, the illusionist is most powerful in the company of thinking creatures, and she also prefers company—but she is as interested in it for preservation as for pleasure. Although illusionists are very gregarious, they are rarely completely open; in fact, in many cases they do not wish to reveal that they are illusionists at all. The illusionist is at her best playing the role of someone else (she would make a good gamer). Most illusionists possess skills associated with role-playing. They are good actors and mimics, think quickly on their feet, and are generally observant enough to make the best of any situation. Illusionists also have a good eye for detail, and their visual memory is



extremely acute.

Unless they are play-acting, illusionists do not make good leaders. Their secrecy, like that of thieves, does not inspire confidence. In most situations they are more effective if they go unnoticed. Their quick wits and dynamic acting make them appealing companions on the surface, but it is extremely difficult to get to know an illusionist on the inside.

Because they are constantly changing personality and strategy to suit their circumstances, many illusionists tend to be of chaotic alignment.

The Invoker

The invoker wields fantastic destructive energy, and the intense communion with that energy his specialization requires has a distinct effect on his personality. Invokers are a restless bunch; they are extremely outgoing, and their emotions are always fiery. The invoker lets you know what's on his mind, and he never stops to consider whether you want to know it. Invokers are self-centered and frequently overbearing; they are also straightforward and, in most cases, honest. They are no more subtle than the magic they wield. Invokers have incredible stamina (minimum Constitution 16) but remarkably little patience. Though not always reckless, they dislike wasting time and can grow irrational if forced to remain inactive for too long.

Though rash, invokers are not always conceited; the best of them are ready to admit their own mistakes and swift to forget the mistakes of others. Invokers don't usually hold grudges; their anger burns hot but burns out quickly. Unfortunately, they tend to take the same attitude toward relationships, particularly romantic relationships; their passions are usually short-lived, and they change companions frequently. Invokers are easily distracted and in most cases don't mind transferring their attention from one subject to another. An invoker makes a dynamic but inconsistent leader—at one moment inspirational, at the next, indifferent.

As one would guess, invokers tend to be somewhat chaotic.

The Necromancer

As you would suppose, most necromancers are warped people. Even those with the best intentions often go awry. Necromancers do not have the same attitudes toward life and death as the people around them. Life is less precious to a necromancer than to most people, because death is his source of power. Even when he wants to do good, he is often shunned because the powers he wields are repellent to those who respect life. The necromancer is comfortable, even dispassionate, about companions and activities unacceptable to others. Though a necromancer's basic goals may

be quite ordinary—power and knowledge—his methods distance him from society. Most necromancers are so isolated from ordinary people that they have an imperfect understanding of human behavior. Many of them grow resentful of this isolation; necromancers are basically a misanthropic lot. The older and more experienced they get, the less human they become. A high-level necromancer who neglects his appearance and spends too much time in crypts may even possess the physical attributes usual to a corpse—salow skin, clammy hands, a drawn, skull-like face, and so on.

Individuals drawn to necromancy are often troubled to begin with. Loneliness, starvation, and abuse are frequent components of a necromancer's childhood; the young necromancer has always felt no more than a step away from death, and has grown to draw strength from that closeness. Even as adults, necromancers tend to retain this view of things.

The majority of necromancers are of evil alignment; those who aren't usually have evil tendencies.

The Transmuter

Transmuters are perhaps the most versatile of all specialist wizards, and their personalities reflect this. Transmuters enjoy their versatility. They are the most likely of all specialists to admit their skills to others, and the most likely to use those skills. Transmuters like magic for its own sake, and they enjoy problem-solving. Like enchanters, they tend to be egotistical, but transmuters are less frivolous. Transmuters are no-nonsense mages; they take their work seriously and keep their play separate and infrequent. A transmuter works at a problem steadily and single-mindedly till she solves it or collapses; though this quality is usually an asset, sometimes transmuters get too emotionally involved with their work and miss obvious solutions.

Because of their massive powers of concentration, transmuters are nearly as patient as diviners. When dealing with a problem, the transmuter rarely heeds the passage of time. As a friend and companion, the transmuter is valuable but often frustrating. Transmuters are rarely aware of the feelings and moods of others—they can't take a hint and often fail to understand that another person is upset even when it is strongly expressed. "Don't bother me with that now," the transmuter says. When the project is completed, she is unable to understand why her friend is mad at her.

By nature, transmuters tend to be obsessive about things. They tend to the four alignment extremes and rarely have a neutral component in their alignments.Ω





Master of the Blade

Who's in charge—your PC or his magical sword?

by Peter Sears

Artwork by Robert Lessl

Lasker ran down the corridor, blind to everything but escape. He could hear the whispering of the vampires behind him, but more importantly he could smell them as they chased him through their crypt. Even Valcan the dwarf and Calaris the mage had fallen before their onslaught. Either the townsfolk had lied about the number of undead under this barrow or they just didn't know the extent. But this was no time to worry about that.

"Turn left at that intersection," Selar prompted. The sword warmed Lasker's hand as it spoke.

That was all Lasker needed to hear. Selar had never been wrong about directions before. Lasker bolted to the left as a cold radiance touched the back of his neck. He had traveled only fifty feet when he saw to his astonishment—and horror—that the corridor ended in a solid wall.

Selar had steered him into a dead end.

"What the hell's this?!" Lasker screamed. He spun, saw unholly light burning in the eyes of the undead blocking the hallway, and involuntarily stepped back and almost fell.

"We're going to fight them!" Selar announced in triumph, its blade starting to glow white with heat. "We're going to send them all back to the Abyss!"

"You're insane! You wretched piece of iron, there's too many of them! You've led me here to die!" Lasker shouted.

"I will destroy these hellspawn as I was meant to do!" the sword retorted. "I refuse to let your cowardice get in the way of my

mission! We shall stand and fight. Trust me, Lasker. I have never failed you. Fight!"

Lasker stared down the hall, seeing a score of cold, glittering eyes, and shivered uncontrollably. He was going to die. He was as good as dead. So be it.

"So be it!" Lasker roared, and charged. Without warning, the ensorcelled blade burst into song, and a flash of golden sunlight illuminated the cavern. The vampires screamed and covered their eyes with bone-white hands, the sound of their agony burned forever into Lasker's nightmares. Before the undead could regroup, Lasker was among them, hewing with his sword clenched in both hands. He was scarcely aware that he screamed, too.

Blind with joy, Selar sang on.

My experience as an AD&D® 2nd Edition game Dungeon Master has taught me a few things. One of these things is that most DMs dislike having an intelligent sword in their campaigns. They say, "It's just another NPC to keep track of, and they tend to unbalance the game." A player is likely to have his character take a blade if it is offered to him, but he will ignore the personality of such a blade unless it is very vocal or balky in a tight situation. Then the player resents the weapon and the DM: "Since when does a blade make decisions? It never did that before."

Creating, giving, and game-mastering intelligent blades is often an exercise in futility. They are very powerful and easily

abused. I admit I didn't use them much. I didn't even like to get them as a player because I knew that if I ever played the character with the blade under another DM, he might disallow the sword right off the bat. It's really a shame that it works out this way, because the intelligent blade is a standard convention of heroic fantasy literature. Who hasn't pictured allowing Excalibur, Stormbringer, or the like into a campaign?

I believe that the system in this article makes the intelligent sword an element that adds fun and creativity to the game, both for player and DM alike. Give it a try.

Blade terminology

Although I use the words "blade" or "sword," I am really referring to any weapon that could be endowed with intelligence. I have seen intelligent daggers, bows, and even an intelligent staff. However, most of this material is oriented toward swords, as these are the most common weapon to be imbued with this power.

"Mission" refers to the task for which the blade was forged. "Purpose" refers to the particular action that the blade will try to perform. "Object" is a person, place, or thing relevant to the performance of the sword's mission. For example, a mage is asked to enchant an intelligent sword for a young paladin. He creates a blade with "find" as its purpose, and "injustice" as its object. Thus, the blade has "find injustice" as its mission.

The mission taken

In the AD&D game, a blade that is intelligent and has a mission is, by definition, a very powerful item to have. Because of the way that the treasure tables in the DMG are laid out, they are also as rare as liches' teeth. In my campaign, however, it works differently. When I first began to reassess the system, it struck me that a blade with a mission need not have earth-shaking power and could be available to low-level heroes.

It occurred to me that missions could be a lot more common in swords than we've been lead to believe. Think about it: Who creates all these blades? For the most part, the creators are mages who cannot wield them, priests who are normally prohibited from using edged weapons, or gods who cannot or will not directly affect human affairs.

Thus, a mission sword is basically an item created by a great expenditure of time, money, and power. But the creator has no power to use it, and must entrust it to some grungy fighter who may not care what the creator wants him to do with it. Giving the blade a mission bent to the creator's end is a way to enforce his interests and see that his agenda is attended to. However, it is necessary to limit the blade's power in order to make it accessible. The easiest way to do this is to limit the scope of the object. A blade that has as its mission "destroy evil dragons" is going to be a lot more useful than "destroy blue dragons" or "destroy the clan of blue dragons near Raven's Bluff."

A blade that has as its mission "protect the city of Waterdeep" might become inoperable (i.e., nonmagical) outside the city limits. There are many ways to limit a blade's power, but doubtless you can come up with several appropriate to your campaign. The point is that it is possible for a blade to be intelligent but not the solution to every problem, and low-level characters can use very limited blades. I think that an intelligent sword is one of the best tutors that a beginning player can have. The DM can explain everything through it.

This particular avenue of interaction is good in that it gives the absolute beginner an NPC ally that he can call on all the time to explain the vagaries of the system. If you play the sword in character, then the new player is also more likely to pick up on playing his character properly as well.

Things to come

The most important aspect of the creation of a blade is the mission it is given. The mission that a blade is given and, to a lesser extent, certain facts about the creator are the tools that come into play when designing the blade. For example, let's take another look at the wizard, paladin, and "find injustice" blade. First off, the mission of the blade is to *find injus-*

tice; however, the mission says nothing about giving the wielder any extra power when *fighting injustice*. The powers given to the blade are: It greatly increases the range of the paladin's ability to *detect evil* and enables him to *detect lie* at will. The sword could also point the way to a great injustice nearby, or prevent the telling of a falsehood within a 5' radius. This could work against the paladin, of course, and just goes to illustrate that not all powers are good for the owner.

Most blades that are created for paladins are Lawful Good in alignment by necessity, but the wizard is wise enough to know that justice comes in many colors, so he gives the sword a Neutral Good alignment to temper the excessively lawful tendencies of the paladin. This also shapes the personality of the blade, making it a conscientious crusader against evil, but not necessarily against "excessive" chaos. Finally, if the paladin is killed, the only people who can use the blade are paladins or, failing that, fighters of Neutral Good alignment.

The mission of the blade thus shapes the kind of master it may have.

Types of blades

Finder blades are imbued with detection powers, but generally carry no other powers outside of innate ones (*flame tongue*, *vorpal*, *life stealing*). Finder blades are the low end of the power spectrum, and these are the blades most often found by low-level characters. Finder blades can be of any alignment, depending on their object. For example, Taryk Wyvernstrike finds a blade with "find dragons" as its mission. The blade is normally nonmagical, but the blade enables the wielder to *speak to dragons*, makes the wielder extremely sensitive to the smell of dragon musk, and, if the sword is tossed in the air and the word "seek" is spoken, upon falling it unerringly points to the nearest dragon. This blade is unintelligent, so Taryk is completely unaware of his new-found abilities.

Destroyer blades are loaded with offensive powers geared toward destroying the object of their mission. The powers that are within a destroyer blade need not always be offensive in nature. There is at least one blade in my campaign that has the mission "destroy the red wizards of Thay"; it projects an *anti-magic shell* of 10' radius that moves with the wielder. Most destroyer blades however, have minimal defensive abilities or even finding abilities. Destroyers also tend toward extremely militant behavior, so care must be taken when dealing with them. Destroyer and preserver blades (see below) are the mid-range of power, and they are good for the transition from a low-powered fantasy campaign to a high-powered fantasy campaign. Destroyer blades can be of any alignment.

Example: Garus Blood-nose, a powerful half-orc, commissions a mage to create a blade with "destroy demihumans" as its mission. The finished blade has the ability to cause an additional 2d6 hp damage to any elf, dwarf, halfling, or gnome it strikes. It also gives Garus the ability to drive his orcish allies into berserker frenzy. Unfortunately, there are no finder or defensive abilities on the weapon; when Garus blunders into an elven forest, he and his allies are cut to bits by missile fire.

Preserver blades are similar to destroyer blades in power level, but their orientation is more defensive in nature. Examples of this might include a blade that gives substantial bonuses to parrying and subdual combat, or perhaps a blade that creates a *wall of fire* three times a day. These blades are light on offensive power but have more sensory powers than destroyers. As with all blades, alignments vary, but preserver blades lean a little on the good side.

Example: Purskull of Garum's Gorge forges a blade and has it enchanted for him. The blade's mission is "preserve dwarven heroes." It is +2 in power, gives the wielder +2 protection (as a *ring of protection*) and gives any dwarf wielding it the power of a *protection from normal missiles* spell. It can also speak and possesses the lore of a dwarven sage when speaking of dwarven heroes.

Creator blades are at the high end of the power spectrum. Creator blades and servitor blades (below) may have only intangibles, like justice, as their object. Instead of merely seeking out an object (then deciding what to do when you get there) or destroying or protecting an object that already exists, the creator blade wants you to go out and *create* the object. For example, a paladin has made a name for herself as a just human, and she's slopping over with courage. A wizard is prevailed upon to create a new sword for her which has as its mission "create law." Thus, the sword constantly urges the paladin to go out into the wilderness and bring law and order to the savages.

Naturally, creator blades can be any alignment, dependent on their objects. They are generally well balanced when it comes to offensive, defensive, and sensory powers. These kinds of blades represent a major commitment to the storyline of the campaign. Much thought is advised before the DM throws one of these into a campaign, since they affect the campaign in sweeping ways.

Servitor blades are radically different from creator blades in that they directly serve a power, group, clergy, or ideal. They are also equipped with a feature called punitive powers, which normally serve the wielder but which can be turned against him if he balks at the mis-

sion's object. Many of these blades are created by clerics, but there are examples of these blades being manufactured by mages, too.

For example, Kiranna is a warrior who worships the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting deity named Tempus. She is part of an elite unit of worshipers in her area, and is entrusted with a blade known as Viperbite, a "serve Tempus" blade.

Kiranna is sent on a holy quest. During the quest, Kiranna has a crisis of faith and considers abandoning the mission. However, she now finds that the snakeskin pommel has become a real snake that has coiled around her wrist; it bites her anytime she tries to turn aside from her quest.

Naturally, servitor blades are not so useful if you and your players aren't involved in a campaign. They serve as a way to tie a player to an organization. While they are something of a mixed blessing to the character, some players will enjoy the role-playing involved.

Divine blades are the rarest blades of the bunch. These blades ignore most rules since they serve their gods' will directly. Each blade also has a secondary mission in keeping with its patron's aims, but this mission could be held in abeyance in accordance with that god's will. Of course, divine blade powers vary from deity to deity. In the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, a blade consecrated to Sune will have wildly different powers from a blade of Tempus; Lathander doesn't have a blade consecrated to him, as it is antithetical to his worship. Naturally, these blades are unique and as such are *very* rare. They are a major investment in your story, and they should be given only to players who game with you regularly. These blades increase the chance that the wielder may call on divine help, as the creator has a vested interest in the doings of the wielder—but calling on a deity at any time is a risk few thinking heroes will ever take.

Object of the quest

The object of a mission is the single most defining attribute of a blade. The objects given here are by no means a complete list. Most will come from your campaign. As I have stated before, an object can be as broad or as specific as you wish. The object may be any person, place, or thing, and the only thing tempering the DM's creativity is a bit of logic. There must be a strong motive for creating a blade because it is hard work and costly for the creator.

Tangible nouns include: Treasure, general monsters or character types (dragons or mages), specific monsters (like black dragons or necromancers), individual monsters (like a small group of blue dragons near the City of Greyhawk, or any lich on a particular island), magic, specific areas (such as a single castle), or even a

specific person (such as a certain king). Groups also count, such as the Harpers or the Zhentarim.

Intangible nouns include: law, chaos, justice, injustice, war, peace, evil, good, and a country or geographic area.

As you can see, not all the objects gibe with all the purposes. For instance, not many people would want to own or create a blade with the mission, "destroy treasure," so use your best judgment.

General rules

1. Unless you have a very high-level party and a lot of experience as a DM, do not allow more than one intelligent blade in the party. This tends to unbalance the party strength.

2. In this article, blades do not have Ego scores; instead, they have Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. When a mage creates a blade imbued with a personality, he must chain a spirit to it. The FORGOTTEN REALMS supplement, FR4 *The Magister*, contains a system for doing just that, but a DM can always wing it. A chained spirit has its own scores. For each score, the DM rolls 1d6, then adds these modifiers:

+1 for each power possessed by the blade (up to five)

+1 for weak innate powers (*luck*, +1)

+3 for powerful innate powers (*vorpal*, *life stealing*, +3, +6, etc.)

Finder: +2 to Intelligence, -2 to Wisdom and Charisma

Destroyer: +2 to Charisma, -2 to Intelligence and Wisdom

Preserver: +2 to Wisdom, -d2 to Intelligence and Charisma.

Creator and servitor: +2 to each score

Divine blades: +4 to each score

When a character wants to talk the blade into something that it doesn't want to do, the DM must decide what the PC is doing: Using logic, emotional appeal, or mere Charisma. Then the player must make a proficiency check while the sword uses its best attribute to make its own check to defend against being talked into the plan. If both win or lose their checks, the wielder is still considered to be unsuccessful in convincing his weapon to follow the plan. For example, a paladin tries to talk his "create law" sword into letting him leave a lawless area to track a ruthless villain. The paladin checks against his Intelligence and makes it, but so does the sword, which ignores his pleas.

3. A DM must decide not only what the sword will do but what it won't do. When a character is at cross purposes with his blade, a battle of wills must ensue. Generally, swords understand that they are part of a symbiotic relationship. If they lend their powers to the wielder, the wielder works toward the sword's mission. The sword realizes that without the wielder, it

accomplishes nothing. Thus, a sword tends to follow its master's lead unless the master tries something that contravenes the sword's mission or alignment. This problem, of course, causes modifiers to be added to the Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma of the blade:

+0 for a minor alignment infraction (irritable paladin rudely pushes aside a pixie)

+1 for a medium alignment infraction (paladin lies) or minor mission infraction (left behind treasure that could have been donated to charity)

+2 for a major alignment infraction (paladin commits an evil act) or medium mission infraction (minor villains escape capture; allies are badly injured; sought object temporarily damaged)

+3 for a massive alignment infraction (paladin turns evil)

+4 for a major mission infraction

+5 for a massive mission infraction (major villains escape; sought object is lost)

+2 if the sword has punitive power

+1 if the wielder is not actively pursuing the mission (+ 1 per week cumulative up to +5)

+1 to +3 if the sword is ignored

+2 to +5 if the sword is routinely ignored or abused

+3 to +7 if the sword is routinely forced to commit antithetical acts

+1 if wielder has alignment within one step of sword's

+3 if wielder has alignment two steps from the sword's

+5 if wielder has antithetical alignment to sword

+7 if blade must have a specific sort of master but the wielder is not one of this sort.

+4 if the blade is divine in origin

4. Give your blade an actual personality by using the NPC trait generator in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, pages 114-115.

This add substance to the blade and makes for interesting play. For example, if our paladin commits an act of dubious morality, then undergoes *atonement* and performs a redeeming service, he finds that his "create justice" blade is cranky and uncooperative. The paladin offers the blade a jewel-encrusted scabbard and baldric to get on its good side. The blade has other ideas, and orders the paladin to donate 7,000 gp to the next city they come to, with the condition that the money is used to feed and shelter peasants.

5. Each blade with a personality has a chance to know nonweapon proficiencies as well. Roll 1d100: 01-50, no proficiencies; 51-65, one; 66-75, two; 76-85, three; 86-95, four; and 96-00, five. Proficiencies that may be given to a blade are: Ancient History, Local History, Animal Lore, Appraising, Astrology, Direction Sense, Etiquette,

Heraldry, Ancient or Current Languages, Reading Lips, Religion, Singing, Spellcraft, Ventriloquism, Blind-fighting, Weather Sense, Animal Noise, Alertness, Navigation, Vocal Mimicry (the last four are from *The Complete Thief's Handbook*). These skills are all drawn from Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma, and they are checked against the sword's own ability scores.

6. Whether a blade is intelligent depends largely on whether the creator is willing to go to the trouble of chaining a spirit to the blade. A blade is capable of having a mission without having intelligence; such a blade would react in a preprogrammed way to certain stimuli, but would have no power to make decisions on its own.

Vengeance is mine!

When a character and a blade are at cross purposes, friction is the result. Blades have many different ways of getting back at the wielder.

For a minor infraction, a blade may stop speaking, or it might become impossible to silence. It might even refuse to leave its scabbard. If the perpetrator of the infraction is not the wielder, it may demand an atonement, an apology, or both on that person's part before it will give its services to the party once again. On the other hand, it may just hurl nonstop insults at the guilty party until penitence is done. Blades are also capable of causing a fumble or disastrous miss in combat.

For more serious infractions, a blade might stop using its punitive powers in the service of its wielder. A blade might also negate its own powers until an atonement or similar form of reparation was made. For all intents and purposes, it becomes a nonmagical sword, except that it still retains its voice and intelligence.

In the face of major infractions or alignment differences, the blade might be moved to actively use its innate powers against its wielder. Perhaps it could root itself to its scabbard and be unmovable until the wielder performs an atonement, depending on the problem and its severity. The sword could also seek a new master. Creator, servitor, and divine blades would cast a powerful *charm monster* on the user of the blade in order to enforce its bidding; the wielder would get -2 to -4 penalty vs. the spell. A servitor blade could force a hero to attack his compatriots, then revoke the *charm* so the hero would see what he had done.

A note about evil swords: It is silly to think that an evil sword would automatically damage anyone of another ethos. A truly evil sword might beg a paladin to keep it. Lying through its nonexistent teeth, it might say that it was cursed and would perform well in the hands of a righteous person. It might then begin a campaign of disinformation against the wielder and his party. It could urge the paladin to take the easy, expedient way

when solving problems, slowly leading the paladin from the path of goodness. If the owner were aware of the sword's true nature, it might occasionally suggest a morally correct course of action just to make the paladin squirm ("My sword is evil, but it just suggested the one thing that I would have done. Should I keep it or not?").

Of course, a blade with "serve Orcus" as its mission might destroy a paladin out of reflex. But an evil sword can serve a good hero—but only for ends that are evil in the long run.

A potpourri of possibilities

Now let's talk about ways to make a blade fun. For instance, a sword might have a bizarre shape (cutting teeth, odd curves, etc.), elongated crossguards for easy parrying and disarming, or a stabbing spike in the hilt. Perhaps some form of curse is more to your liking, such as a blade cursed only to speak by signs, or a blade that can speak normally but gives only cryptic clues. Maybe the personality of the blade is insane in some way (use the insanities section of the AD&D 1st Edition DMG, pages 83-84). Perhaps the blade has a twin, and their powers cancel each other out when they are in close proximity. Give the twin blade to the first sword-wielder's nemesis, and you have a story.

Perhaps, too, the blade has a long and mysterious history. A few attempts to steal her sword could cause a fighter to go in search of that history, especially if that blade cannot or will not tell her what its history is. Maybe the blade has a specific destiny that it must fulfill, or it protects a bit of lore or treasure until it decides that the wielder is worthy of it. In my campaign, there was a sword reputed to be the guardian of a vast treasure. A ranger found it and passed its tests as to his worthiness. It then divulged its first clue, a map etched in the steel of the blade that had been kept invisible before. This led to an adventure where the ranger found a map etched in the floor. The ranger slid the blade into a slot on the map, and waited until sunlight shone through the hole in the pommel. This marked the next place to go, where the ranger discovered that the pommel held the key to the third and final map that led to the hoard of a dragon.

You can also give your blade little powers that make it special but don't offer any real power, such as the sword having a razor edge at all times. Perhaps the blade floats in water, or it sings in combat. Perhaps the sword is the metallic equivalent of a *crystal hypnosis ball*. Go nuts—your players will thank you for it.

Creation checklist

1. Determine who the creator of the sword is, and whether he is a PC or NPC. Make notes on the creator's class, level,

race, and alignment.

2. Determine who is to be the wielder of the sword and make the same notes. Concentrate on the relationship between sword and wielder.

3. Add any history between the time that the sword was created to the time it arrived in the wielder's hands.

4. From the notes already taken, it should be easy to come up with the mission of the sword and whether it is intelligent.

5. Once the mission is created, the sword's statistics should fall right into place.

6. Use the NPC trait generator to find the blade's personality, then determine if the blade has any proficiencies.

7. Lightly garnish the finished product with special touches, then see if the finding of the blade itself can be made into a whole adventure.

8. Make notes on possible future storylines.

9. Keep a note card with all the statistics of that sword with you during the game, and note all the things about the sword that are secret. Be prepared to share this card with any other DM who runs that PC and the sword.

Lasker leaned against the crypt wall, his knees shaking. Spots passed before his eyes as he panted. He slowly became aware that he was mumbling something a mad string of thoughts, and he stopped. He dropped Selar and rubbed at his face. He was dying of thirst. He had to get out of the tomb.

He scarcely remembered to recover his sword first. Stumbling over brittle vampire bones, he made his way toward the exit as if in a dream. Outside, in blinding daylight, he sank to his knees, then fell forward on the wet grass and offered up a silent prayer of thanks to the sun, the sky, and his deity.

"That was great!" came a ghostly voice from the sword he held limply in his right hand.

"I ought to throw you back in the tomb," Lasker gasped. "I ought to have you melted down into buttons."

"You ought to keep me," Selar replied. "I can do so much more in a brave fighter's hands."

Lasker didn't answer. He was still tempted to dispose of the weapon in the fastest way possible. Still, something stayed him from flinging Selar into the hills. Perhaps he'd think about it on the way back to town. He still needed to recover the bodies of his allies before they, too, arose in undead form three days hence. And Selar was still the best sword he'd ever found.

He'd think about it. And maybe he'd keep Selar a while longer. Ω

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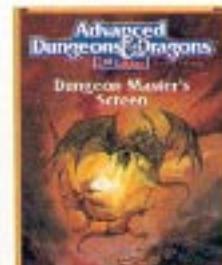
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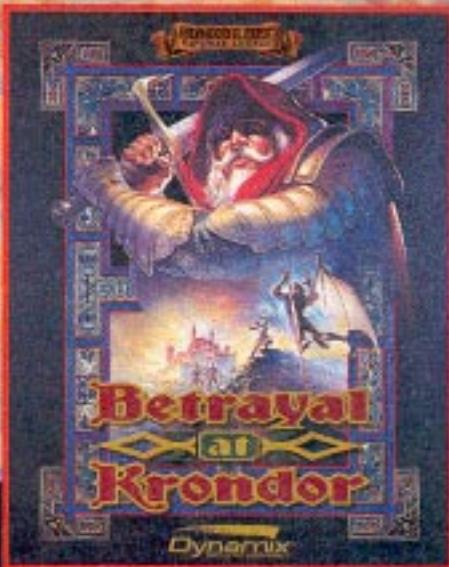


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Might and
Magic:
*Clouds
of Keen*
(New World
Computing)

Soar amidst the *Clouds of Keen*

KnightLine

In the news, American Laser Games is going to create games for the Sega Genesis system. These entertainments will require the Sega CD-ROM accessory and incorporate a new, light-reading gun accessory called the Menacer. Two games currently in development are *Mad Dog McCree* and *Gallagher's Gallery*. The company expects these games to reach the market by the summer of 1993.

Rumored to be in development by Velocity is a super new version of *Spectre*, its futuristic tank game for the Macintosh. Already playable over an AppleTalk network, the new version possesses enhanced features we'll discuss in a future column. Also under development by New World Computing is *Might and Magic III* for the Macintosh.

Two new CD-ROM games being com-

pleted for the Macintosh include *Hell Cab* from Warner New Media and *The Iron Helix* from Drew Pictures. These games possess robust graphics and animation, and superb music scores and sound effects—they leave no doubt as to the direction computer entertainments are heading.

Strategic Simulations, Inc. (SSI) has started a new telephone number for game hints. Operating 24 hours a day, seven

days a week, the number is (900) 737-4468. If you're under 18, be sure to obtain your parents' permission before calling the hotline. If you require technical support from SSI for one of its products, that number is (408) 737-6850.

H.E.L.P.

Ben Webster of Gloucester, Mass., writes, "In the IBM version of *Space Quest*, how can you get past the guard to the tunnel that leads to the interior of the super-computer?"

Peter Flagg of Buffalo, N.Y., would enjoy hearing from anyone who can help him finish SSI's *Pool of Darkness*. "I get killed in one of the three fights. Can someone tell me how to get through this?"

Todd Mulholland of Greenbush, Mich., writes, "I am writing in response to Jake Haney's request for help with *Leather*

Computer games' ratings

X	Not recommended
*	Poor
**	Fair
***	Good
****	Excellent
*****	Superb

Goddesses of Phobos. You give your flashlight to the salesman, who will in turn give you a tee-remover machine (that you use on the unTangling ointment—remember the dude with an angle for a daughter?) To buy an exit, you must first get the coin from the visophone booth near the scientist's house. Then, if you can get to the North Pole without having your brain fried (which, I believe is done by using the raft in the secret catacombs), there are a group of penguins. If you give the coin to them for their retirement fond, you will get the exact change you need to buy the exit. As far as Thorbast goes, if you attack him enough times, you will eventually disarm him. Do not attack him again.

Instead, get his sword, and give it to him. He will realize that you are a good guy and that evil never wins, and he will impale himself. For the frog, you don't need the cotton balls, you need the clothespin from the sultan's house. Put that on your nose, the lip balm on your lips, close your eyes, then cover your ears with your hands. I hope these help you complete this great game."

Casey McCaleb of Fennville, Mich., responds to Bruce Kumsteen's question about *Secret of the Silver Blades*. "After you get the Staff of Oswulf, you must use the malfunctioning teleporter to reach ninth level of the mines. Then you can go to the tenth level and get into the dungeon. When you are in the dungeon, be sure to look around and get the three keys. The passwords are (in this order): 'Your Heart,' 'Your Word,' 'Your Breath,' 'River,' 'Water,' 'Silence,' 'Wind,' and 'Fire.' When you get out of the dungeon, you must go through the ice crevices until you reach the frost giant village. Fight your way to the king in the southwestern corner of the village. He will help you if you attack the Black Circle. Work your way through the crevices on the other side of town, and you will find Dreadlord's sanctum.

"If you meet Sargatha in the castle, attack immediately. On the second level of the castle, use the View command to get through the maze. If you meet iron golems, the password is 'Steeleye.' In the southwestern corner of the maze is a secret door. Ignore the Magic Mouth. Again, the password is Steeleye. In the upper level of the castle, use the keys in this order: Silver, Gold, Brass. The Dreadlord is in the northwestern section of the castle. After you kill him, save the game! Go north from this room and fight the iron golems. When you beat them, you have won the game."

Reviews

Might and Magic: Clouds of Xeen* ****
New World Computing, PC/MS-DOS
computers

What a delightful experience! *Clouds of Xeen* (*Xeen*) gets back to the roots of fan-



Might and Magic: Clouds of Xeen
(New World Computing)

tasy role-playing games (FRPGs). It is eloquent in its simplicity and exciting in its delivery, while full of interesting and dangerous adventures. New World Computing didn't see the need to experiment with different interfaces or adventure views, and instead enhanced the adventure with richer music, better sound effects, and speech synthesis.

We've been playing *Xeen* for over a week, for at least three to four hours a night. We hate to leave it to do other things. At every turn there is a new encounter to manage, a new quest to complete, or a puzzle to solve. Thankfully, New World hasn't required godlike characters to get the adventure up and going. The increasing difficulty level is matched to the game's abilities to increase your six characters' attributes at appropriate times. Complete a quest, and you'll find the experience earned is enough to allow your adventuring party to tackle the next quest.

However, not every quest is linear. You can complete your "assignments" as you find them, or you can select from several that you've uncovered but not yet solved. As you endeavor to complete these mini-adventures, you'll discover that you need to acquire an item, become stronger, or need clues or "rumors" to help you finish the quest. As the game's world is quite large, you'll have no difficulty in finding something else to focus upon as you prepare to finish the adventure you just started.

New World offers a terrific interface for play. Whether you use the included character set, or create your own, this FRPG tells you immediately the health of each character. There's no need to open separate windows or submenus simply to find out if a character can sustain another hit in battle.

One of New World's great interface deci-



sions is automapping. Despite some geographical complexities between using the View window and the Automap, we never had to map by hand. Granted, we made a lot of notes about different X,Y locations as points of interest, but the Automap feature added enjoyment to this game.

Note that some races have capabilities not possessed by everyone. Also, some classes obtain a special, secondary skill. Humans, for example, obtain Swimming. A paladin has clerical spell capability right from the start. Dwarves can immediately Spot Secret Doors. Ninjas and robbers have Thievery. Gnomes have Direction Sense, while rangers have the Pathfinder skill. When we rolled our characters, we tried to ensure each character possessed a special ability. This saved us time and money, as we didn't have to purchase these skills during the game when the cash was needed for other things, such as buying spells and other necessities to ensure survival.

You'll meet many characters in the game, from King Burlock to Lord Xeen (you should meet his pet). You start the game in a tavern in the town of Vertigo discussing a dream you've had with others who have had similar nightmares. King Burlock's brother, Roland, has returned home. Crodo, the King's trusted advisor, doesn't think too highly of Roland or his special quest in trying to find the magical Sixth Mirror. King Burlock assigns the quest to many brave adventur-



Discovery: In the Steps of Columbus***
Impressions, PC/MS-DOS computers

This offering is one of the better simulations of this type we've encountered. In it, you'll soon have your ships exploring the world in search of safe landfall. Once anchorage is made, it's time to settle in and build your ports. Should your settlers survive everything from natural disasters to attacks by the natives, they'll start clearing the land and filling in swampy areas. You can assist in this endeavor by directing individuals to undertake specific actions, or you can send several out on foot to explore in designated directions. As your port grows and as lumber is obtained by clearing the land, you can build warehouses, farms, and even a church or two.

Don't forget that you have computer-controlled opponents from other countries, though. They take great delight in building their empires as well, so you can expect confrontations. Build up your defenses as quickly as possible and establish a trade route for your goods to other ports in the world to assure your treasury of growth. Neglect either, and your ports will crumble into disarray and your ships' crews might take to pirating as an alternative to your forgetfulness. If you find an enemy's port nearby, attack it! If you win the battle, that settlement is now yours!

You can borrow additional money from the bank to build more ships to do additional exploring, set up trade routes, or even purchase a couple men-o'-war to protect your sea routes. Be careful that you don't become too involved in the building and sailing ship endeavors. Once landfall is made, you'll have a heck of a time simply trying to maintain your ports. No one ever said discovering, exploring, and conquering the world would be easy!

A couple of drawbacks: Once you've seen the game's "Land Ho" graphic animation, you don't need to see it each time a landfall takes place. It takes too long, and there is no override key to allow you to cancel the entire process. Also, the interface is different than most other games. It's going to take you several games to understand how to control ships, what your ports can build, and how to direct your settlers. At no time did we find the interface intuitively easy to use, and that lead to some frustration.

Discovery is an enjoyable game most of the time. Once learned, you'll enjoy the fact that the majority of the settlers understand what's to be done and do it, without direction from you. Make certain you keep an eye on the critical readings from your settlement and you could control the world. We reviewed the game with VGA graphics and AdLib sound board.



Might and Magic: Clouds of Xeen
(New World Computing)

and transfer all his weapons, armor, equipment, and miscellaneous goodies to the character in the second adventuring position.

2. Remove the first adventurer from the party.

3. Create your first character and, once you're satisfied with his attributes, assign this adventurer to the party.

4. Transfer the items that used to belong to the first prerolled character to your first created character.

5. Continue this process until you have moved all the prerolled characters' equipment to your new characters.

By the way, when we created our own characters, we refused to accept any die roll that didn't afford each character double-digit attributes for might, intelligence, personality endurance, speed, accuracy, or luck. Various attributes are necessary for specific assignments. (You'll find more hints in "Clue corner.")

This is a great FRPG, enabling gamers to concentrate on the game itself with up-front character statistics that don't interrupt the flow of play. The animation, although limited, is appropriate, and the number of exciting quests will keep you playing for days. We highly recommend *Xeen* to all computer gamers. As the company's past *Might and Magic* series have been converted to the Macintosh, our hope is that *Xeen* will also find its way to that system as well. This game was reviewed using VGA graphics, Roland sound board, and AdLib for speech synthesis.

ers. One day, Crodo finds out that Roland is actually Lord Xeen, who has initiated a plan to control King Burlock. Crodo is locked away in Baron Dargoz's Tower and can no longer advise King Burlock.

You may play *Xeen* in either Adventurer or Warrior mode. The former provides for less combat. Once you've made your selection, you cannot change your mind. To create characters, you must enter the tavern. When the game starts, you'll find yourself looking out across a cobblestone area with a green, animated something awaiting you. The six characters that fill the positions in the adventuring screen are the ones provided with the game. If you wish to create your own group, turn around and head into the tavern. Keep in mind that if you select to play with the prerolled characters, they not only possess the same amount of gold (800) and gems (10) that you receive when you roll your own characters, but they are also fully armed. New characters have only money.

Here's what to do—although time consuming, it's worth the effort:

1. Go back into the tavern and sign in. Start with the first prerolled character

Legend of Kyrandia

Westwood Associates, PC/MS-DOS computers

Westwood Associates has released the first of its Fables and Fiends series, called *Legend of Kyrndia*. It's your duty to stop an evil jester. Yes, an evil clown with magical powers is destroying the land of Kyrandia—he's even turned your grandfather into stone! Now, it is up to you to stop this evil by finding a magical amulet that possesses four unique properties.

The animation and backgrounds are astonishing and the dialogue is wonderful. The puzzles begin easily enough, but believe us, they get more difficult quickly. Moving your character is as simple as point-and-click. Clicking the cursor on an object picks it up and turns the cursor into an icon representing that object. You can deposit the object into your inventory, have your character use it, or drop it.

The story, though not original, is quite enjoyable. The ease of character interaction is a definite plus, as are the puzzles. This is a game that won't be finished in a day. It requires some mapping and thinking. The graphics and music are stupendous, and all this requires fewer than eight megabytes of hard-disk storage space (quite a feat when you consider the double-digit storage requirements of many other new games). We applaud Westwood Associates for *Legend of Kyrandia* and hope we won't have to wait too long for the next installment. We reviewed this game using VGA graphics.

Ultima VII: The Black Gate and Forge of Virtue

Origin Systems, PC/MS-DOS computers

Origin Systems should score well with *The Black Gate* (TBG) and *Forge of Virtue* (FOV). What's interesting about FOV is that this is the first time a major FRPG publisher has released an add-on adventure to its main storyline. Best of all, it works well!

This FRPG always starts with TBG. You'll learn from the introduction that The Guardian is controlling your computer, specifying his intent not only to rule Britannia, but you, the Avatar, as well.

In order to learn your characters' health scores, you must either double-click on the character to obtain the Inventory Display, or press the letter "I" on your keyboard. If you wish to check out the health or possessions of a character other than the Avatar, you must still open his display first. This leads to a cluttered screen, especially when you start opening possessions inside backpacks and bags.

FOV is installed after TBG. A new island, called the Isle of Fire, then takes its position south of Vesper. This island has new quests for you to tackle, all designed to increase the viability of your Avatar character. Three quests can provide you with the means to create the Black Sword.

You'll find this weapon a great aid to you in TBG.

In order to become involved in FOV, you must start your adventure in TBG. You cannot play one without the other. When you consider the cost of FOV in relation to the price paid for TBG, we're not certain whether you're going to find the additional \$20 to \$27 worth only three quests that result in you obtaining a sword. Granted, it is a powerful sword, but before FOV came along, adventurers were playing and completing TBG quite handily. You certainly don't need FOV to succeed at TBG.

If you're interested in accomplishing the quests in FOV, you must continue to tell yourself not to become too embroiled in the adventures in TBG. What you must do is get to Britain to talk to Lord British, so he can give you the deed to his ship and inform you of its location.

Don't travel overland from Britain to Vesper. There are enough physical hazards to derail such an endeavor. Instead, head over to the Serpent's Spine near the Lost River, find the trail that leads inland, and hop aboard the magic carpet you'll find. Fly southeast and land in the desert area near Vesper, get aboard your ship. Unfurl your sails (double-click) and head south; you'll run directly into the huge Island of Fire. Finding a suitable landing area is going to be your first task. If you need help, check out "Clue corner" for more details.

The graphics are not up to Origin's normal high standards. Your ship is large, the island's rocky shoreline is squared, and your ship simply doesn't fit into most shoreline areas. It'll jump when you try to move toward the land because it's too large to fit the shoreline. Forget using your mouse for navigation here. Go with your numeric keypad and be patient.

You don't have to complete the adventures on the Island of Fire. As you gain attributes, you may wish to head back to the mainland to continue your TBG quests. However, we recommend that if you start FOV, you should finish it. That sword does come in handy. When you do return to TBG, concentrate your investigations on the Fellowship. Realize that sometimes a gargoyle can be a better friend than a human!

Although some of the dialogue is trite and some conversations are poorly constructed, you do learn a great deal of information, but you must speak to everyone you encounter. Keep track of what is being told to you. Do not steal anything! Not only does it violate your vows as an Avatar, but it upsets the local guards.

If you're interested in completing FOV forget what you see in the stables. Yes, Christopher and Inamo the gargoyle are a mess. Take all the notes you can between Trinsic and Britannia, but get that magic carpet and get to your boat to sail to the Isle of Fire first!

FOV automatically updates TBG with the latest software patches from Origin. Yes, both adventures are exciting and require gamers to think about what they are doing in order to succeed. Despite an angled perspective, conversations that occasionally read (or sound, if you possess the speech board) as though a translator missed a syllable here and there, and the inconvenience of having to open multiple windows to see statistics, both adventures should probably earn their way into your software library. We reviewed these using VGA graphics and Roland sound board.

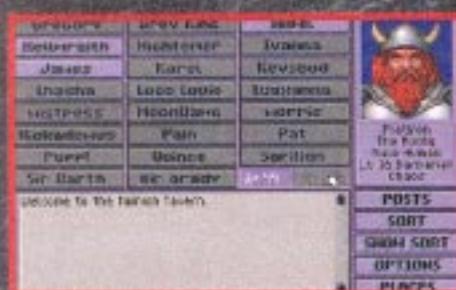
Clue corner

Might and Magic: Clouds of Xeen

In the town of Vertigo:

1. Watch out for the gate at X20,Y1—it's a shocking surprise.
 2. More than fruit grows on these trees.
 3. Mylo's Maps is at X10,Y16. He will teach cartography for 100 gold.
 4. The well water at X14,Y17 is not fit for drinking.
 5. Gilbert's Hexes are at X20,Y11. You must be a member to shop here.
 6. Lady Geraldine's Tavern is at X18,Y4. Some rumors you might hear here include:
 - The orcs keep valuables in their outposts and camps in the hills.
 - Phirna plants look like small berry bushes and can be found all in Toad Meadow to the southeast.
 - There's still gold in the hills to the north.
 - The Count in the town of Nightshadow sleeps in a coffin that can only be opened if the sundials are correctly set.
 - The witches of Toad Meadow have been snatching children and turning them into goblins.
 - 7. Norman's Ironworks is at X13,Y4.
 - 8. Gunther the Mayor is at X14,Y5. Complete his quest and gain 5,000 experience points, complete recovery from all injuries, plus 4,000 gold and 50 gems. You also gain the Red Dwarf Badge of Courage and 50,000 experience points.
 - 9. Vernon the Guildman is at X16,Y11. He will put anyone on the guild roll for free, but guild dues cost 25 gold.
 - 10. The bank is at X21,Y17.
 - 11. Joe's exterminator shop is at X10,Y18.
 - 12. Mylo's Maps charges 100 gold for those who wish cartography skills.
 - 13. Thylon's Training is at X10,Y8.
 - 14. Rialdo the Ranger is at X25,Y26—pathfinding for 2,500 gold.
 - 15. Joe's Storeroom is at X6,Y29.
 - 16. Slime Temple is at X15,Y21
- In area E3:*
1. The cabin at X14,Y13 is observation post for orcs. You'll receive 1,000 experience if you destroy it.
 2. X11,Y12 is a covered wagon containing Oslo the Observant who will teach you how to spot secret doors for 500 gold.

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3. The archway at X8,Y14 offers +20 resistance to fire, electricity, cold, and poison to whoever prays here.

4. The fountain at X8,Y6 offers +25 spell points. Requires three Jumps through forest, heading west, to get to it.

In area F3:

1. The fountain at X12,Y12 adds +5 to AC.

2. Myra the Herbalist at X9,Y11 will give you five Cure Poison potions for each Phirna root you bring to her from Toad Meadow. (You can pick only one plant at a time. If you want more than five potions, you'll have to return to the meadow to get additional plants.)

3. The pyramid is at X8,Y10.

4. The entrance to Red Dwarf Range nines is at X5,Y13.

5. The fountain at X7,Y7 adds 25 hit points.

6. The wishing well at X1,Y7 requires a Jump spell to get there. Whoever throws in a coin receives +60 to luck!

7. At X9,Y6, Orothin the Hermit needs you to find his bone whistle, dropped somewhere in Pitchfork Creek. If you can find his whistle, he activates statues that can teach spells.

In area B3:

1. In a cabin at X9,Y6, you'll meet Halon the Efficient who requires some lava to unfreeze his water works. He will reward you, if found.

In area B2:

1. The door located near the mountains at X12,Y4 gets you into the War Zone for arena-like combat versus your selection of opponents. See the Battle Master at X7,Y6.

In area A3:

1. Kai Wu the Monk would like you to rid his home of evil clansmen. He's in a tent at X15,Y12.

The Red Dwarf range:

In mine #1:

1. A note found on skeleton: "Dwarven travel codes: Mine 1, Mine 2, Mine 3, Mine 4, Mine 5."

2. A green Liquid offers +2 to endurance.

3. Dwarven travel code: A----

In mine #2:

1. A teleport device is at X10,Y28.

2. Watch out for the rubble; it contains spiders!

3. The barrel at X10,Y22 adds +2 to endurance, permanently.

4. The barrel with orange liquid adds +2 to intellect.

5. Find a gold vein in the mines, and you can mine it for GP!

6. A blue liquid in a barrel adds +2 to personality.

7. A red liquid in barrel adds +2 to might.

8. A white liquid in barrel adds +2 to luck.

9. A skeleton at X6,Y3 adds to Dwarven travel code: "Deep Mine -L--"

In mine #3:

1. A teleport device is at X4,Y14.
2. A barrel with red liquid adds +2 to might.

3. A barrel with purple liquid adds +2 to speed.

4. A skeleton at X6,Y0 "Dwarven travel code: Deep mine --P--"

In mine #4:

1. A teleport device is at X7,Y7.

2. A barrel with white liquid at X8,Y5 adds +2 to luck.

3. A parchment found on skeleton reads "Dwarven travel code: Deep mine ---H--"

4. There's a high yield gold vein at X5,Y10.

5. There's a gold vein at X4,Y14. After two mining attempts, watch out for a cave-in.

6. Leave the rubble alone in the area of X14,Y10. Nothing but poison and spiders are there.

7. There's a secret door at X11,Y14 facing west.

8. There's a secret door at X7,Y12 facing west.

In mine #5:

1. A teleport device is at X8,Y4, facing west.

2. A yellow liquid in a barrel adds +2 to accuracy.

3. A purple liquid in a barrel adds +2 to speed.

4. A skeleton may give you a strange feel-

ing: You are now aware of which direction you face!

5. There's a poison gas trap at X12,Y6. Jump over it.

6. There's a secret door at X13,Y7.

7. There's a gold vein at X1,Y14, but after a second mining operation, it'll cave in.

8. A parchment on a skeleton reads, "Dwarven travel code: Deep mine ---A--"

The Lessers

We thank those of our readers who continue to come to the rescue of other gamers with their answers to their published requests for "H.E.L.P." Also, to everyone who continues to send in game hints, thanks again. Typed or word processed letters are preferred, as some handwriting is almost hieroglyphic in quality and presents quite a challenge to read. Mail your goodies to: The Clue Corner, c/o The Lessers, 521 Czerny Street, Tracy CA 95376. Until next month, game on! Ω

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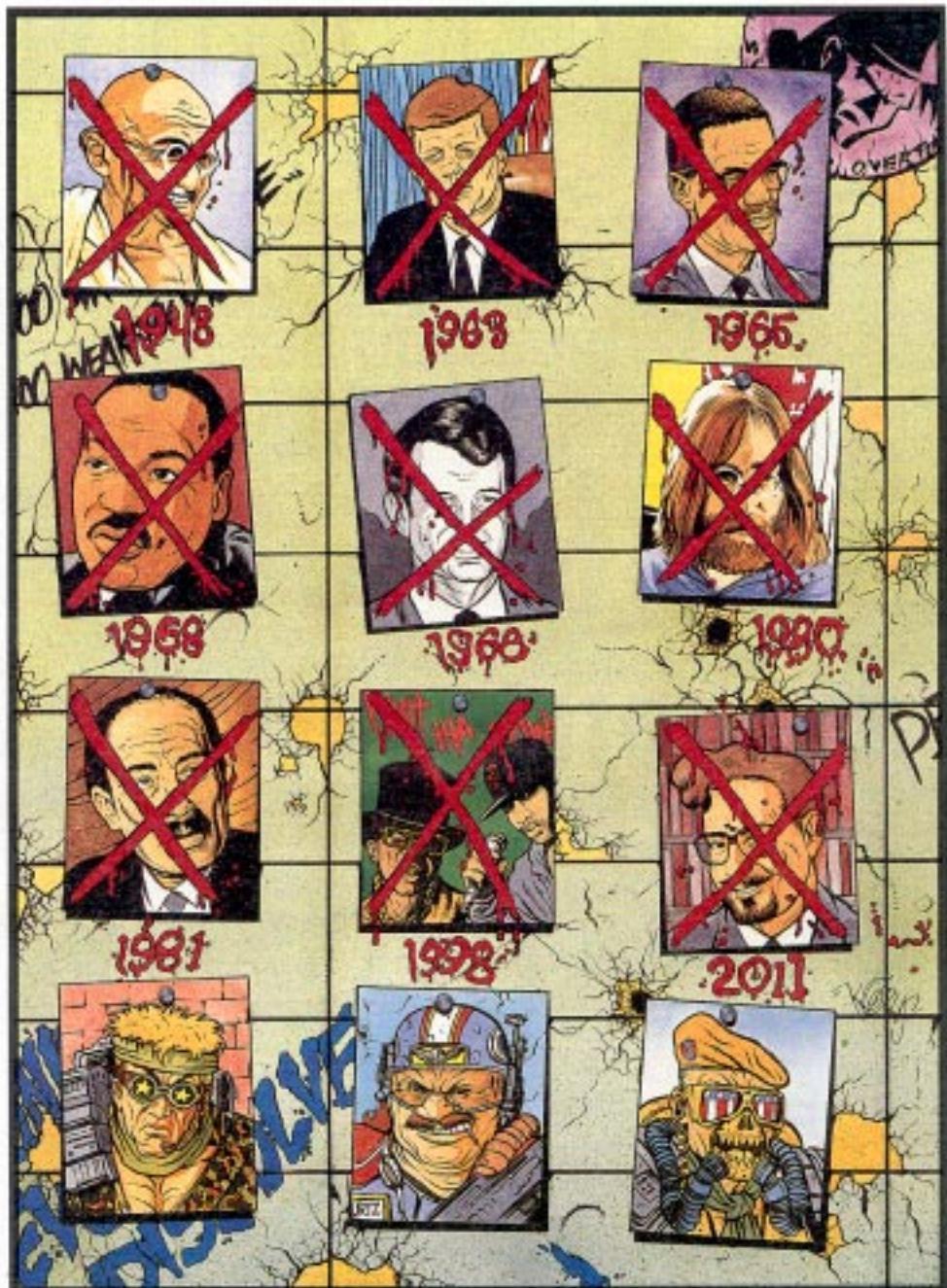
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CAMPAIGN JOURNAL



Risen from the Ashes

Gaming in the revitalized WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting
by Carl Sargent

This article is the first in a series that will present material for specific AD&D® game worlds by different authors. This column, like "The Dragon's Bestiary," etc., will appear whenever we receive an appropriate article. Many of the ideas presented here are applicable to other campaigns, so be certain to look past the label for ideas to borrow for your campaign—no matter where it is set. Let us know what you think about this column.

The Editors

The WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting is the oldest published RPG campaign world, and it's one with a lot of long-time fans. It is now a world changed greatly by the events depicted in the GREYHAWK® Wars set—nearly three years of carnage and deadly deceit in which the powers of evil have waxed strong. The hand of Iuz, the Old One, extends across the central Flanaess, and the cruel Scarlet Brother-

hood extends its power and influence around the southern lands bordering the Azure Sea. The WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting has become a truly exciting world again filled with opportunities for adventure of all kinds. This is no longer a world at war, but tensions, border skirmishes, intrigue, and desperation are to be found in all lands. There's never been a better time to adventure here! This article gives DMs a wealth of ideas for how and where to build up campaigns set in this world, showing which lands and locations are best suited for different preferences (skirmishing, intrigue, battle, crusading, etc.) in campaigning. Many of the places and personalities mentioned here are not fully detailed in the *From the Ashes* boxed set. This allows DMs to individualize each for campaigns. Also, see the "Errata, etc." box at this article's end for clarifications and some heretofore unrevealed information.

Old-timers and newcomers

When I was given the opportunity to write *From the Ashes*, the new WORLD OF GREYHAWK boxed set (replacing the old WORLD OF GREYHAWK set of 1983), I kept in mind the fact that there are many gamers who've been playing in this world for a long time. Although a great war has changed much, I didn't want to turn a much-loved world wholly on its head in this rewrite, based on the GREYHAWK Wars boxed set. Players with characters who have become part of this game world shouldn't have everything turned upside-down. If you've been with Greyhawk a long time, you'll be pleasantly surprised that much of what you know and love is still there. The Free City is still the nub of the Flanaess, and little has changed there; Mordenkainen still watches from the Yatils; Furyondy is beleaguered, but Veluna still stands as a beacon of good in the darkened days of the post-war world.



The lands of Geoff and Sterich are lost to giants pouring down from the Crystalmists—but many of the people of those lands live in Keoland and the Gran March, now, and fight to regain their homes. The Shield Landers are driven out by Iuz, but their diaspora provides much of Furyondy's backbone and they look to the day when they can return home also. We've changed your game world, but we haven't broken it asunder.

For a DM with a long-established Greyhawk campaign, adapting the changes of the Wars isn't difficult. If you wish, you can involve PCs in adventures that take place in the war years, and *From the Ashes* has a complete summary. Otherwise, you can just use a "reality shift"—tell your players that three years of game time have passed, summarize the changes for them, and assume that their PCs were engaged in war service, or defensive/protection action, unscathed. They may have to relocate (rarely; only if Shield Landers, Geoff men, or Sterish folk), but most of the time the transition can be simple. There are no major rules upheavals as accompanied the Time of Troubles in the

FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, although PC clerics should be converted (no pun intended) into specialty priests (*From the Ashes* gives rules for this). Greyhawk's specialty priests, by the way, typically have access to more spheres of spells than in other AD&D game settings, making them more versatile. This reflects the fact that the Powers of Greyhawk very rarely act directly (by sending avatars) in the affairs of the world, so their priests are more important (and more powerful and significant) servants.

This world also is ideal for 1st-level characters. They're an option for long-timers who want to start over in the world, too. There are several locations that provide excellent bases for such PCs to learn the survival skills they need; to find good companions, friends, and tutors; and to have adventures in a variety of settings. Some of these locations are noted here.

Settings within a setting

Some information about what *From the Ashes* contains will be helpful to DMs and players. The Atlas Book is the world book,

and it contains a large number of short adventure themes set across the game world, a listing of mysterious and magical locations, a bunch of rumors that can be expanded into adventures, and a chapter ("Tales of the Year of Peace") that provides still more adventure themes. The Campaign Book develops the lands around the City of Greyhawk: the Gnarley Forest, the southern plains and the Mistmarsh down the Selintan to the military port of Hardby, the Cairns Hills east to Urnst and the northern Abbor-Alz. Each section has a wealth of short adventure themes, and completing this are six adventures set cross the Flanaess on adventure cards, plus two longer adventures set in the Campaign Book setting.

The city and environs

There is a complete range of environments around the City of Greyhawk—for forest, desert to the south (covered in the module WGR3 *Rary the Traitor*), hills, mountains, marshland, rivers, and coastlines. It is also a setting largely untouched by the Wars, and may appeal to long-time DMs on this score (particularly if they're uncertain about how to integrate the changes of the Wars, at least initially).

This setting also allows for all kinds of adventures. For dungeon delvers, try the star cairns of the Cairn Hills or the dangerous, magical ruins of the Abbor-Alz (lamia, derro, liches, brass and copper dragons and much else lair there). For wilderness adventures, the Mistmarsh, the foothills, and the Gnarley Forest are perfect locales. For spying or skirmishing, the Gnarley Forest rangers are always watchful of the Wild Coast's orcs and a skilled ranger or thief with suitable talents will find employ in Hardby or the Wild Coast cities now under Greyhawk's control. For intrigue and living the good life, the City of Greyhawk has not changed much since the boxed set by that name was published, but *From the Ashes* lists all the changes (it also has an alphabetical index to every major NPC within the Free City in both boxed sets). It's the perfect place to gamble, spy, spy on other spies, investigate mysteries, and get embroiled in other people's conflicts, and it is also a good place to draw in the theme of the Scarlet Brotherhood. This group's interest in the Free City can threaten PCs when they are ready to be drawn into truly dangerous political intrigue. For PCs with a desire to see some action, a career in the Hardby Marines or the Cairn Hills garrisons are recommended.

A particularly good location for starting PCs is to have them in the service of the paladin Karistyne in the Abbor-Alz. This castle is not detailed in the boxed set, so this base works well for a DM who wants to personalize things a bit. The higher-level occupants can be supplemented by the DM's own intermediary mid-level

NPCs, and Karistyne's many connections and friends in nearby lands give a good background. This is a great place for PCs who like to make friends, acquire contacts, and use their Charisma and negotiating skills. The location of the castle also puts it within a few days' travel of hill, desert, marsh, and plain terrains, and the many settlements of these lands. Some settlements are directly associated with Karistyne (the Greyhawk militia bases of Hardby, Storm Keep with its griffon-riding skyrangers, dwarven settlements, gnomish mines, etc.) and others through those associations. A campaign can spread from this base, with new friends and contacts found at each stage of the journey as PCs travel farther in the service of their liege. It's also ideal for developing the campaign into more dangerous territory, such as the lands of the Ogremeeet ogres, the southern lands, the margins of Maure Castle, or such strange and bewildering places as the Doomgrinder, the enormous and forbidding stone windmill that counts down the decades to the end of the world (see below for more on this and other "rumors").

Karistyne's castle has a good basis for a campaign and can sustain diverse adventures as a campaign progresses. It is an especially good setting for a PC party including rangers, priests of LG/NG alignments, dwarven and gnomish PCs, and even elven mages (providing they can handle the temper of Karistyne's notorious elven invoker). It is especially recommended for newcomers, since DMs don't have to master a great deal of world background to adventure in this setting.

Furyondy: A land oppressed

Northern Furyondy is an excellent campaign setting for a DM who wishes to bring the flavor of post-war Greyhawk right into the central focus of the campaign. The armies of Iuz can be a few miles away across the Flare Line, Furyondy's long strip of defensive earthworks, castles, keeps, towers, and other fortifications. This adventure setting is good for PCs of all levels of experience.

For more accomplished PCs, involvement in the politics of Furyondy is almost certain. The divisions of the Seven Families, the major landholders and militiamen, are fully recounted in WGR4 *The Marklands* sourcebook, and King Belvor IV has a very tough time keeping his kingdom together. In addition, he has to act as liaison with his banker to the west, Veluna, and deal with hotheads who want to go to war again (including some of the nobles and the vengeful priesthood of Trithereon) while also keeping his alliance with the Highfolk intact and cordial. Wherever you go here, someone's muttering about powerful people doing the wrong thing.

This border zone isn't one of major bat-

tles (if the PCs want these, the Vesve, Forest is the place to go, and it's just west of Furyondy). It's one of tactical skirmishing and hit-and-run raiding, perfect for aggressive mid-level PCs. High-level PCs can try heroic acts like those in WGR6 *City of Skulls* (due out in May), penetrating Luz's capital to free the imprisoned leader of the Shield Lander exiles. The ability to think and move swiftly, and to have contingency plans for almost anything, are a great advantage here. Rangers, elves, and halflings will find the Vesve Forest a perfect setting for their skills, and will find many friends along the road, too. Unfortunately, those friends often don't cooperate too well, so PCs with some Charisma and a real desire to unify good against evil will have endless opportunities here. Of course, Luz's forces, indigenous humanoids, and the monsters of the decimated battleground ruins of the Defiled Glades badlands all offer worthwhile opposition!

The Vesve setting is also a good one for PCs with some magical strength behind them. There are powerful magical communities here, such as the grey elves of the Tree Lands and Luz uses the Vesve as a testing-ground for new spells and all manner of summoned monsters, such as the Abyssal bats that have terrorized the forest folk. The Vesve has its own magical, mysterious ruins, too: liches' lairs, Suloise and Baklunish ruins, and more. It is also a place where the PCs can see the defensive, scrying magics known as *Philidor's globes*, after the Archmage who put them there. Philidor is one of the two major new arrivals in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK campaign (together with Mayaheine, a nascent Demipower of Lawful Good) and if the PCs become drawn into his affairs, well, anything is possible.

Northern Furyondy is a land where everyone looks over their shoulders most of the time. Head farther south, and you may still find Luz's agents at work. The southern city of Ryemend is a spying post for the whole kingdom, it seems; the king's men keep nervous watch over the paralyzed city of Verbobonc with its increasingly impotent ruler, some Knights of the Hart here are planning to annex that city, Duke Bennal Tyneman's spies keep watch on everyone else, and the great Velverdyva brings travelers to and from Perrenland, the Highfolk, Dyvers, Willip, and the Free City itself, and within a day's travel across the river waters lie the Kron Hills. Spies of Luz and the Scarlet Brotherhood have surely infiltrated this city by now. A campaign taking this town as a starting point can head off anywhere. Because water travel is so much swifter than land travel, Ryemend could be an ideal base for PCs who like to be highly mobile.

Nyrond: The mighty have fallen

Bankrupted by its war with the Great Kingdom and the cost of fending off Stonefist men and even humanoids from the Bone March, Nyrond commands itself to players and DMs who enjoy role-playing in a land of strife and struggle. Nyrond is far more factionalized than Furyondy; its king is weak and is poorly advised by toadying sycophants. Corruption and rebellion rot this once-great nation. Ordinary people starve or riot at the ruinous taxes the king forces upon them, and Nyrond is beset with divisions. A handful of local rulers are still wise and kindly, trying to do their best by their subjects in such harsh times. For some respite, southern Nyrond is the best place to be. The southern coastal lands are semi-autonomous, and Relmor Bay offers skirmishes with South Province pirates; spying on Scarlet Brotherhood vessels headed out of Onnwal; the chance to befriend the aquatic elves, dolphins, and selkies of the bays; or the chance to be smugglers, explorers of the coves and ruins littering the southernmost promontories of the land. For low-level characters, the settlement of the paladin Farenne at Shining White overlooking Fairwind Bay (she is very distantly related to Karistyne of the Abbor-Alz), when developed by a DM, offers an excellent starting point that can be developed in a similar manner to Karistyne's castle, except that here the aquatic element, with sea elves and selkies, offers an extra dimension. No evil adversary is at hand, but rather the wickedness of corrupt local nobles and the tragic weakness of the king of the land is this campaign's focus.

Nyrond is a terrific setting for PCs who like a great deal of freedom. If they are chaotic enough, they might ally with Cunhal Blackmaer and the youngbloods of Barren Keep as they gather strength to confront and depose corrupt nobles, some under the magical control of evil advisors. Or perhaps they may be part of the flashpoint of the Celadon Forest, where woodsmen and elves fend off the insurrections of the brutal and corrupt Baron Bastrayne of Woodwyck. The Celadon is an excellent setting for bringing home the deprivation and desperation of so many of Nyrond's people: driven to revolt, ragged and starving in the Spurned Vale, and pursued by monsters in the Gnatmarsh as they try to gather in swamp hay to make a few coppers. This setting puts PCs in the position of having to face evils that arise from an inner degeneration, not an external enemy such as Luz. In this respect, Nyrond can be very challenging.

Not that Nyrond lacks external enemies. The border with Luz's empire is to the north and the main problem there is the bizarre and demented Valorous League of Blindness, a Pholtus cult that wears blink-

ers with pride so that only the true path of righteousness can be discerned and no side distractions. Absurd the cult surely is, but their Fiendfinder-General is powerful and influential, and in a land sundered by internal dissension and governed by such an absolutist, this determined cult gains strength by the day. But to the southeast there lies the monstrous strength of Duke Szeffrin's Almorian Lands, stalked by fiends, where Nyrond is forced to spend money it cannot afford in sustaining armies, cities, and castles. For high-level PCs, this is the place to be. Check out WGR4 *The Marklands*' descriptions of Szeffrin's strongholds, DMs; these beg to be developed into places the most powerful of PCs would fear to tread.

Nyrond handles chaotic and freedom-loving PCs well, and offers good-aligned PCs both internal and external enemies to face. If all these themes are to be brought into a campaign, the eastern lands from the Flinty Hills to the Harp River are ideal (and also recommended for parties with several demihumans). Here, tentative links with the beleaguered good folk of the Adri Forest are being forged as the marauding Bone March humanoids are kept at bay. This setting is ideal for PCs who like both hill-stalking adventures allowing them ample opportunity to beat up on orcs, hobgoblins, ogres, and much else (even refugees from the Bandit Kingdoms), and also like sneak missions across borders to reach friends in distant places. The Valorous League has spread its influence to the borders of these lands, and its demihuman-hating fundamentalism offers a worthy "enemy within" campaign theme. For ranger PCs, membership in the Brothers of the Bronze fellowship beckons here, and members of that society have friends and contacts strung out widely across the forests of the Flanaess. This allows a campaign to travel very widely as new contacts are made.

The Great Kingdom: An ocean of madness

For players who like really being up against it, the Great Kingdom is the place to be. Shattered into a score of petty fiefdoms, some larger domains (North Province, for example) still remain largely intact while elsewhere the Overking's bizarre treatment of his most powerful nobles has generated an entirely new type of ruler: the *animus*. Slaughtered by the Overking and resurrected by Hextor's priests as undead monstrosities, these very powerful creatures rule huge swathes of the old Aerdi (and are detailed in the boxed set). Motivated by cold fury, their own self-loathing, and topped up with fanatical hatred of the Overking, these monsters spare no one and nothing to prosecute their goals of revenge. Entire counties, duchies, and even whole cities have been transformed into charnel

houses and killing zones, realms of absolute nightmare.

Elsewhere, the more detached *animus* rulers control their domains with iron lists, administered by less chaotic extra-planar horrors than the fiends serving the Overking and his more insane nobles. Hextor's powerful priesthood has grown

Errata, etc.

A few errors crept into *From the Ashes*, so errata are listed here. As an additional treat, these are followed by a brief list of mysteries (some with totally new information) that can be addressed and dropped into any WORLD OF GREYHAWK campaign.

1. The silver border and heading in both books were a printer's error. They were intended to be bronze. We apologize for any undue eye strain this caused.
2. Two locations are missing from the maps, they are:
 - Fort Leman lies four hexes northwest of Sourlode (the upper right-hand corner of the campaign map).
 - The Screaming Valley is four hexes due south of Stankaster Tower.
3. According to TSR's 1992 AD&D™ Trading Cards, Bigby the wizard is dead. He is not dead. (The reports of his death were greatly exaggerated.)
4. The hermit of Wavenair was a 13th-level druid from the Gamboge forest. Tenser visited him to learn about elemental water magic. But, since Tenser is now dead, no one may ever know what he learned.
5. The Doomgrinder is a complete mystery, except that it was built by the same dwarves who constructed the Beauteous Cones. It is rumored that the derro who live beneath it are searching for an artifact that will slow the advance of the sails.
6. No one knows what happened to Stankaster and Karposhnen. They may have escaped, or they may have died. Stankaster was an invoker who fled the Great Kingdom. He reputedly had information on Ivid's genealogy. Ivid sent fiends and mages to silence him.
7. Storm Keep was formerly occupied by a wizard, Melandril. He escaped to the Scarlet Brotherhood to participate to its monster-breeding programs.
8. The fifth Star Cairn has never been discovered. Each cairn is the burial site of a Suloise wizard. The only history is the description given on page 36 of the Campaign Book. Extrapolate the location of the fifth cairn by looking at the map. Remember, though, that the cairn only can be accessed with a *gate* cast during a certain planetary conjunction. Elemental creatures as well as magical treasures lie within the cairns

stronger from the Wars; a Power of strife and war could hardly fare otherwise in such times. Clinically planned war schemes are being plotted and schemed by these undying, unfeeling creatures.

It's not likely that many players will want to be right in the middle of this—they don't have to be. They can live in the vast realms of the Grandwood or the Adri, or among the free people of the Lone Heath. They can live in the few remaining cities (mostly in North Province or the southernmost lands) where life can still exist a day-to-day basis without one having to fear being dragged from one's bed and slaughtered by a fiend, or killed by renegade ex-Aerdi humanoid soldiery for the price of a chicken or a few loaves of bread. Progressing farther takes the campaign into Irongate or Sunndi, and brings the PCs to the borders of the Scarlet Brotherhood as well. This may be better as a later option for the DM, since having to detail the Brotherhood as well as the Great Kingdom in sufficient nitty-gritty detail for a campaign may simply be too much for some DMs.

The Great Kingdom is a good campaign for mid- to high-level PCs who enjoy guerilla warfare, building and protecting their own strongholds, and feeling themselves to be faced with an evil mightier than they. Establishing a stronghold in an oppressed land and protecting good folk in one's own lands can be very rewarding for many players. If the southern lands are used, then dwarves and elves will find the campaign especially rewarding. Opting for the northern lands will draw in the Bone March humanoids, the barbarians, and the men of Ratik, which will give a more rugged feel to the campaign and offer wider scope for seaborne adventuring also.

Keoland and Ulek: Struggle in the west

Keoland and the lands surrounding it (Gran March, Yeomanry, and Ulek) is a fine setting for PCs of all levels. To the west, the Lost Lands (Geoff and Sterich) offer mid- to high-level PCs the chance to adventure in a liberation struggle against the giantish and humanoid invaders of those lands. For chaotic PCs with a desire to bash great lumps out of worthy enemies, this is perfect. There also are dangerous forests (Dreadwood and Dim Forest) and the southern Hool Marshes, where pawns of the Scarlet Brotherhood are introducing Hepmonaland savages, monsters, and much else, or so it is said (PCs would find no lack of Yeomanry or Keolandish patrons to pay them to find out the truth). Head southwest and the Pomarj beckons; again, there is lost land to recover in eastern Ulek from Turrosh Mak's orcish armies, and many strongholds, mines, and hidden temples. In the Drachensgrabs, there are said to be temples to the dreaded Lost God, Tharizdun.

The rich Ulek lands, in particular, offer subtler delights. The Ulek nations are powerful now; they are rich, dispensers of aid to other lands, and are increasingly influential. However, they are faced with the awkward problem of the elven land of Celene, determinedly isolationist. The hard-pressed central Flanaess needs Celene's aid, but Queen Yolande has all but sealed the borders of her land. The Knights of Luna, with Prince Melf at their helm, seek to persuade her otherwise and the knights have many friends in Ulek—but also many who would inform on them and see them hang for treason against the Queen. For elven PCs, getting embroiled in this would be a whole heap of trouble (and fun from a campaign point of view). A switch to the struggle to protect the Welkwood against Mak's incursions through the Suss Forest would provide a good change of pace, so a campaign set here has many directions for the imaginative DM to take.

Where to start?

Of course, the lands detailed here hardly exhaust the opportunities for good campaigning. Rugged, combat-oriented PCs can be thrown into the struggles between the barbarians and their allies in Ratik, and the Stonefist, Bone March humanoids, North Province and Sea Barons enemies (plenty to fight there). The vast,

sprawling Empire of Iuz (which gets full treatment in WGR5 *Iuz the Evil*, due out this month) surprisingly offers many opportunities for exploration, intrigue, negotiation, and role-playing, as well as endless chances for fighting the good fight. Then there are the Baklunish lands, which we haven't even mentioned.

But enough is enough. Below is a list of what to check out if you like the feel of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting and are contemplating a new campaign there, or a shift of focus with an existing campaign. These are only recommendations to get you started. So get going!

Low-level PCs: With complete campaign material: Base at Karistyne's Castle in the Abbor-Alz away from the border zones (Campaign Book); Farenne's settlement at Shining White (*The Marklands*); or at Castle Ehlenestra in the service of the swanmay-ranger Sharnalem on the verge of the Vesve Forest (*The Marklands*). The first is good for dwarves, gnomes, and lawfully-aligned PCs, the last for elves, and chaotic PCs. The sourcebooks deliberately describe the higher-level NPCs of importance in each locale while leaving mid-level PCs either described very briefly or entirely left up to the DM to develop.

Mid-level PCs: For outright hack-n'-slash campaigning: Keoland and points

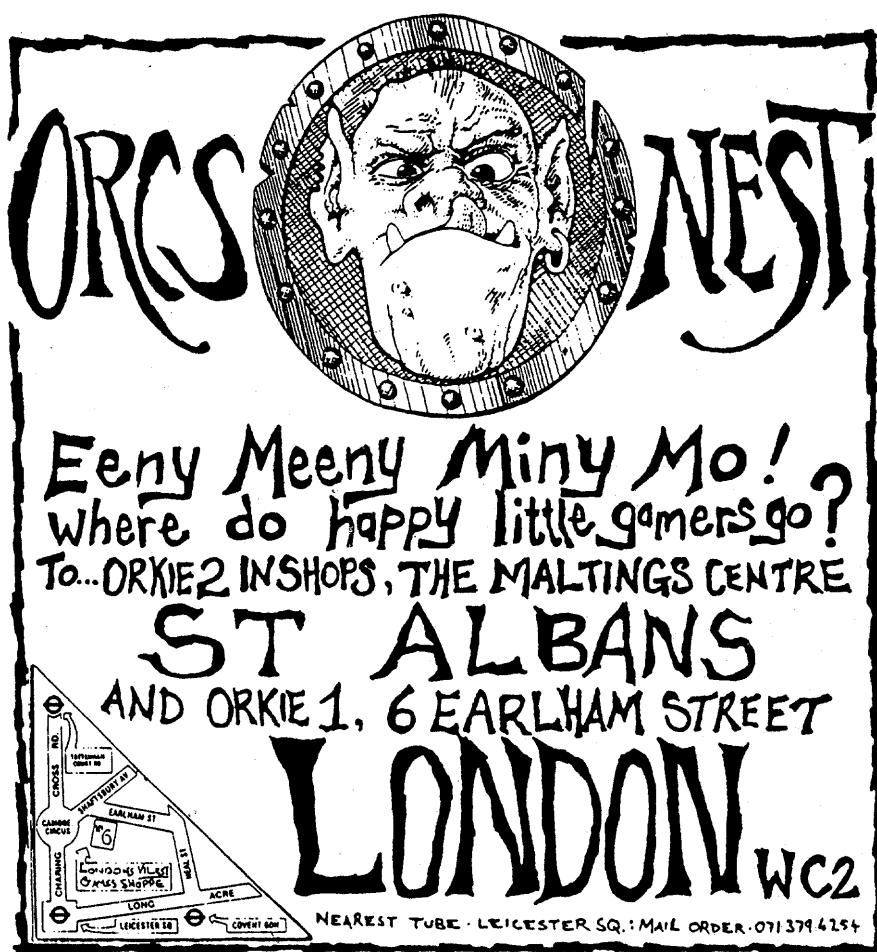
west for higher-middle level PCs; the Principality of Ulek, bordering on the Pomarj; or Ratik, fighting off the Bone March humanoids (these are all detailed in *From the Ashes*).

For intrigue and city adventuring: Southern Furyondy (*The Marklands*); the Free City itself (*City of Greyhawk*, but use the Scarlet Brotherhood material in *From the Ashes* to make this truly dangerous); several city options in Nyond (*The Marklands*).

For border skirmishing, guerilla warfare, etc.: Grandwood Forest; Adri Forest; Sunndi margins (*From the Ashes*); Vesve Forest (*The Marklands*, and *Iuz the Evil*); Flinty Hills margins (*The Marklands*); or, for a change of pace and flavor, the Fellreev Forest or Rift Canyon, among the free bandits, woodsmen, or elves (*Iuz the Evil*).

High-level PCs: For more hack n' slash gaming, the Lost Lands (*From the Ashes*); or the Vesve Forest (*Iuz the Evil*). For heroic adventuring: *Iuz the Evil* (also see WGR6 *City of Skulls*), or Almor (*From the Ashes*, and *The Marklands* especially). For a group embroiled in the high politics of the Flanaess: see WGR5 *Rary the Traitor* in the Bright Desert, or the Vesve Forest setting for involvement with Philidor the Blue Wizard. For a magical mystery tour: Dahlvier's County close by the Fellreev Forest, then develop the campaign toward the Lake Aqal location, or develop a location such as Zagy's Folly (both in *Iuz the Evil*). For a DM who wants to throw the book at his players: The fiend-infested insanity of Gibbering Gate (*Iuz the Evil* within an Iuz-set campaign, or the forbidding constructions of Szeffrin the animus (*The Marklands*).

The High Magic Campaign: The WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting is a campaign world steeped in magical forces. The strange linkage of the *ion stone* deposits referred to in *Rary the Traitor*, the gemloads of dweornite noted in *Iuz the Evil*, and the magical "leys" of *From the Ashes*, are some of the many strange and magical banes and riches within Oerth. *From the Ashes* lists many bizarre and peculiar magical locations, from the Fading Lands to oddities such as the monster-infested Hanging Glacier of Alisedran or the eerie, elemental-haunted Beauteous Cones of the long-dead Baklarran dwarves. If high fantasy and rich magic is your thing, then the Flanaess calls to you! If your players are among the good and the great, the movers and shakers of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK from years of campaign play, then you know of Mordekainen and his colleagues already—but do you know why the demipower Mayaheine has arrived here, or what Philidor has in mind? There are many deep mysteries for you in this land. You won't be disappointed if your PCs set out to explore this "new" world. Ω



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could tell right away he was a thief. The hair gave him away. Cut short, it looked like a brown mold on his head. Assassins wear long hair, to hide strangle wires. Barbarians also keep their hair long due to some silly legend about hair being the source of strength. Magicians usually don't have any hair. No, if it was short hair, it was a thief. Short hair was easier to hide under a hood, and a thief couldn't afford to leave a strand behind in case the victim employed a thaumaturge to track him down.

Frankly, I wondered why this guy came into my shop at all, so I decided I better watch him close.

He plopped down on the stool, and a puff of travel dust escaped from his pants. "Take a little off the top, Master Barber."

"With what, a trowel?"

His black eyes looked like rabbit droppings, and they narrowed as he looked at me. Then he smiled. "Aw, it's nice to have a barber with a sense of humor. But really, I would like a little trimmed off. I like my hair short." He rubbed his hand across the top of his head, and the hair sat there like he had painted it on.

"Sure. Whatever you say. Be two obals up front."

He started to glare at me, but then he reached into a pouch at his side and withdrew the two copper coins.

He tossed them at me. "Here, barber."

I raised my arm and caught the two coins with a snap, and deposited them on the counter with the same movement. He moved his stare to the two coins on the counter.

"Well, let's get started," I said.

I took a cape from the counter and tied it around his neck, making it just a little snug but not enough to draw his attention.

Then I took my shears and began to snip bits of brown fuzz from the top of his head.

"So, what trade are you in, stranger?" I asked.

I watched him in the mirror, but he didn't react.

"I collect things," he said.

I bet he did. "And whose things do you collect?" He didn't even twitch one of those eyelashes that looked like dead flies.

"Oh, different people's things," he answered.

I thought so. "Sounds interesting," I said.

"Oh, it is. I meet some fascinating people."

And probably kill them, I nearly blurted out, but a good barber knows when to hold his tongue. I continued to watch his expression as my shears clipped off his hair. His mouth curved into a slight smirk, and I began to get suspicious.

"Actually, I do have a favorite collection. Have you heard of Samradi of Genspal?" he asked. This time he met my gaze in the mirror. I held it as I answered, 'Who hasn't?' but I heard a warning ring out in my head. This was no random visit.

"The Mastersmith. His swords were known to make even the poorest fighter into a champion."

The Barber, the Thief, and the Smith

by P. Andrew Miller

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

I nodded. 'Yes, I could see those would be worth collecting.'

The thief smiled. "Definitely."

"Is that what you're looking for now?" I asked.

'Yes, as a matter of fact. I heard that Samradi used to live near here. Is that true?'

I continued snipping and deliberately came as close to the ear as I could without getting skin. The thief didn't blink.

"For a short time, the Mastersmith set up a forge here. Didn't stay long, though. Not many swordfighters come here to Flandel."

I took the last snip of hair and pronounced him finished.

He sat where he was. "Did Samradi ever come in here to have his hair cut?"

I pulled the cape from his neck and snapped it in the air. "Once or twice. Now, sir, it is time for my lunch, unless you have further need of my services."

The thief shook his head and stood. He walked toward the door, then turned around to look at me.

"They say he used to make gifts for his friends. Did he have any friends here in town?"

I grabbed the broom from the corner and began sweeping up the brown mold of his hair. "Not that I know of."

"Well, then, I'll be on my way. Nice talking with you."

Then he left, and I leaned against the broom. Did he take me for a fool? I hated thieves, and smug thieves I loathed. No doubt he already knew that Samradi had been a regular customer and paid his tab with a piece of metal-work. He was testing me to see if I would crack. Well, no arrogant thief was going to get the better of me. I swept up the rest of his hair and decided to keep it. A good thau-maturge could do wonders with this sampling.

The rest of the day I managed to put the thief out of my head, but as I lay down in bed, his image hopped into my mind and squatted there. I knew he'd be back, probably sometime during the night. I didn't even bother to take special precautions. He would have laughed at them anyway. So I just had to wait until the little creep showed up.

His image still sat in my mind, keeping me from sleep, so I started counting sheep jumping over him. Then each sheep relieved itself on the thief. When I finally drifted off, I'm sure I had a smile on my face.

He shook me awake about an hour later, or at least it felt like I'd had only an hour's sleep. Dressed in black, with a hood drawn up around his face, the thief stood over me, a thin knife pressed against the drawstrings of my nightshirt. The dull eyes of the afternoon now glinted like polished onyx in the starlight.

"Where is it?"

I glanced down at the dagger as I responded. "Where's what?"

He pressed the point through the cord. Sharp little sucker.

"Don't treat me like a fool, barber. Where's the sword Samradi gave you?"

I almost swallowed but didn't want to take the chance, with the blade against my Adam's apple.

"What sword?"

This time he drew blood. "Everyone in town knows you have an original Samradi. He gave it to you before he left."

"Is that what brought you here?" I asked.

"Yes. And I won't leave until I have it."

"I'll have to show you."

His lips twisted, and he poked me again. "I warn you, barber, no tricks."

I didn't answer but slowly climbed out of bed, which isn't easy with a dagger pressed to your throat. Then I was standing, and I felt the point press into my back. We walked that way from the bedroom, down the stairs into the parlor, and on to the door that led to the shop.

I stopped to open the door, and he pricked me with the point. I felt a small drop of blood trickle down my back. Now I wished I had clipped his ear during the haircut.

"Where do you think you're going?" he asked.

My fingers rested on the doorknob. "The Samradi is in the shop."

"Why?"

I shrugged and felt the dagger scrape against my back. "That's where I keep it."

He was silent a moment, then prodded me with his hand. "Go on."

I opened the door and entered the shop. Little light came through the front window, but I didn't really need it. I walked straight over to the counter with the thief behind me. Then I lunged forward, grabbed my shears, and whirled to face him.

He looked at me for a moment and then laughed.

"You're going to fight me with a pair of scissors? Besides the fact that you're old and fat, I am an adept at knife fighting. You don't have a chance."

"Maybe, maybe not. I happen to be an adept at using scissors."

"This isn't a haircut, barber. Put down the scissors and give me the Samradi, or I'll cut your heart out."

Now I laughed and snipped at him with the shears. "You're the fool, thief."

Before he could respond, I came at him, snipping here and there. A piece of his shirt sleeve fell to the floor. He snarled and lunged with the dagger. I parried with the scissors and clipped a piece of his hood. He lunged again, and again I parried. But he was right. I was old and fat, and I could feel my breath leaving me. I fell back and turned. He went off balance, and I reached out with the scissors and cut right through his blade.

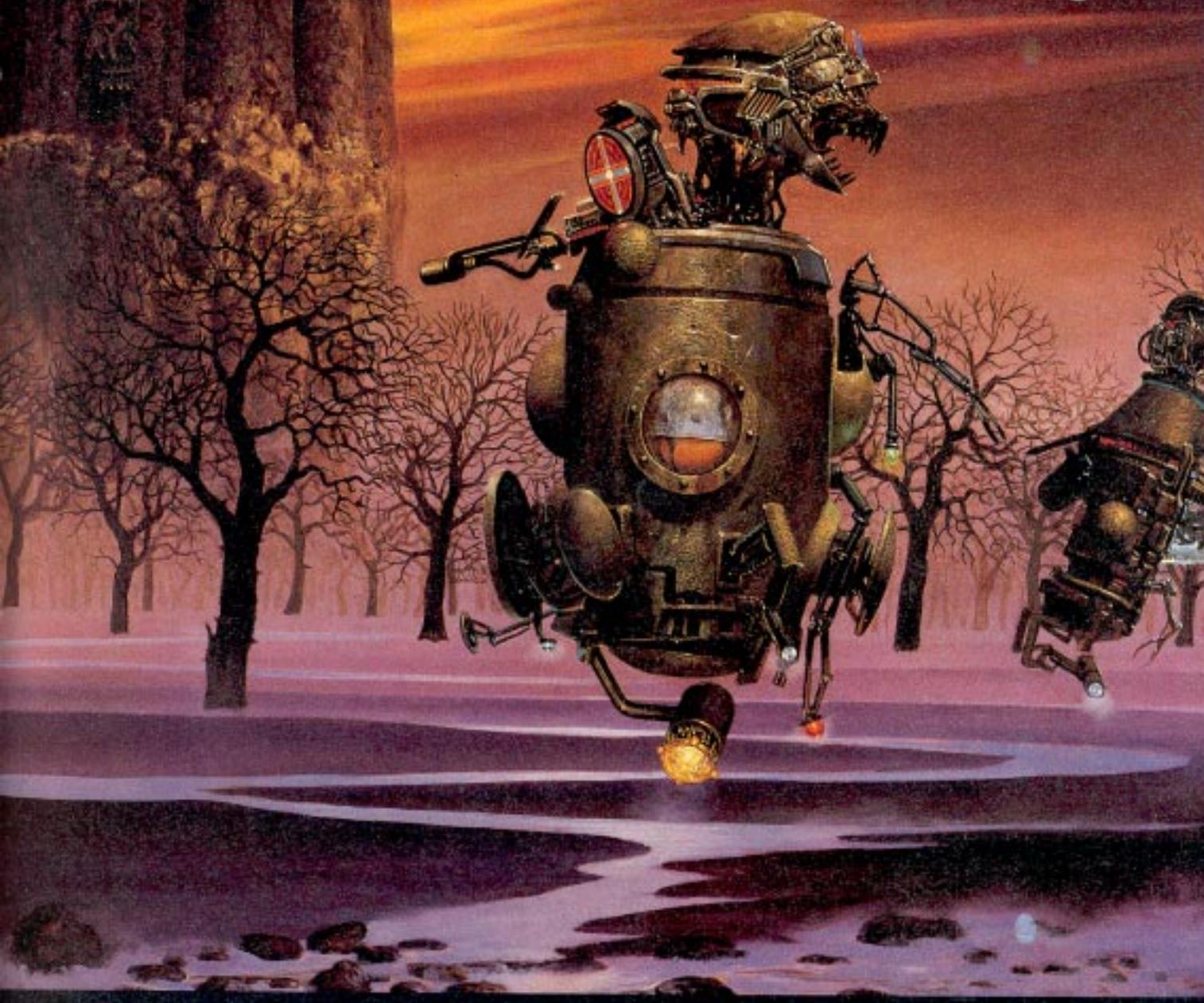
He pulled what was left of the knife back and stared at it. Before he could move, I had the points of the shears against his throat.

"Turn around," I said. He just looked at me. "Turn around," I repeated and snipped the blades together. He looked at the shears and turned. As soon as his back faced me, I clubbed him over the head. He collapsed in a heap on the floor.

I leaned against the barber chair, panting. I was getting too old for this, but at least I'd caught the idiot. He'd make a nice present for the constable.

I put the scissors down before I went to get some rope. I didn't really need Samradi's scissors to trim hair, but they were sure nice for cutting arrogant thieves down to size. Ω

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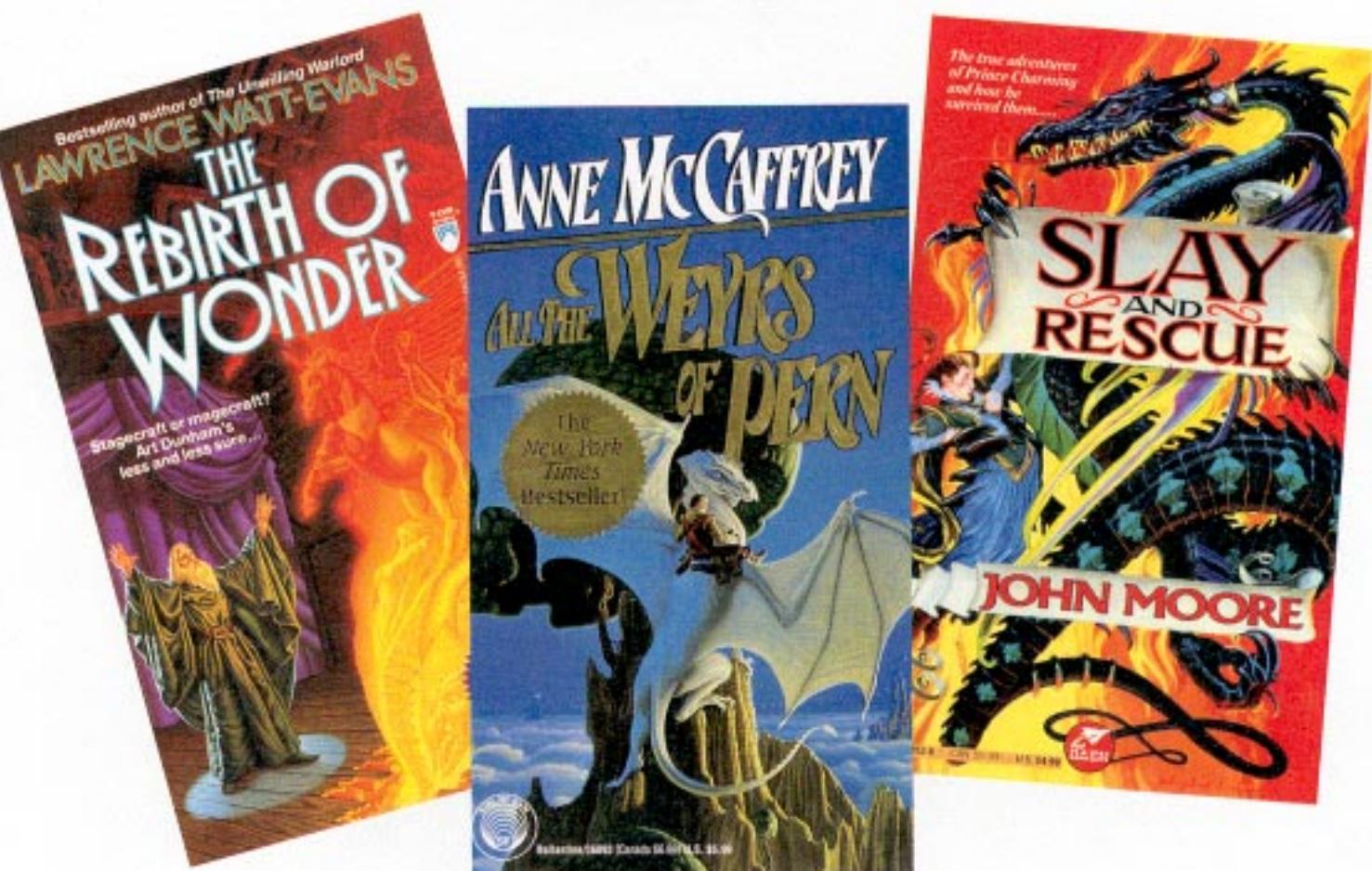
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Computers infest fantasy fiction once again

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DEMONS DON'T DREAM

Piers Anthony

Tor 0-312-85389-0 \$19.95

Serious readers of fantasy will probably have two automatic objections to Piers Anthony's sixteenth Xanth novel: It's a Xanth novel, and it's hardcover. Despite being constant bestsellers, the Xanth

books, have been accused of sexism, excessive silliness, and tired plotting. And now Xanth's new publishers are promoting the series to hardcover status—and prices?

Of course they are. In fact, Demons Don't Dream is a clever addition to the series, with a couple of twists that gamers

should find especially pleasing and a world view that acknowledges stereotypes without endorsing them. As usual, Anthony's narration is about as subtle as an air-raid siren, but there are enough good ideas in the latest Xanth adventure to counterbalance the persistent "Pay attention, I'm teaching you something" tone of

the prose.

The framing device for the adventure is a Xanth computer game whose first two copies fall into the hands of Dug, a sharp but somewhat crude-minded technogeek, and Kim, a shy girl who's read every Xanth book ever published. This is no ordinary game, though—players can actually project themselves into Xanth through their computer screens, the prize is a Magician-class magic talent (for which Kim and Dug must compete in a Xanth-wide treasure hunt), and the remote but powerful demons X(A/N)th and E(A/R)th have a stake in the outcome.

The game's design is striking and well-executed on all levels. Each player must pick a Companion from a roster of familiar Xanth characters whose skills and abilities may prove useful during the quest. But each Companion also has built-in limits, and one of the seven candidates (chosen at random) is under orders to secretly hinder the player's search at every opportunity. The diversity of the Companions makes for a corresponding open-ended quality to the plot puzzles, so that no single solution to any problem seems over-programmed and there's plenty of room for innovation on the players' part. A real-world version of the game might well need CD-ROM memory space to handle the amount of detail involved, but the concept is both sound and distinctive.

Anthony's sense of wordplay and punnery is also firing on all cylinders this time around, most notably in a sequence in which Kim engages a band of ogres in a battle of wits (no small feat where ogres are concerned), and in a highly amusing battle between Dug and Xanth's own arch-villainous Com-Pewter. As Dug says, "He who lives by the pun, dies by the pun."

Even the obligatory romantic subplot is executed with a bit more vigor than usual. Again, Anthony won't win many points for subtlety, but he takes care to establish that the stereotypes he and his characters invoke are stereotypes, and courtesy and honor clearly reap more rewards than the pursuit of prurience. And while Anthony's direct, occasionally blunt narrative voice isn't well-suited to describing matters of the heart, there's really little if anything in the novel that could be considered in bad taste.

In short, *Demons Don't Dream* has solid entertainment value and is a novel that gamers should find of particular interest. As the Xanth series' first full-scale hardcover release, it's a worthy addition to the canon and one that merits the promotion.

DEUS X

Norman Spinrad

Bantam 0-553-29677-9 \$3.99

Science-fiction characters were hot-wiring human brains into computers long before the term "cyberpunk" became fashionable. Most of the early mind-to-com-

puter networkers, though, were chasing plain old data of one kind or another. The folk of Norman Spinrad's *Deus X* are more ambitious. Somewhere inside the worldwide Big Board, they're hoping to find God—and they're hoping they don't find His opposite number.

A generation or six from now, Spinrad time, a female Pope is running the Catholic Church. International business, telecommunications, government, and entertainment are all conducted over the ultimate computer network known as the Big Board, and inside the Big Board are a small army of "successor entities," copies of human personalities downloaded from their original "meatware" owners. While armies of lawyers are busy sorting out the rights of these electronic duplicates, Pope Mary I is desperately concerned with the question of whether successor entities have souls.

To that end, elderly Father Pierre De Leone (who firmly believes they don't) reluctantly agrees to become the ultimate Devil's advocate and has his mind downloaded to the Big Board. But when the Church loses track of Father De Leone's silicon ghost, the Pope is forced to hire electronic detective Marley Philippe to search the Big Board's depths in an effort to figure out just what's happened.

Spinrad's narrative is spare yet evocative, lively yet thoughtful. Neither the theological nor technological puzzles are difficult to follow, and Spinrad mixes the two realms of wonder with a deft, understated skill. *Deus X* is a slim, low-key novel about a high-stakes poker game between the mortal and the immortal. If the answers it postulates seem a bit too neatly wrapped, it's still a novel that leaves its readers thinking and debating about those answers for long after they've finished the story.

SLAY AND RESCUE

John Moore

Baen 0-671-72152-6 \$4.99

Where *Slay and Rescue* is concerned, "deceptively simple" is the understatement of the year. What looks from the packaging like an uncomplicated send-up of several classic fairy tales turns out, on careful reading, to be one of the most intricately flawed books I've read in ages.

The novel initially looks like just another humorous fantasy, but it doesn't really fit that mold. Nor is it quite a swashbuckler, though there's a good deal of swashbuckling in it. No, John Moore's tale is a sex comedy whose video version would be rated a cheerfully bawdy, photogenic R. His Prince Charming is easily impressed by female beauty and runs into plenty of it: two virtuous princesses, one not-so-virtuous stepdaughter, a devious-minded witch, and a dangerous fairy godmother. Impressively, however, the prince holds onto his own virtue for most of the book,

and the lighthearted air of youthful lust never quite turns pornographic.

We're not talking about gratuitous sensuality, put in just for appearances. Take out the risqué elements, and much of the plot disappears. Still, for the younger readers in the novel's likely audience, Moore's unabashed descriptions are of questionable appropriateness. It's not a matter of promoting immorality, as the book actually comes down squarely against irresponsible sex; it's a matter of emphasis and style.

It's not fair, though, to criticize Moore purely for having written a sex comedy. One can legitimately object to the novel's cover copy and design, which gives no clue to the bawdy contents, but those aren't Moore's fault. In fact, the problem with *Slay and Rescue* isn't that there's too much sex in it—it's that there isn't enough. Moore has been so careful to keep his overall message wholesome and nonpornographic that while there's a lot of titillation in the narrative, there's entirely too little erotic payoff to keep the adult audience interested. Readers are liable to be as frustrated as Prince Charming himself by the time the climax of the story rolls around.

That's doubly annoying because on a general level, Moore's writing is amiable, entertaining, and displays a refreshing matter-of-fact wit. He's also done a clever, credible job of rearranging and integrating the tales of Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, and the Arthurian grail-quest into a smooth whole. But *Slay and Rescue* is a book without a constituency; it's too spicy for the junior-high set and not sexy enough for grownups. John Moore has potential as a fantasy humorist, but first he needs to figure out who he's writing for.

THE REBIRTH OF WONDER

Lawrence Watt-Evans

Tor 0-812-51406-8 \$3.99

The *Rebirth of Wonder* is an odd book in a couple of ways. For one thing, it's neither novel nor short-story collection; the title story takes up only about two-thirds of the volume, with a second tale filling the remaining pages. The two stories are a study in contrasts, with one a quiet contemporary yarn and the other a lively piratical puzzle.

I can't say a great deal about "The Rebirth of Wonder" without stepping on the surprises author Watt-Evans has in store for small-town theater technician Art Dunham, whose latest assignment is to look after a company of performers that seems decidedly untheatrical. The story's charm lies in its carefully restrained pace, its cleverly described characters, and a premise that deserves to be experienced rather than explained ahead of time.

Gamers have seen one principle applied

more often in the service of the horrific, in TSR's AD&D® game RAVENLOFT® supplements or Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® materials—description that relies on sensory details and keen observation for dramatic effect, rather than merely naming the beings and artifacts being portrayed. But that approach works just as well for this quietly magical story, the more so because Watt-Evans displays convincing knowledge of theater people and traditions.

"The Final Folly of Captain Dancy" is an entirely different kettle of fish, a frenetic seagoing swashbuckler that has the crew of the Bonny Anne trying to pull off one of the trickiest capers their captain has ever devised—assuming that they can figure out what he was up to in the first place. As the tale begins, Jack Dancy has had the rare bad timing to get himself killed just as his scheme is getting underway and before he can explain it to his officers.

That leaves a small matter of a freight wagon, five guineas, a parrot, a governor's pardon, a townswoman, the governor's wife, a midnight signal, a warehouse fire, and a lock of a witch's hair. If Dancy's crew can unravel their late captain's plot and put it back together again before the night is out, they may just survive till morning.

The style and tone of the adventure are a world away from those of "A Rebirth of Wonder," but the craftsmanship is no less polished, and second mate Billy Jones and his fellows prove to be reasonably good at improvising under pressure—another skill that gamers ought to appreciate. Like its companion piece, "The Final Folly of Captain Dancy" succeeds admirably in creating atmosphere, this time a tangy nautical flavor that's both crisp and colorful.

The Rebirth of Wonder is a decidedly unusual book, but it's also a book with a great deal to recommend it. The tales it contains are entertaining and well-told, and ably demonstrate both Lawrence Watt-Evans's versatile literary expertise and an assortment of storytelling techniques that gamers would do well to study.

ASSEMBLERS OF INFINITY

Kevin J. Anderson and Doug Beason
Bantam **0553-29921-2** **\$4.99**

Imagine the headline, "LIEN MICRO-TECH FOUND ON MOON"—not on a supermarket tabloid, but across the front page of the *New York Times*. Would you be shocked? Worried? Curious? Or merely indifferent? That's just what happens in the newest science-fiction thriller from Kevin Anderson and Doug Beason, and it's an ingeniously plausible approach to the question of first contact with extraterrestrial life. While the alien "nanocritters" in *Assemblers of Infinity* are a fascinating invention, the events of the book unfold against a background that's less than con-

vincing.

Anderson and Beason assume that Earthbound reaction to such a discovery will be instant paranoia and a conviction that humanity will be erased by the microscopic biomachinery that's recently arrived from the interstellar void. That assumption drives a quickly deployed coverup, the cold-blooded write-off of an entire lunar colony, and the treatment of the nano-entities as dangerous enemies. But no supporting evidence is given for the proposition, and it's hard to accept that humanity is really that terrified of what's soon established as a limited and answerable threat.

In turn, that undermines the credibility of Anderson's and Beason's scenario, which depends on journalists and scientists alike to behave in ways that don't match their career profiles. Reporters are assumed to blandly accept the version of events being handed to them by government space authorities, and too many of the tale's scientists are too quick to abandon research and investigation in favor of efforts to destroy the nanocritters out of hand. There's simply not enough justification given for the aura of irrational fear that permeates the novel, and natural scientific curiosity gets too little credit. Worse, at least two major plot twists are left half-sprung: the presence of nanocritters on Earth itself is first established but then ignored, and a "cure" for nano-infiltration of the human body is invented, then set aside.

The real problem with the novel may be an excess of subplots. There are three related nanotech puzzles, two on the moon and one at an Antarctic research lab. There's the perceived publicity crisis, which has Earth authorities in a whirl of damage control (and which is complicated by one space official's ominous nightmares). There are additional complications involving the interplay between the Columbus lunar base and an orbital station. And there's a romance evolving between nanotech expert Dr. Erika Trace and Columbus commander Jason Dvorak.

Anderson and Beason are more than capable of turning out a good story, but the diverse aspects of this novel tend to work at cross purposes. What's left after filtering out the logical lapses and extraneous filler are a fascinating premise and a host of characters who are almost believable despite their awkwardly stage-managed motivations. The most sympathetic of these is Dr. Trace, who's one of the only players allowed to keep her wits about her and her mind on her work.

With a tighter, more controlled focus and better attention to detail, *Assemblers of Infinity* might have been a first-class novel. In practice, it's a book whose fascinating central idea has been overwhelmed by the surrounding material. Anderson and Beason have tried to graft

too much of the techno-thriller onto a story about cutting-edge science, and this time the combination just doesn't work.

ALL THE WEYRS OF PERN

Anne McCaffrey
Del Rey **0-345-36893-2** **\$5.99**

There are at least three ways to look at the most recent entry in Anne McCaffrey's series about the world of Pern, and by all three standards, it's a welcome arrival. But it's also more than that; *All the Weyrs of Pern* finds McCaffrey at the top of her form, presenting readers with a book that may well be her best novel to date.

The first bit of good news is that this book brings the Pern series solidly out of a long holding pattern. After a pair of lengthy detours, one into Pernese history and another away from the cycle's original protagonists, McCaffrey finally returns to events left hanging at the end of *The White Dragon*, where the citizens of Pern had finally rediscovered their technological heritage in the form of a newly revived artificial intelligence voice-address system, or AIVAS. The awakening of AIVAS not only allows the people of Pern to relearn a great deal of lost scientific knowledge, but enables the planning and execution of a long-term strategy by which Pern's dragonriders can finally eliminate the deadly fall of Thread for all time.

McCaffrey has always been a good storyteller, and she easily gives the book all the action and suspense it needs to make it an entertaining yarn. This time, though, she's also working on an intellectual level, squarely confronting the issues and complexities involved in dropping advanced technology into a low-tech culture's lap. There's a thoughtfulness and texture in the plotting that makes this novel richer than most of the Pern books, lifting it past the realms of adventure fiction and into serious science-fictional speculation.

The degree to which she successfully carries off the speculation is arguable. On one hand, there are times when the pace of Pernese adaptation seems rushed, and resistance to the rapid industrialization and technological change is given rather short shrift. On the other, what feels compressed in this single novel might well have felt too thinly stretched in a two or three book sequence. It's hard to fault McCaffrey for producing a tightly written novel, which she's clearly done here.

Besides, there's a third side to *All the Weyrs of Pern*. Perhaps more than anything else, this is a novel of character. At its center are AIVAS, the electronic intellect whose single-minded mission to eliminate Thread occasionally makes uncomfortable demands on some of the humans it professes to serve, and the veteran Masterharper Robinton, whose charge as Pern's premier lorekeeper and preserver of knowledge makes him AIVAS's human counterpart. At its heart, the story this

novel tells is about personal devotion to fulfilling a cause, and it's a tribute to McCaffrey's skill that despite his artificial origins, AIVAS emerges as a complete, intriguing personality.

While it would be unfair to discuss the ending in specific detail, it can be said that the novel not only stands on its own, but brings the entire Pern cycle to what looks like a satisfying close. While the door remains open for future tales, such books would be stories about a new and very different Pern. And as the finale to one of science fiction's most popular and best-known series, *All the Weyrs of Pern* is a resonant and dramatic success.

Recurring roles

There are no less than four anthologies on the stack this time around, and all four are winners of one sort or another. Of most interest to gamers is undoubtedly *Aladdin: Master of the Lamp* (DAW, \$4.99), in which editors Mike Resnick and Martin H. Greenberg have packed 43 (yes, 43!) tales of djinn, wishes, magic lamps, and other denizens of the Arabian Nights. Standouts in a book full of standouts include wicked humor from David Gerrold and Lea Hernandez, more dramatic tales from Michelle Sagara and Judith Tarr, and a topical yarn from newcomer John E. Johnston, Jr.

Resnick is also the editorial brain behind *Whatadunits* (DAW, \$4.99), a diverse assortment of science-fictional murder mysteries in which the writers were challenged to write themselves out of their choice of impossible corners. The results are invariably clever and sometimes ingenious (would you believe a book review as a murder weapon?); Jack Nimersheim and Roger MacBride Allen turn in especially good work, and a second volume is forthcoming.

The remaining pair of anthologies feature seasonal stories, but both *The Magic of Christmas* (Roc, \$4.99) and *Christmas Bestiary* (DAW, \$4.99) are worth saving for year-round perusal. The former, edited by John Silbersack and Christopher Schelling, features a rather uneven group of tales—Christopher Stasheff's is forgettable, and Gael Baudino's is rather unsettling—but Dennis McKiernan, Judith Tarr (again), and Andre Norton turn in excellent stories. The success ratio in *Christmas Bestiary* (edited by Rosalind M. and Martin H. Greenberg) is rather higher, with Barbara Delaplace and Michelle Sagara making the most notable contributions.

Judith Tarr (again) is also back with a new novel, this one a mostly historical tale of Alexander the Great and the twilight of ancient Egypt. *The Lord of the Two Lands* (Tor, \$19.95) proves that Tarr has the rare ability to blend a sense of high drama with a scholar's eye for realistic detail. Few writers seem as comfortable in the

ancient world, but the research enhances the story rather than overwhelming it. Look for this one under general fiction rather than fantasy, but look for it.

In the Department of Things Continued, Rosemary Kirstein is back with *The Out-skirter's Secret* (Del Rey, \$3.99), picking up where *The Steerswoman* left off. The science-fictional background is both more and less evident in the current novel—why is everyone suddenly writing about nomadic barbarian tribes?—but Kirstein is still wielding incisive logic in a distinctive milieu.

Gatherer of Clouds (DAW, \$5.50) concludes the story begun in Sean Russell's earlier *The Initiate Brother*, and it is just as ponderous as its predecessor. The Oriental flavor here is slightly less artificial than in the prior book, and the characters are well-drawn, but the duology remains at best a mixed success. There are simply too many players, and Russell can't decide which of them is the real centerpiece of the book until it's too late.

Thorarinn Gunnarsson finishes what's emerged as a very peculiar trilogy in *Dragons on the Town* (Ace, \$4.99), in which former human teenager Jenny Barker teams with Sherlock Holmes (who turns out to have been an elf) and an assortment of dragons and magicians on a world-spanning chase. Read on its own, the book is entertaining enough, but the trilogy as a whole is more strange than satisfying.

with a very odd balance of humor and epic conflict.

Several subcategories over, *Blood Lines* (DAW, \$4.99) is the third of Tanya Huff's tales of Toronto sleuth Vicki Nelson and her vampiric colleague, Henry Fitzroy. These have gotten better and more complex as Huff goes along, with a realistically complex romantic triangle and a hard-nosed grasp of police procedure. This time, Vicki and Henry are after a reborn Egyptian sorcerer and former mummy who's got a very good chance of seizing control of the entire provincial government. The ending deliberately sets up the next (and final) book, but that's a minor quibble set against an otherwise first-class dark fantasy thriller. Ω

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SAGE advice

by Skip Williams

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This month, the sage considers your comments about "Sage Advice" itself, then looks at some questions that defy classification.

Back in DRAGON issue #177, you said the commune with nature spell should be included in the Elemental sphere. What do the elements have to do with nature, and why would the elemental powers grant such a spell?

First, I'll remind you that the *commune with nature* spell is officially part of the Elemental sphere, as I explained in some detail in issue #177. I don't know exactly what you mean by "elemental powers." However, Elemental magic is not the sole province of the powers that rule the elemental planes. Just about every nature deity in the AD&D® 2nd Edition game grants its priests major access to Elemental spells, as even a cursory glance through *Legends & Lore* and other rulebooks where deities are detailed will show. I assume the game logic behind this is the fact that nature—at least in the AD&D 2nd Edition game—is composed of the four basic elements: air, earth, fire, and water. In terms of game balance, this change allows druids, and other nature priests who do not have major access to the Divination sphere, to cast the *commune with nature* spell. I think most Dungeon Masters and players would agree it is silly to deny the *commune with nature* spell to druids, who are the quintessential nature priests.

You were being too hard on the reader who asked about the Dimensional Door psionic devotion in issue #184. Where did you get the idea that one door always has to be right in front of the psionicist? The psionicist can put the doors anywhere he wants them, as long as they are in range.

I think you were a lot more complex than you needed to be when answering the question about "raining monsters" and the Dimensional Door psionic devotion in issue #184. Where in the power description is there anything that suggests two-way travel between the two doors is possible?

Regarding the placement of Dimensional Doors: Reread the second paragraph of this devotion's description (CPH, page 69), and you'll discover that one portal appears in front of the psionicist and only the second portal can be freely placed anywhere within range. The DM is left to decide what constitutes the psionicist's "front" in this case, but the definite intent here is not to put this under the psionicist's control; exactly where the first portal should appear is up to the DM, but the spirit of the devotion's description would suggest that it should appear directly in front of the psionicist and about an arm's length away. CPH-designer Steve Winter points out the psionicist has some control over the first portal's location just by deciding where he is facing when using the power. Steve also points out, however, that the portals are immobile once created, so if the psionicist turns around while maintaining the power, his back will be to the portal.

Regarding the direction of travel: As CPH-editor Andria Hayday points out, the fifth sentence of the description's second paragraph clearly states a creature can enter either portal and immediately step out of the other portal.

I was flipping though my old back issues when I ran across your discussion of why chain mail is more expensive than ring mail, an inferior armor

type. Why is chain mail, with all those individual links of chain, cheaper than plate mail or plate armor?

Plate mail in either version of the AD&D game is a suit of chain mail with several solid metal plates worn over it for extra protection, so it should be no surprise that it is more expensive than simple chain mail.

Plate armor is more expensive than either plate mail or chain mail because it has to be custom-fitted for the wearer, while plate mail and chain mail can be worn "off the rack." Furthermore, plate armor is much more intricate than plate mail. A complex system of hinged plates covers the wearer's joints (in a suit of plate mail, the underlying chain mail does this job). Large or small, all the plates in a suit of plate armor are manufactured from thick, high-quality steel that is carefully hammered into the correct shape while the metal is cold. This process not only requires very good steel, it requires large pieces of steel that have a consistently high quality throughout. Chain mail, on the other hand, can be manufactured from whatever bits and pieces of iron or steel the armorer has lying around.

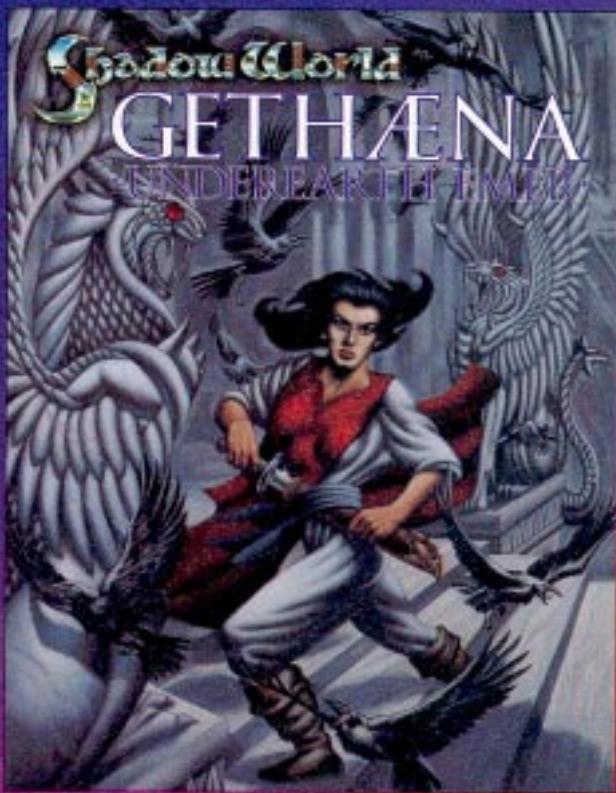
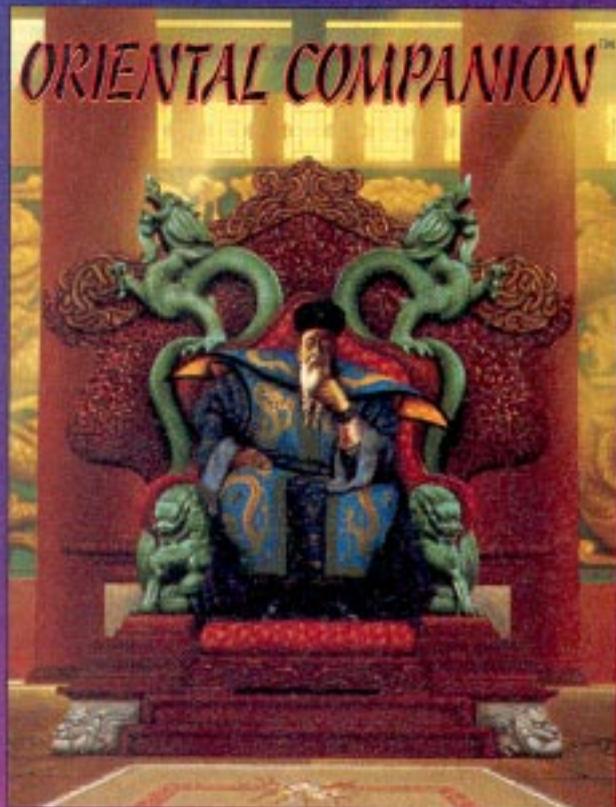
Also, while making chain mail's many separate links is arduous, the armorer has the luxury of tossing out badly made links. An armorer who is hammering out a whole breastplate can't afford even small mistakes—if there is an error, an entire piece has to be thrown out or laboriously remade.

Finally, plate armor has to be periodically heated and cooled again during manufacture to restore the metal's strength and flexibility in a process called annealing. The armorer must carefully judge just how far he can push, pull, and bend the metal before it has to be annealed. Proper annealing makes a suit of plate armor very strong, but too much annealing yields metal that is much too weak to provide good protection. This additional opportunity for error makes plate armor production even more costly.

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Is it possible for a character group from Athas to be transferred to the RAVENLOFT® setting? Can a ship's crew in a SPELLJAMMER® campaign be transferred to the RAVENLOFT setting? If so, what would prevent them from just sailing off into wildspace and escaping? Does a party that leaves the Demiplane of Dread have to return to its home plane, or can it go somewhere else?

The mists of Ravenloft can entrap characters from any AD&D game setting. A spelljamming ship's crew who find themselves in Ravenloft have the same problems as any other adventurers—they are trapped until they can find a way out. Attempting to fly into wildspace from the Demiplane of Dread will bring the ship into contact with the Mists, which returns the ship to a random location in Ravenloft. Ravenloft is a demiplane, not a crystal sphere, and has no wildspace to explore (though an imaginative DM always can modify this as she sees fit).

Most groups who manage to escape from Ravenloft do so through a dimensional portal they have discovered. The DM is free to decide exactly how the PCs reach a portal, and where such a portal leads.

If a defiler from the DARK SUN setting casts a spell from a preserver

scroll, or vice versa, what type of magic would be released?

Generally, a spell cast from a scroll functions exactly as if the character who wrote scroll cast it from memory; a defiler scroll thus releases defiling magic and a preserver scroll releases preserving magic. I recommend you allow Athasian wizards to automatically know the type of magic on a scroll when they cast *read magic* spells to discover the scroll's contents. However, preserving is a more careful and thoughtful approach to magic than defiling, which is a sort of quick-and-dirty magic. If the DM chooses, it is reasonable to assume preservers can make adjustments while reading a scroll that prevent defiling. Likewise, it is reasonable to assume defilers can take shortcuts while reading a preserver scroll in order to release a defiling effect. In these cases, the adjustments are optional and should happen automatically if the character decides to make them. Note whenever an Athasian wizard writes a spell into his spell book, he writes according to his approach to magic, that is, preservers write preserving spells and defilers write defiling spells, even if the spell was discovered on a scroll written by the other type of wizard.

If a defiler from the DARK SUN setting escaped the world of Athas and wound up casting spells somewhere

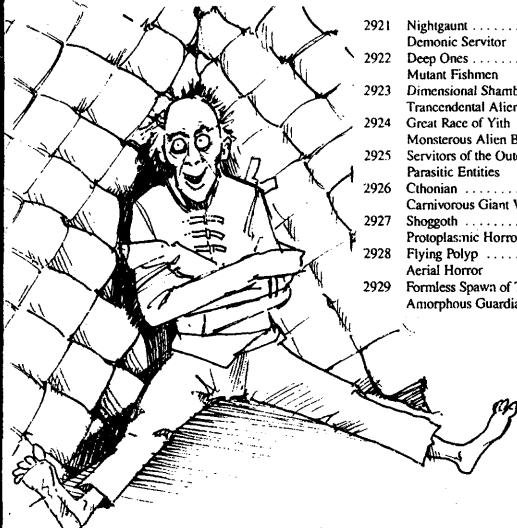
else, what affect would his magic have on the surroundings and how long would it take before someone noticed?

This is up to the DM. It's possible that defiling works only on Athas. If the DM decides defiling works in other places, then any defiling spell creates an area of lifeless ash according to the amount of plant life in the area where the spell is cast (see the DARK SUN set's Rules Book, page 60). How long it takes the locals to notice the devastation depends on where the defiler starts casting spells, who witnesses the spellcasting, how alert and caring the local deities are, and a whole host of other factors too numerous to mention here. Common sense has to be your guide. If the defiler casts a spell under the royal court wizard's nose, the locals will immediately notice something is up. If the defiler winds up on a deserted island, it's possible nobody ever will notice.

Hey! Have half-orcs left the AD&D game permanently, or will there be rules for them be released soon?

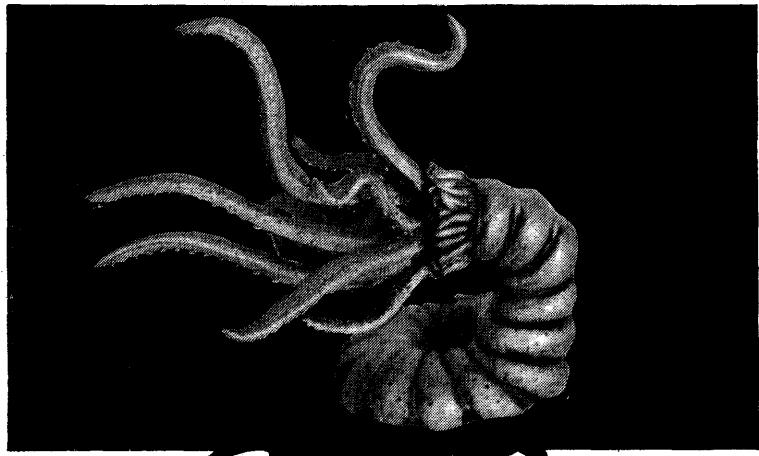
In April, TSR will release *The Complete Book of Humanoids*, which will include rules for PC half-orcs and many other types of humanoids. Pretty much everything you need for oddball humanoid PCs will be provided, including class and level limits, character kits, and new proficiencies. Ω

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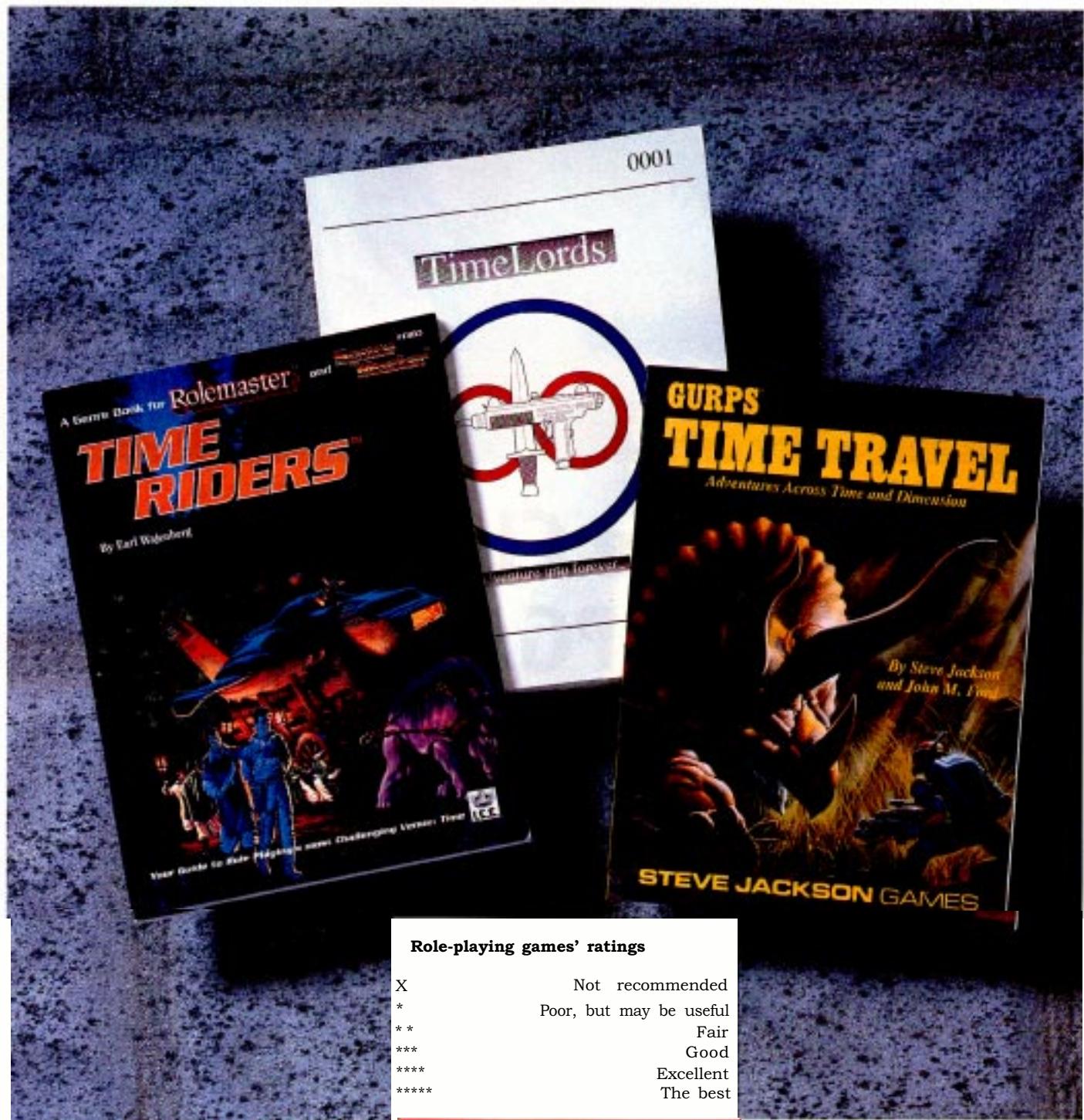
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Role-playing Reviews

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Role-playing games' ratings

X	Not recommended
*	Poor, but may be useful
**	Fair
***	Good
****	Excellent
*****	The best

Time-travel RPGs: Playing in the halls of history

Now, let's see. I'm writing these words at 7:00 A.M., December 24, 1992. Suppose I traveled through time a few months into the future when this issue of DRAGON Magazine arrives in my mailbox. I could rip out this column, bring it back to the present, then copy it word for word instead of having to make it all up. I could take the rest of the day off!

But suppose I overshot my mark. Suppose I returned an hour too early and got back at 6:00 A.M. instead of 7:00 A.M. Would I meet myself in the throes of trying to think up the very column I had just gone to the future to retrieve? Would the sight of seeing myself stumbling around the house in my underwear give me a heart attack?

Or, worse, suppose I made a mistake while I was copying my column and mentioned a product that didn't exist—say, GURPS Tide Travel? What if that seemingly insignificant error set into motion an irreversible chain of events that began to unravel the fabric of time itself? Would TSR cease to exist? Would editors Roger Moore and Dale Donovan de-evolve into writhing blobs of protoplasm? *[You wish!—The editors]* Would laying eyes on these words cause the reader to experience an intolerable paradox that could only be resolved by his ceasing to exist?

Er . . . so, how are you feeling?

It's no wonder that game designers have approached time travel with the enthusiasm of a Marine entering a mine field. For all of the genre's obvious appeals—staging adventures in an infinite number of settings, meeting historical personalities, fiddling with the time stream—its execution is fraught with peril. It's impossible, for instance, to discuss time travel intelligently without considering the nuances of temporal theory—that is, the nature of time itself. Are history's events rigid and unchangeable, or is history malleable, capable of being directed into a variety of outcomes? What "laws" govern time travel? Can we go anywhere we want? Can we meet our descendants? Can we meet ourselves? What if we accidentally kill our parents?

Then there's the problem of moving time travelers from era to era. Do they use magic or machines? Do they have absolute control over when and where they end up, or are there risks? What are the consequences of malfunctions or miscalculations?

And what's the point of time travel anyway? What motivates the player characters? Are they explorers, scientists, or time-police officers? What distinguishes a time-travel campaign from a conventional fantasy or science-fiction RPG?

Those knotty questions defy easy answers. I can think of only two games,

both about 10 years old, that made the attempt with any degree of success. Timeline Ltd.'s TIME AND TIME AGAIN* game took time travel as seriously as physics, resulting in a literate but humorless approach that was too rigid to be much fun. The TIMEMASTER* game from Pacesetter Ltd. pitted the noble Time Corps troubleshooters against a band of evil alien time-warped, an intriguing premise that was undermined by so-so mechanics. [This system is available, in reprints, from 54° 40' Orphyte—look for it at conventions or ask at your local hobby store.] Both these games were victims of underdeveloped ideas and an indifferent public. Will the current crop hold up any better? Only time will tell.

GURPS Time Travel*

128-page softcover book

Steve Jackson Games \$17

Design: Steve Jackson and John M. Ford

Additional material: Chris McCubbin,

J.M. Caparula, Walter Milliken, David Pulver, Daniel U. Thibault, and Dale F. Reding

Editing: Loyd Blankenship

Illustrations: Dan Frazier, Michael Barrett,

Timothy Bradstreet, Topper Helmers, Karl Martin, Doug Shuler, and Dan Smith

Cover: John Zeleznik

****½

In one sense, time travel is the lynchpin of the GURPS* game, the concept that, in the words of GURPS godfather Steve Jackson, "fulfills the original potential of the system." The GURPS system has generated a library of worldbooks ranging from the Ice Age to the far future, with plenty of stops in between. But blending the worlds into a truly universal setting—the promise implicit in the GURPS game from the outset—has been addressed obliquely at best, mostly in the occasional sidebar.

Sensing that the stakes were high, Jackson took no chances and assigned the project to himself and co-author John M. Ford, an accomplished veteran of both science-fiction and gaming. Ford's Star Trek novel, *How Much for Just the Planet*, is one of the few highlights in that otherwise dreary series. He also designed the award-winning *Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues* adventure for West End's PARANOIA* game.

Temporal theory: In the GURPS tradition, Jackson and Ford take a kitchen-sink approach to time travel, presenting a menu of options that allows referees to create customized systems appropriate to a variety of campaign styles. Time streams may be plastic, where changes in the past automatically alter the future, or fixed, where the future remains unchanged regardless of what occurs in the past. The

pros and cons of each are discussed at length. Plastic time, for instance, allows for the most provocative adventures—this is where magazine editors can be transformed to protoplasm—but excessive tinkering with history may prevent a traveler from returning to his own era. In fixed time, events conspire to prevent the traveler from making changes; the DRAGON issue I want may be delivered to the wrong house. A traveler attempting to outwit the conspiracy (e.g., I tackle the mailman and try to snatch the magazine from his bag), may be whisked back to his own time before he can trigger a paradox. For referees who shudder at the thought of juggling paradoxes, Jackson and Ford offer the Recency Effect, a physical law that prevents travelers from visiting the immediate past or, presumably, the immediate future.

The Recency Effect also discourages travelers from meeting themselves, a practice the designers deride as hopelessly disruptive. Taken to its logical conclusion, they point out, travelers could multiply themselves into armies or visit themselves before they began a mission to reveal how it all turns out. As a safeguard, Jackson and Ford suggest that referees mandate a Temporal Exclusion law where meeting oneself is flatly impossible. Characters attempting to violate the exclusion law are punished with physical pain or bounces into hostile parallel worlds.

Also discussed are such esoteric concepts as the Linearity Principle (time advances at the same rate for persons occupying different eras), the Absolute Now (the date to which travelers return when they get back from the past), and the Observer Effect (observed events can't be changed unless the observer believes an event has occurred that actually hasn't—got that?). Obviously, assembling a time-travel system requires the referee to navigate a dense tangle of pseudo-science. But thanks to the clear writing and vivid examples, it's a pleasure, not a chore.

Getting to then from now: GURPS Time Travel offers a variety of era-hopping techniques, including psionic projection, time gates, and magical spells. The most interesting option involves the Arbatov-Brill-Eden Transmitter (ABET), a futuristic device housed in a secluded Canadian laboratory and supported by a phalanx of cryogenic supercomputers. ABET not only serves as a convenient springboard for adventures, it also neatly addresses some of the more problematic aspects of time travel. Because of the Arbatov Barrier, an energy field similar to the one surrounding an atomic nucleus, travelers must be sent back at least 130 years, eliminating the prospect of encountering themselves. Certain eras are

unreachable, limiting the number of settings a referee has to prepare. And travelers can't always pinpoint their exact times of arrival, increasing the potential for unexpected surprises.

Of course, as any aficionado of cheap SF movies knows, time machines are a dime a dozen. But what makes ABET an exceptional creation is the care taken to develop it. Users, for example, have Focal Referent (FR) transmitters implanted in their chests, powered by organic electricity. If the user suffers severe trauma, the FR deactivates and sends him back to the ABET platform. To return voluntarily, the user bites down on switches in his teeth, presenting the possibility that an unexpected punch on the jaw might make him disappear against his will. When a traveler eats ancient food or breathes ancient air, assimilating this "past" matter into the "future" matter of his body, he effectively becomes part of the past. If a bop on the chin yanks him back to the present, he may leave a hunk of himself behind.

Yee-ouch!

What's there to do? To give time travelers something to do, Jackson and Ford provide an elaborate campaign setting based on the ABET device. Players take the roles of Timepiece agents charged with opposing Stopwatch, an organization of alternate-world fanatics dedicated to vandalizing our time line. Despite a premise that's reminiscent of the TIMEMASTER game, it sparkles with imaginative detail. Timepiece agents wear special earpieces that pick up energy ripples created when objects enter the immediate time zone, thus enabling agents to detect Stopwatchers by "hearing" them. Because Stopwatchers fear excessive disruptions of the time line, they slit the wrists of defeated agents instead of killing them outright; the blood loss triggers their FRs and sends them home.

A compelling adventure outline illustrates the potential of the Timepiece/Stopwatch struggle. ABET masterminds send a squad of player-character agents to Austria in May of 1914, just prior to the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and the beginning of World War I. Stopwatch conspirators have replaced the Serbians destined to carry out the assassination. But why? If Timepiece intervenes with Stopwatch, who will assassinate Ferdinand to ensure the stability of the time line? And what's Harry Houdini doing in Austria, an aberration of actual events as understood by future historians? It's an exciting, solidly plotted scenario, cramming more twists into a mere three pages than most adventures manage in an entire book. I wish it had been developed and expanded-replacing, for instance, the nine-page summary of human history in the appendix, which is readily available in any high-school library. But it wasn't, so instead I'll wish that Jackson and Ford find the time to cook up a full-length vol-

ume of scenarios this good.

Extras: A chapter devoted to alternate worlds gives thoughtful tips for staging campaigns on parallel Earths. Despite the tenuous connection with time travel, the twisted histories allow for some appealingly quirky settings. The Thousand Year Reich, which finds Nazis flourishing in 1995, and the United States of Lizardia, where President Clinton has been replaced by President Tyrannosaurus, are two of the many intriguing possibilities.

Also featured are a brief but informative section on using historical personages as player characters and an exhaustive bibliography of relevant fiction. New advantages and disadvantages include gadgeteering (an aptitude for invention), retrogression (the power to project one's consciousness into the past) and timesickness (fatigue or physical damage associated with the stress of time travel). As is typical with the best GURPS supplements, the margins are packed with fascinating sidebars (the recipe for manufacturing gunpowder from scratch ought to raise the eyebrows of role-players and anarchists alike).

Evaluation: GURPS Time Travel borrows ideas from everyone from H.G. Wells to Dr. Who and blends them into a cohesive whole, resulting in the most comprehensive take on time travel to date. Though intended for the GURPS system, the material is generic enough for any system, presuming the referee does his homework. Bursting with baffling jargon and giddy analyses of nonsensical concepts, GURPS Time Travel is exactly the type of book that makes civilians think role-players are out of their minds. Consider that a recommendation.

Time Riders*

Supplement for the ROLEMASTER* and SPACEMASTER* games
144-page softcover book
Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc. \$15
Design: Earl Wajenberg
Editing: Kevin P. Barrett, S. Coleman
Charlton, and Monte J. Cook
Illustrations: Richard Jacobson
Cover: Richard Hescox

Derived as it is from the complicated ROLEMASTER system, *Time Riders* is surprisingly user-friendly. Earl Wajenberg doesn't take time travel anywhere near as seriously as Jackson and Ford, dismissing the intricacies of temporal paradoxes with a shrug and a yawn. Short on scholarly commentary, long on whimsical speculation, *Time Riders* is Time Travel Lite.

Temporal theory: According to Wajenberg, history is fixed, period, and time travelers can't do a thing to change it. His reasons have less to do with physics than playability; tampering with history, he warns, screws up the story line and makes the referee's life miserable. To ensure continuity, Wajenberg encourages the lib-

eral use of "timelocks," which boil down to runs of bad luck for over-functioning PCs. If a PC points a gun at baby Hitler, a chandelier drops on the PC's head before he can get off a shot. A temporal law called the Limelight Effect makes it difficult for travelers to visit major historical events. Though the explanation isn't very satisfying ("... history's limelight seems to repel time machines . . ."), Limelight works as an effective referee's tool for confining visits to particular eras.

Linearity Principles, Observer Effects, and other tricky aspects of time travel are ignored or glossed over, but they aren't missed. If you buy Wajenberg's interpretation of time, paradoxes won't occur too often, so a lot of fussy rules aren't necessary. He grudgingly devotes a page to "flex time," a variant that allows PCs to change history, but offers only a few listless observations ("... every time the PCs alter history, you have to figure out what the effects of the alterations are . . ."). Stick with fixed time, he counsels. Unless you're up for designing your own rules, take his advice.

Getting to then from now: Time Riders details a lengthy list of time-traveling devices, most of them vehicles. The Eon class time ship resembles a giant boomerang and can transport a crew of thirty to the age of dinosaurs in a mere 17 days. The Anderson Special, a motorcycle with spheres for wheels, not only flies like a plane, it also boasts a force field capable of stopping bullets. An all-purpose gizmo called the Holmes-field device can be fitted into cars, backpacks, pocket watches, you name it. Better yet, just about anybody can create one, any time, anywhere. "If you were stranded in the Roman Republic, it might take you a few months . . . but you could probably make yourself a crude Holmes-field device . . ." Is that handy or what?

What's there to do? Time-traveling PCs belong to one of three general groups. Independents, nomads, and fugitives comprise the loosely organized Freetimers. The League of Ages, the Time Riders version of temporal police, monitor the time stream on behalf of their government. The Timekeepers, a mysterious alliance from the distant future, specialize in vigilante justice. The Freetimers, Timekeepers, and especially the League members are enemies of the Revisionists, minions of an evil empire conspiring to rewrite history.

Rewrite history? If history can't be changed, how can the Revisionists "rewrite" it? Answer: the Revisionists aren't trying to change history so much as subvert it. As Wajenberg explains, "The Revisionist goal is to fill the undocumented stretches of history with so many of their schemes that, in their own time, it becomes obvious that all history was really just a preparation for their own victory . . ." Huh? If the logic here were any

more tortured, it'd be screaming for mercy. Instead of trying to make sense of it, I suggest accepting the premise at face value: the Revisionists are the bad guys, we're the good guys, and the time stream ain't big enough for both of us.

The seven scenario outlines emphasize action scenes and simple detective work, avoiding most of the troubling complications of time paradoxes. The "Poachers on Dinosaur Trail" scenario spotlights an expedition in the Cretaceous Period, with cameos by a delightful menagerie of unusual reptiles. "The Eleusis Oracle" makes good use of an ancient Greek setting. The rest are moderately engaging but nothing out of the ordinary.

A chapter explaining how to design original future histories is well-intentioned but too superficial to be of much help. Referees would be better off focusing on "The Fiction Shelf" section, which lists a tantalizing selection of mysteries from the past that beg to be developed into full-blown adventures. Time travelers might investigate the Mary Celeste crew's disappearance, the reasons behind the Hindenburg explosion, or the true identity of JFK's assassin. They might also verify the existence of Robin Hood or track down some of Shakespeare's lost plays. Ambitious referees could send a Timekeeper team on the trail of the Necronomicon, thus linking ROLEMASTER system with the CALL OF CTHULHU* game. How's that for a crossover?

Extras: The generous helping of bonus material includes an essay discussing the evolution of the League of Ages, an amusing look at the culture of time travelers (because they're always encountering timelocks, they're understandably superstitious), and some practical tips for incorporating time travel into other ICE products. A directory of pre-generated characters, complete with statistics drawn from the ROLEMASTER and SPACEMASTER systems, provides an appealing variety of ready-to-go personalities, but at 21 pages may be too much of a good thing. The obligatory summary of human history is less detailed than the GURPS version but just as unnecessary.

Evaluation: *Time Riders* downplays the science of time travel, focusing instead on fanciful characters and painless staging techniques. As such, it's ideal for those who couldn't care less about temporal exclusion laws. Familiarity with the ROLEMASTER and SPACEMASTER games isn't mandatory, since most concepts are framed in generalities rather than game-specific rules. While not in the same league as the demanding GURPS Time Travel, *Time Riders* makes an acceptable alternative for players who just want to get on with the dinosaur hunts.

TIMELORDS* game

140-page softcover book
Blacksburg Tactical Research Center \$15
Design: Greg Porter
Illustrations: Thomas Darrell Midgette and Kirsten Almstedt

***½

Unlike GURPS Time Travel and *Time Riders*, which are sourcebooks for existing games, the TIMELORDS book supplements its time-travel musings with a full-blown RPG. Or it that vice versa? The massive blocks of role-playing rules threaten to overwhelm the modest number of pages devoted to temporal theory. But buried beneath all these tables and formulas is an impressive treatment of time travel, strikingly original and fiercely intelligent.

The game: Greg Porter, who also served as a playtester for GURPS Time Travel, makes no apologies about his affection for detail. "I am a firm believer in realistic rules," he writes, "and I try to practice what I preach." He's not kidding. By my estimate, combat alone requires 40,000-plus words to explain. Tables packed with column after column of dense statistics fill a dozen pages of the appendix. "If you don't like a rule, don't use it," says Porter, but since the book supplies few simplified substitutes, that's easier said than done.

In the game's oddest conceit, players use themselves as characters. Attributes derive from the players' real-life strengths and weaknesses, determined by working through a list of personal questions and objective tests. Do you catch a lot of colds and frequently come down with the flu? Then your character has a Constitution of 8. Can you hold a 10 kilogram weight at arm's length for five seconds? Then your character has a Strength of 9. A player who has a profession where pain is a way of life (football player, magazine editor, etc.) earns a bonus to his Willpower score. Though the system requires a lot of guesswork and the end result is unlikely to resemble Conan the Barbarian (mine was more like Conan the Tax Accountant), it's irresistible fun.

Combat, on the other hand, borders on the incomprehensible, requiring players to juggle initiative ratings, hit locations, impairment multipliers, and a host of other factors. The obsession with minutia is evidenced by the initiative modifier awarded for weapon length (+5 if one weapon is 30 centimeters longer than another). Machine guns and similar projectile weapons have 19 different statistics. The distance a weapon can be thrown equals the character's Strength rating squared, divided by the mass of the weapon in kilograms multiplied by four. Get the picture?

I can't vouch for the integrity of the system, though the few simple attacks I managed to see through to the end produced reasonable results. But that's not the

point. The emphasis on combat is way out of proportion to its importance in the game. Time travel ought to focus on exploration and problem-solving, not the number of seconds it takes to reload a revolver.

Temporal theory: While combat is bloated and finicky, temporal theory is elegant and fascinating. Porter offers a single, unified explanation of time travel, based on the premise of an infinite line extending from the beginning of the universe. The line represents the path history would've taken if nothing had ever happened. Every event causes the line to branch, with each branch becoming an independent universe. Consequently, an infinite number of possible futures extend from any point in the present, but there's only one possible past: the set of events that produced the present as currently experienced.

A traveler may generate a new set of time branches by going into the past and instigating an event. Events are assigned to Event Classes according to their importance. Squashing a flower is Event Class 0, assassinating a president is Event Class 9, starting a nuclear war is Event Class 14. The higher the Event Class, the more likely it is to generate a significant new universe. Smaller Event Classes can also produce radically different futures, providing they occur far enough in the past. What's more, Event Classes are relative to the observer; to a contemporary American, a Presidential assassination might be Event Class 15, but to an extraterrestrial passing by in a flying saucer, it might be Event Class 0.

Changing history comes down to a matter of manipulating probabilities. Repeating a high Event Class event 10 times will most likely result in 10 indistinguishable futures, but the eleventh attempt might prevent the outbreak of World War II. If you kill your ancestors, you'll still be around; you'll generate some universes where you don't exist, but the branch of time where you were born remains unscathed. You can't meet yourself, as this requires an endless duplication of already existing branches. It's complicated but manageable, thanks to Porter's lucid explanations and illuminating graphics. All in all, this is one of the most engaging analyses of time travel I've ever come across.

Getting to then from now: To get his travelers into the time stream, Porter opts for mysticism instead of technology. The Matrix, cooked up by an advanced civilization for reasons unknown, resembles a metallic 20-sided die. The user touches a sequence of facets on the Matrix and concentrates on his destination. The Matrix reads his mind and deposits him in the age of his choice. To prevent accidental plagues, the Matrix radiates a sterilization field that kills all harmful bacteria and

viruses along for the ride. The Matrix computer implants a working knowledge of relevant languages into the traveler's mind, and also ensures that he won't arrive in an active volcano or similarly lethal site. A kind-hearted contraption, wouldn't you say?

What's there to do? Initiating a time-travel campaign can be as easy as rolling a die. As the players wrap up an AD&D game or some other RPG session, one of their 20-sided dice begins to glow. A moment later—poof!—they're aboard a slave barge in ancient Egypt or at the Battle of Gettysburg, using the *TIMELORDS* rules to play themselves as PCs. As the campaign unfolds and the PCs acquire power and experience, they may ally with one of several organizations similar to those featured in the *Time Riders* rules. The Guardians, benevolent survivors of a post-apocalyptic future, may recruit the PCs to help prevent the extinction of the human race. The Time Force operates a sort of interdimensional research library, while the Keepers of the Flame wage an endless war against a mysterious entity known only as the Enemy. Unfortunately, Porter neglects to follow through on these promising ideas, leaving it up to the referee to flesh out the details.

Extras: Most of the bonus material deals with the role-playing system, including game effects of drugs and diseases, meticulous rules for vehicle combat, and a comprehensive equipment list that covers everything from tennis shoes to iodine tablets. Referees can generate worlds at random by rolling on a series of tables; I came up with a prehistoric culture of ambivalent Spanish-speaking Amazons who get rained on a lot. The sample scenario, a fast-moving skirmish in Crete circa 1500 B.C., serves as a good introduction for newcomers, though experienced players may find it routine.

Evaluation: The intricate RPG rules makes the *TIMELORDS* game best suited for veteran players. Staging tips, developed backgrounds, and adventure hooks are sorely missed, and referees should be prepared to do some heavy lifting. Still, those unsatisfied with the do-it-yourself approach of GURPS Time Travel or the simplistic *Time Riders* may find the *TIMELORDS* game worth the effort. Porter handles the implications of time travel with unusual eloquence, and his insights are worth savoring.

Short and sweet

HyperCad 54, Where Are You?, by Craig Sheeley. The Avalon Hill Game Company, \$16. The TALES FROM THE FLOATING VAGABOND* game generated more groans than belly laughs, not a good sign from an RPG that lives and dies on the strength of its jokes. But the *HyperCad* supplement gets it right, collecting five delightfully goofy scenarios that recall the

PARANOIA game at its most subversive. Best of the bunch are "Return of the King," featuring an alternative universe where an Elvis Presley revival threatens the existence of rap music, and "Imprisoned," where the PCs struggle to escape a 1950s suburban nightmare right out of "Leave it to Beaver." Avalon Hill hiked up the production values for this one, bundling the text with well-rendered player handouts and a handy character sheet booklet. But it's Craig Sheeley's nimble writing that makes *HyperCad* a keeper.

The Stars Are Right, by Richard Watts, Andre Bishop, Steve Hatherly, Kevin A. Ross, John Tynes, Fred Behrendt, Gary Sumpter, Steven C. Rasmussen, and D. H. Frew. Chaosium Inc., \$19. Just as I initially shrugged off the TALES OF THE FLOATING VAGABOND game, I also dismissed Chaosium's *Cthulhu* Now supplement as marketing gimmickry, a not-too-convincing attempt at bringing the CALL OF CTHULHU game into the 1990s. But after reading this scenario pack, I'm having second thoughts. Steve Hatherly's "Fractal Gods," featuring a personal computer infected with a Mythos virus, ranks with the most memorable CTHULHU adventures of any era. Another winner is John Tynes' disturbing "Nemo Solus Sapit," which sends the Investigators to California for some horrifying mental-health therapy. "Love's Lonely Children," by Richard Watts, unflinchingly probes drug dens and other sordid corners of the modern world, though I think his punk rockers are a little too tame (he should've used Slayer or some other death-metal band as a model). While the remaining entries seldom catch fire, there's enough quality material to make a strong case for the viability of a contemporary Mythos campaign.

Quest for the Silver Sword, by William W. Connors, and *Sword and Shield*, by John Terra. TSR, Inc., \$7 each. Whenever a holiday rolls around, an assortment of nephews, nieces, and cousins besiege the Swan house, clamoring to drag out the role-playing games. Since I'm swimming in this stuff all year, role-playing isn't exactly my first choice for holiday recreation. But, hey, I'm a sport, so I'm usually willing to comply, providing we can play something that doesn't require me to memorize a long-forgotten rulebook, and doesn't take forever and a day to finish. My thanks, then, to TSR for the revised, easy-on-the-brain DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, and double thanks for its series of simple introductory adventures, typified by *Quest for the Silver Sword* and *Sword and Shield*. Each boasts clutter-free story lines, maps that double as game boards, and colorful sheets of punch-out counters that make playing a breeze. *Quest for the Silver Sword*, with its straightforward exploration of a haunted

keep, is a bit easier to manage for beginners, though *Sword and Shield*, highlighted by a confrontation with the mysterious Black Knight, also delivers the goods for players with a tad more experience. Game snobs may sneer at the meager plots and superficial characters—these are, after all, little more than glorified dungeon crawls—but the nasty monsters and gaudy treasures are guaranteed to dazzle novices. Weary Dungeon Masters can run either adventure almost effortlessly; I didn't even have to read them first. Pick one up and get those pesky kids off your back.

Rick Swan has been a full-time free-lancer since 1987. He's worked for TSR Inc., West End Games, and Steve Jackson Games and is also the author of The Complete Guide to Role-playing Games, published by St. Martin's Press.

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A game convention is the perfect place to make new friends who enjoy the same hobbies you do—whether you like boardgames, role-playing games, miniature wargames, or just shopping around. If you've never attended a game convention before, please check out the Convention Calendar feature in this issue for the game convention nearest you. Take some of your own gaming friends along, too—and make it an experience to remember.



Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines must be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing must include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location; 3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the last Monday of October. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been canceled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at TSR, Inc.: (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited: (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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OWLCON, March 12-14

TX

This convention will be held at Rice University, Houston, Tex. Events include role-playing, board, and miniatures games. Registration: \$12 preregistered; \$14 at the door; one-day passes for \$5-6. Write to: Joe Westmoreland, Rice University, Lovett College, P.O. Box 2671, Houston TX 77252-2671.

PRINCECON XVIII, March 12-14

NJ

This convention will be held at Whig Hall, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. The main event is a paper-and-computer RPG involving 15 interlocking scenarios in one integrated world. Registration: \$10 preregistered by March 1; \$15 at the door (starts at 3 P.M.). Minimum age: 18 years old. Write to: Matt Zinno, 201 Feinberg, Wilson College, Princeton NJ 08544; or call: (609) 258-8900. Make checks payable to "Simulation Games Union."

BAMACON 7, March 18-21

AL

This convention will be held at the Bryant Conference Center and Sheraton Capstone Inn in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Guests include Jonathan Frakes, Hal Clement, and Brom. Activities include over 30 gaming tournaments with prizes, an art show, a masquerade, a computer room, and a movie room. Registration: \$35. Write to: BAMACON 7, P.O. Box 6542, Univ. of Alabama, Tuscaloosa AL 35486-6542; or call: (205) 758-4577.

CALCON 8, March 19-21

*

This convention will be held at the Marlborough Inn in Calgary, Alberta. Events include role-playing, war, miniatures, and board games, with a comic-book convention, computer gaming, an auction, and dealers. Registration: \$10 until March 1; \$15 at the door. Visitor and day passes are available. Write to: CALCON 8, Box 22206, 401-g Av. SW, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2P 4J6; or call Paul at: (403) 281-1574.

CRACKERCON 2, March 19-21

FL

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Baymeadows Holiday Inn, Jacksonville, Fla. Guests include Ben Bova, Jeff Adams, and Jack Haldeman III. Registration: \$20 before Feb. 20; more at the door. Lodging is available. Write to: CRACKERCON 2, P.O. Box 8356, Jacksonville FL 32239-8356.

GAMECON 4, March 19-20

NJ

This convention will be held in the Bergen Mall Shopping Center, Paramus, N.J. Events include role-playing and miniatures games, with a miniatures-painting contest. Registration: \$10, \$8 for Saturday only, with a \$2 fee per game. Write to: GameMaster, Bergen Mall Shopping Center, Paramus NJ 07652; or call: (201) 843-3308.

GAMEFEST '93, March 19-21

IL

This convention will be held at Friend's Hobby Shop in Waukegan, Ill. Events include miniatures, role-playing, and board games. Write to: Friend's Hobby, 1411 Washington, Waukegan IL 60085; or call: (708) 336-0790.

VILLECON '93, March 19-21

MO

This convention will be held at the Northwest Missouri State Univ. Conference Center in Maryville, Mo. Events include many RPG™ Network role-playing events, plus board games, dealers, and contests. Registration: \$7 preregistered; \$10 at the door. Write to: Brad Monger, 517 W. 7th St., Maryville MO 64448; or call: (816) 582-8174.

SIMCON XV, March 25-28

NY

This convention will be held at the University of Rochester's River campus in Rochester, N.Y. Events include board, miniatures, and computer games, with a movie room, a dealers' room, and a miniatures-painting contest. Write to: SIMCON, CPU #277146, Univ. of Rochester, Rochester NY 14627-7146; or call: (716) 275-6186.

ADVENTURERS' INN VI, March 26-28

CA

This convention will be held in the Angels Camp at the Calaveras Fairgrounds. Activities include role-playing and strategy games, a costume contest, a movie room, medieval food, and dealers. Registration: \$20 until Feb. 28; \$25 thereafter and at the door. Write to: ADVENTURERS' INN, P.O. Box 391, Mokelumne Hill CA 95245; or call: (209) 286-1545.

CONNCON '93, March 26-28

CT

This convention will be held at the Danbury Hilton & Towers in Danbury, Conn. Events include role-playing, board, and war games, with RPG™ Network-sanctioned events. Jean Rabe is the guest of honor. Other activities include miniatures, board and war games, a banquet, and dealers. Judges are welcome. For preregistration fee information, write to: CONNCON, P.O. Box 444, Sherman CT 06784-0444.

COWBOY CON '93, March 26-28

OK

This convention will be held at the Student Union on the OSU campus in Stillwater, Okla. Guests include Mark Simmons and Roger Allen. Activities include gaming, a dealers' room, a masquerade, and filking. Registration: \$8 preregistered; \$10 at the door. Write to: Cowboy Campaigners Club, c/o COWBOY CON, Student Union 040, Box 110, Stillwater OK 74078.

IANUA FANTASY III, March 26-28

*

This convention will be held at the "Istituto Brignole" in Genoa, Italy. Events include numerous role-playing games in Italian and English, with a costume show, tournament prizes, and a miniatures-painting contest. Registration: about \$4 per day or \$10 per weekend until March 1; \$6 per day at the door. Lodging is available. Write to: Labyrinth, Vico S. Antonio 5/3A, 16126, Genova ITALY; or call: (10)-887991 at GMT +1.

NANOCON '93, March 26-28

UT

This convention will be held at the Taggart Student Center at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Events include role-playing and tactical

* indicates an Australian convention.

* indicates a Canadian convention.

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Utah. Events include role-playing and tactical games, with anime, SCA demos, and a games auction. For fees and information, write to: Michael Sorensen, P.O. Box 3375, Logan UT 84323-3375.

ONEONTACON '93, March 26-28 NY

This convention will be held at the Hunt Union, on the SUNY College campus in Oneonta, N.Y. Events include role-playing and miniatures games, with a dealers' area. Registration costs vary, but students receive a minimum \$1 discount. Preregistration is advised. Write to: Gamers' Guild, c/o Student Activities, State University College, Oneonta NY 13820.

DREAMCON VI, March 27-28 MO

This convention will be held at Ophelia Parrish Hall, at Northeast Missouri State University, Kirksville, Mo. Events include role-playing and miniatures games, with a dealers' room, movies, anime, and a costume contest. Registration: \$5/weekend preregistered (includes 2 game sessions); merchants \$5/weekend; \$3/day and \$1/game otherwise. Write to: NMSU Fantasy Club, Student Union Building, Kirksville MO 63501-4988; or call: (816) 627-2128.

KNIGHT MARCH I, March 27-28 *

This convention will be held at the Pine Ridge Room of the Northumberland Mall in Cobourg, Ontario. Events include role-playing, board, and miniatures games, plus many RPGA™ Network-sanctioned events, miniatures and art competitions, workshops, a silent auction, and speakers including Ed Greenwood and Lawrence Simms. Registration: \$8/day or \$12/weekend (Canadian). Write to: KNIGHT MARCH, 12 King St. E., Cobourg, Ontario, CANADA K9A 1K7; or call Don at: (416) 372-4245, (705) 741-6079, or (613) 234-9437.

NORMAN CONQUEST, March 27-28 OK

This convention will be held at the Cate Center, University of Oklahoma Campus, Norman, Okla. Events include tournaments, RPGA™ Network games, board games, and IFGS demos; the guest is Dennis McDonald. Registration: free! (but tournaments are \$2 each and board games are \$1 each). Write to: NORMAN CONQUEST, 215-A OMU, 900 Asp Avenue, Norman OK 73019; or call Mary at: (405) 325-9583.

RUCON '93, March 27 PA

This convention will be held from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M., at the Parsons Union Building, Lock Haven University Campus, Lock Haven, Pa. Events include RPGA™ Network events, role-playing and miniatures games, and magical-item and monster invention contests. Registration: \$7 preregistered, or \$10 at the door. Send an SASE to: Kenneth Newquist, RUCON Chair, Woolridge Hall Box 38, Lock Haven University, Lock Haven PA 17745; or call: (717) 893-3237.

**SF³SIG OPEN GAMING '93,
March 27-28 IL**

This convention will be held at Rockford College in Rockford, Ill. Events include open gaming and Ten Backwards. Registration: \$2/day. Write to: SF³SIG, College Box 237, Rockford College, 5050 E. State St., Rockford IL 61108.

MAGNUM OPUS CON 8, April 1-4

This convention will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Greenville, S.C. Guests include Rowena, Ben Bova, C. J. Cherryh, Robert Asprin, and David Weber. Activities include gaming, a costume contest, panels, seminars, anime, videos, dances, and a hospitality suite. Registration: \$40 at the door. Send an SASE with \$.52 postage to: MOC-8, P.O. Box 6585, Athens GA 30604; or call: (706) 549-1533.

COASTCON XVI, April 2-4 MS

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum/Convention Center, West Beach, in Biloxi, Miss. Guests include Timothy Zahn, Michael Stackpole, Keith Parkinson, Mary Scott, Lawrence Watt-Evans, and Andrew Offutt. Activities include a dealers' room, 24-hour video rooms, films, an awards banquet, a writing contest, an art show and auction, a dance, a costume contest, a charity auction, a used-game auction, tournaments, and gaming. Registration: \$20 before March 1st; \$25 at the door. Write to: COASTCON XVI, P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533; or call: A. J. Brockway at (601) 864-6064.

CON-TOON III, April 2-4 OH

This animation convention will be held at Seigfreid Hall, Ohio University, in Athens, Ohio. Events include role-playing games, animated films, dealers, an art competition, SCA demos, and guests Dennis MacKinnon and Ardith Carlton. Registration: \$5/weekend. Write to: Chad Taylor, 93 E. First St., The Plains OH 45780; or call Chad at: (614) 797-4691.

PENTECON V, April 2-4 NY

This convention will be held at the campus of Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. Events include role-playing games, war games, board games, and miniatures games. Other activities include dealers and RPGA™ Network events. Registration: \$7 preregistered; \$10 at the door. GMs will receive discount if preregistered. Write to: PENTECON V, c/o CSSS, 29 White Hall, Cornell Univ., Ithaca NY 14853; or call Kris at: (607) 253-0650. No collect calls, please.

POCON '93, April 2-4 PA

This convention will be held at the Pocono Manor Inn and Golf Resort, in Pocono Manor, Pa. Events include role-playing, board, and miniatures games, with RPGA™ Network tournaments, a painting contest, dealers, and an auction. Lodging is available. For fees, write to: Ed Dowgiallo, The Pocono Encampment, P.O. Box 390, Effort PA 18330; or call: (717) 629-7218.

SPRING OFFENSIVE IV, April 2-4 IL

This convention will be held at Illinois Central College in East Peoria, Ill. Events include role-playing, miniatures, and board games. Registration: \$3/day or \$5/weekend. Events fees are \$1 each. Write to: SPRING OFFENSIVE, The Game Room, 116 Walnut, Washington IL (no zip code given); or call: (309) 444-4640.

HYPOTHETICON '93, April 3 CT

This convention will be held Student Union at the Storrs branch of the University of Conn. Events include gaming, movies, panels, and a dealers' room. Registration: \$4 preregistered; \$6 at the door. Write to: Vivian Norwood, UConn, Shippee Hall, Room 519, Storrs CT 06269; or call: (203) 427-5085.



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SCRYCON '93, April 3**NY**

This convention will be held at the Poughkeepsie Day School, in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Events include RPGA™ Network tournaments and role-playing games, with a miniatures-painting contest and a used-game flea market. Registration: \$6 preregistered, or \$8 at the door. Send an SASE to: SCRYCON '93, P.O. Box 896, Pleasant Valley NY 12569.

SPRING FANTASY REVEL, April 8-10**IL**

This convention will be held at the Woodfield Hilton in Arlington Heights, Ill. Events include numerous RPGA™ Network events. Other activities include the Little Wars Wargaming Weekend, running concurrently. Registration: \$12/weekend (Little Wars passes are \$3). Send an SASE to: Keith Polster, Box 27, Theresa WI 53091.

GOLD CON I, April 10**NJ**

This convention will be held at American Legion Post 328, in Clark, N.J. Events include RPGA™ tournaments and role-playing, miniatures, and board games, with a miniatures-painting contest. Registration: \$8 before March 15, or \$10 at the door; no event fees. Write to: AU Gamers, P.O. Box 81, Whippny NJ 07981; or call: (201) 402-9239.

TECHNICON 10, April 10-12**VA**

This convention will be held at the Donaldson Brown Center in Blacksburg, Va. Guests include Scott Quirk. Activities include gaming, an art show and auction, panels, videos, anime, and a dance. Registration: \$22 preregistered; \$24 at the door. Student rate is \$20. Write to: TECHNICON 10, c/o VTSFFC, P.O. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24063-0256; or call: (703) 952-0572.

CON-TROLL, April 16-18**TX**

This convention will be held at the Marriott Astrodome in Houston, Tex. Events include Dream Park, IFGS, and NASA presentations; an art show and auction; a dealers' room; filking; children's programming; a costume contest; tournament games; the Troll Stomp dance; and guests including Larry Niven, Steven Barnes, Ed Greenwood, Dell Harris, and Judy Dugas. Registration: \$22 to April 1; \$25 thereafter. Send an SASE to: CON-TROLL Conventions, Inc., 7311 Bellervile #1025, Houston TX 77036.

I-CON XII, April 16-18**NY**

This convention will be held on the campus of the State University of New York, at Stony Brook on Long Island. Events include an art show and print shop, an awards banquet, pro parties, movies, filking, game tournaments, an auction, videos, films, slide shows, authors and speakers, anime, and guests including Barbara Hambly, Craig Shaw Gardner, Fred Pohl, Edward Bryant, Gregory Benford, Barry Malzberg, Barry Longyear, and F. Paul Wilson. One-day passes available at the door. Lodging is available. For fees and more information, send an SASE to: I-CON XII, P.O. Box 550, Stony Brook NY 11790.

KNIGHT GAMES HI, April 16-18**NJ**

This convention will be held in New Brunswick, N.J. Events include RPGA™ tournaments, role-playing and board games, contests, and movies. Part of the proceeds will be donated to campus organization for the homeless. A valid college ID is required for admission. For fees and more information, call Scott at: (908) 874-4034, or Will at: (908) 463-2259.

ANIMEDAY FILE III, April 17-18

©

This convention will be held at the Rutland Hotel, in Sheffield, Yorkshire, England. Events include lots and lots of anime. For more information, write to: ANIMEDAY III Committee, 14 Ashurst Road, Stannington, Sheffield, Yorkshire, UNITED KINGDOM S6 5LP.

GAME FAIRE '93, April 23-25**WA**

This convention will be held at the Student Union Building #17, at Spokane Falls Community College, in Spokane, Wash. Events include role-playing, historical, microarmor, and miniatures games, with miniature-painting contests. Registration: \$12/weekend preregistered, \$16/weekend at the door (single-day passes available). Write to: GAME FAIRE '93, c/o Merlyn's, N.I. Browne, Spokane WA 99201; or call: (509) 624-0957.

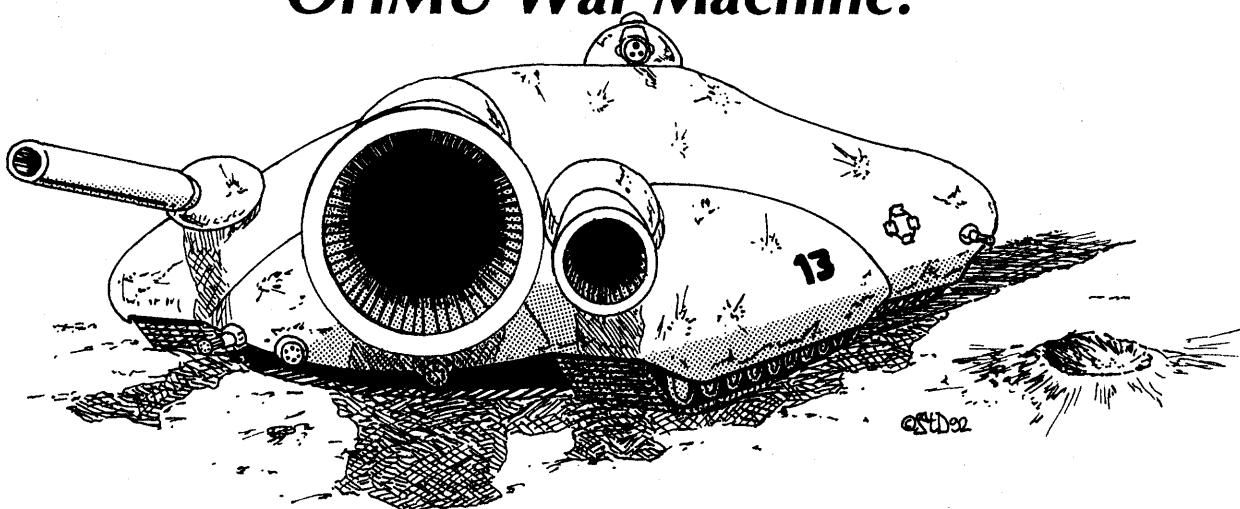
POINTCON XVI, April 23-25**NY**

This convention will be held at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. Events include role-playing, microarmor, miniatures, and historical games, with dealers, computer gaming, a miniatures-painting contest, and open gaming. Registration: \$12 at the door; \$10 preregistered by mail; no event fees. Write to: USMA Wargames Committee, ATTN: POINTCON XVI, P.O. Box 62, West Point NY 10997.

U.B. CON '93, April 23-25**NY**

This convention will be held at the State University of New York at Buffalo, N.Y. Events include role-playing and strategy games, with tournaments, SCA demos, and dealers. Registration: \$6 preregistered, or \$9 at the door (student discounts available). Write to: UB Strategists' and Roleplayers' Association, 363 Student Union, SUNY at Buffalo, Buffalo NY 14261; or call: (716) 645-4128.

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The ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Open Championship Game to find the British AD&D™ Game Champion of 1993, held over Saturday and Sunday. Places in this event are limited and must be booked in advance. (Entry fee £3.00).

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BOISE FANTASY ARTS CONVENTION**April 24-25****ID**

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Boise, Idaho. Events include gaming, dealers, costuming, an art show, and panels. Registration: \$19 preregistered by April 15; \$22 at the door (one-day rates are available). Write to: BOISE FANTASY ARTS CONVENTION, P.O. Box 8602, Boise ID 83702; or call: (208) 336-0568 or -3155.

WIZARD'S CHALLENGE XI**April 30-May 2*******

This convention will be held at the Delta Regina in Regina, Sask. Events include a games auction, panels, a figure-painting competition, and a medieval banquet. Guests include Robin Curtis and Loyd Blankenship. Write to: Ken McGovern, No-Prair-Con, 2101 Broad St., Regina SK, CANADA, S4P 1Y6; or call: (306) 757-8544.

BRISCON '93, May 1-3*****

This convention will be held at the QUT Kelvin Grove campus in Brisbane, QLD. Events include role-playing, board, and miniatures games. Other activities include a used-game sale and an end-of-con barbecue. Registration: \$20 (Australian) until April 1; \$25 thereafter. There will be discounts for those under 15 years of age. Write to: Chris Ryan, P.O. Box 182, Indooroopilly, QLD AUSTRALIA #4068; or call: +61-7-870-8156.

CONVOCATION '93, May 1-2**MA**

This convention will be held at the University of Mass.-Amherst Campus Center. Events include role-playing, strategy, and miniatures gaming. Other activities include a costume contest, a figure-painting contest, open gaming, and a dealers' room. Registration: \$5 preregistered; \$7 at the door. Area students receive a discount. Event fees are \$3. Write to: UMASS Grenadiers, Box 178, SAO, Amherst MA 01003.

HIGHLAND VI, May 1**TN**

This convention will be held at the University Center on the campus of Tennessee Tech in Cookeville, Tenn. Events include gaming, a dealers' room, an art show, and door prizes. Registration: \$2; \$3/event. Write to: Thomas W. Nelson, 1107 Sioux St., Athens TN 37303; or call: (615) 745-0648.

MAGIC CARPET CON '93, May 7-9**GA**

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Dalton, Ga. Guests include Andre Norton, Susan Schwartz, and P. M. Griffin. Activities include gaming, a con suite, an art show and print shop, a dealers' room, and a masquerade. Registration: \$20 until March 31; \$25 thereafter. Write to: MAGIC CARPET CON, P.O. Box 678, Rocky Face GA 30740.

OASIS 6, May 14-16**FL**

This convention will be held at the Altamonte Springs Hilton in Altamonte Springs, Fla. Guests include Connie Willis, Michael Whelan, and Andre Norton. Activities include a dealers' room, an art show and auction, a con suite, panels, videos, and gaming. Registration: \$21 until April 16; \$24 at the door. Write to: OASFIS, P.O. Box 940994, Maitland FL 32792-0992; or call Ray at: (407) 725-2383.

KETTERING GAME CONVENTION VIII,**May 15-16****OH**

This convention will be held at the Charles I. Lathrem Senior Center in Kettering, Ohio. Events include fantasy role-playing, board, miniatures, and computer games, plus a game auction, and an RPGA™ Network tournament. Registration: \$2/day. Write to: Bob Von Gruenigen, 804 Willowdale Ave., Kettering OH 45429; or call: (513) 298-2480.

MADISON GAMES CON '93**WI**

This convention will be held at the Quality Inn South in Madison, Wis. Events include role-playing, war, miniatures, and board games. Other activities include a games auction. Judges and dealers are welcome. Registration: \$8/weekend or \$5/day. Write to: Pegasus Games, 6640 Odana Rd., Madison WI 53719; or call: (608) 833-4263.

ADVENTURE GAMEFEST '93**OR**

This convention will be held at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Ore. Events include role-playing, board, and miniatures games in all genres. Other activities include door and event prizes, a game auction, and a miniatures-painting contest. Registration: \$15/weekend or \$7/day. Write to: Adventure Games Northwest, Inc., 6517 NE Alberta, Portland OR 97218; or call: (503) 282-6856.

ECLIPSE '93, May 21-23**MO**

This gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Inn in Columbia, Mo. Guests include Jean Rabe, David "Zeb" Cook, Tim Beach, Rick Harris, and Bruce Nesmith. Activities include many RPGA™ sanctioned events and war gaming. Registration: \$10 preregistered; \$12 at the door. Write to: Jim Herring, 3702 W. Truman Blvd., Ste. 223, Jefferson City MO 65109; or call: (314) 635-2441.

NEWPORT MINI-CON '93, May 22**RI**

This convention will be held at the Howard Johnson in Middletown, R.I. Events include role-playing and miniatures games. Registration: \$8 until May 8; \$9 thereafter; \$10 at the door. Write to: NEWPORT MINI-CON, c/o SMAGS, P.O. Box 6295, Fall River MA 02724.

ORGANIZED KAHN-FUSION**May 22-23****PA**

This gaming convention will be held at the Embers in Carlisle, Pa. Guests include Greg Porter and Greg Costikyan. Activities include open gaming, panels, dealers, a figure-painting contest, and readings. Registration: up to \$12. Write to: M. Foner's Games Only Emporium, 200 3rd St., New Cumberland PA 17070; or call: (717) 774-6676.

GAMEX '93, May 28-31**CA**

This convention will be held at the Airport Hyatt hotel in Los Angeles, Calif. All types of strategy, family, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be featured. Other activities include flea markets, an auction and a dealers' area. Write to: STRATEGICON, P.O. Box 3849, Torrance CA 90510-3849; or call: (310) 326-9440.

GAME-A-THON '93, May 28-30**NY**

This convention will be held at the Sheraton Inn at the airport in Albany, N.Y. Events include RPGA™ Network events, plus minia-

tures, board, and role-playing games. Other activities include a benefit for the Farano Center for Children. Registration: \$18 before May 7. Write to: Michael J. Rivet, Jr., GAME-A-THON, 602 Foxwood Dr., Clifton Park NY 12065; or call: (518) 371-8953.

GAMESCAUSUS II, May 28-31**CA**

This convention will be held at the Airport Hilton in Oakland, Calif. Events include role-playing, miniatures, and board games. Other activities include a dealers' room, a painting contest, a flea market, and a 24-hour-a-day movie room. Registration: \$25 preregistered; \$30 at the door. Judges are welcome and will receive discounts. Write (and make checks payable) to: Trigaming Assoc., P.O. Box 4867, Walnut Creek CA 94596-0867.

MIGSCON XIV, May 29-30*****

This historical gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Hamilton, Ontario. Events include games set in the following periods: Ancient, medieval, renaissance, Seven-Year War, Napoleonic, colonial, ACW, WWII, and modern. Dealers are welcome. Write to: MIGSCON XIV, c/o P.O. Box 37013, Barton Postal Outlet, Ontario, CANADA L8L 8E9; or call: (416) 351-7207.

Important: To ensure that your convention listing makes it into our files, enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard with your first convention notice; we will return the card to show that your notice was received. You might also send a second notice one week after mailing the first. Mail your listing as early as possible, and always keep us informed of any changes. Please avoid sending convention notices by fax, as this method has not proved to be reliable.



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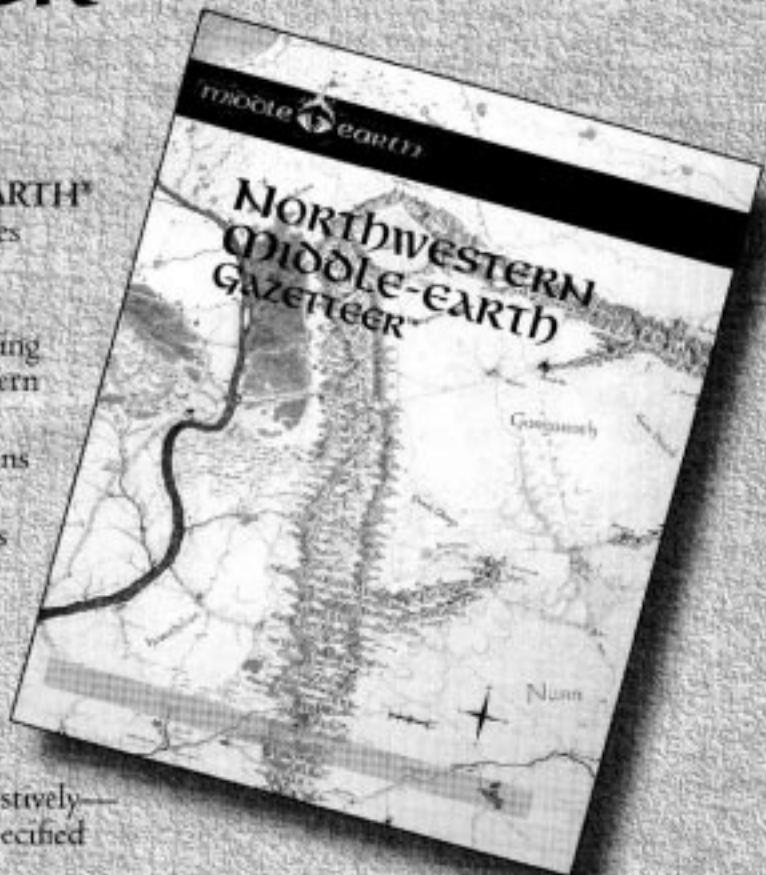
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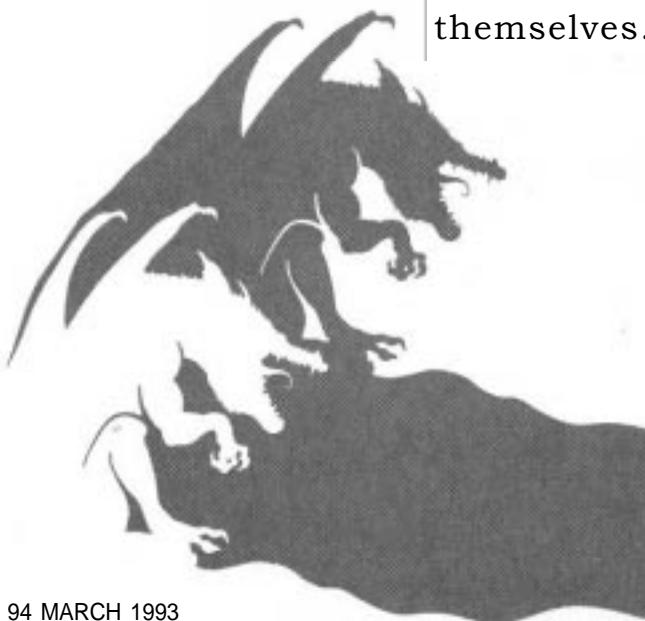
The Dragon's Bestiary

Artwork by L.A. Williams

Politeness counts when dealing
with these denizens of Faerie-land

by Richard A. Hunt

In the faraway places where elves and faerie
creatures dwell can be found some
extraordinary beings. Two such creatures are
presented here, one from
the woodland waterways and
the other from the woodlands
themselves.



Faerie Phiz

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Sylvan settings
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Very to godlike (11-21+)
TREASURE:	Q,T
ALIGNMENT:	Any
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	Nil
HIT DICE:	10-12
THAC0:	Variable (as wizard)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-24 (bite)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spell use
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Camouflage, spit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	5% per hit dice
SIZE:	S to L
MORALE:	Fearless (19-20)
XP VALUE:	Leafling: 7,000 Woodmaster: 8,000 Treelord: 9,000

The faerie phiz is a mystical entity similar in nature to a treant or galeb duhr. The faerie phiz is a magical being found exclusively in sylvan woods and faerie settings, or in the kingdoms of elves. The fay phiz, as it is sometimes called, is simply a face (the old elven word for "face" being "phiz") found on magically enchanted wooden surfaces. The faerie phiz appears for the most part on trees of the woodland, although it has been seen on old, large wooden doors, enchanted houses, bridges, drawbridges, and other old, large, wooden structures. The phiz is detectable only 25% of the time (50% for druids and elves) when its eyes and mouth are closed; thus, it is effectively camouflaged. The phiz may appear on any sort of wood, although oak is most common.

The visage of the faerie phiz and its features range anywhere in size from that of the smallest pixie to the visage of hill giant size. The phiz is usually quite striking, and no two are alike in personality or looks, although it is said that once in a thousand years twins may occur. Sages who study the lost and rare philosophy of phizonomie (the arcane study of judging character from facial features and sometimes the art of divination based on such) agree that the phiz are created through the vicissitude of great and potent overflows of faerie magic. Sages also believe that the destruction of a powerful wizard may cause the transference of his power to the area at the moment of his death, resulting in the magical growth of the fay phiz later. The phiz may be dour and ugly or simply bear a visage similar to that of a treant. It may also bear the characteristics of elven faces or other faerie creatures, but these sort are not as common, although these are the most advertised sort in city taverns and gossip haunts.

Combat: The phiz, like the treant, abhors fire, but it does not fear it as most treants do. The phiz spits on any fire within range and often on anyone bearing a torch or lighting a campfire. The spit, a magical acidic resin secreted by the faerie phiz, causes all fires smaller than 2½ in diameter to be completely extinguished. The saliva of the phiz also affects any live target as if an *irritation* spell had been cast on it, with the effects of both itching and rash occurring.



The phiz may spit at any point within a distance of up to 100 yards within a clear line of sight.

The faerie phiz's attack form is spell use. The phiz is capable of casting spells as a wizard and druid at a level equal to its hit dice. The phiz gains spells by merely observing someone cast them, then remembering them. Any spells appropriate to its type so witnessed are transferred to its memory, which serves as a spell book. The Phiz must still take time to study the spells in its mind, attempting to recall them from its extensive memory. The lowest hit-die phiz will have spells available as a 10th-level wizard or druid; for every additional hit die, it gains one level of spell-casting ability to a maximum of 12th level. The spells are converted to verbal components, and no memorized spells are ever fire-based. The phiz may not specialize in specific schools of magic as a character would.

Habitat/Society: The phiz has a very long life span. It may often live to be over 1,500 years old if left undisturbed. An individual phiz increases in hit dice every 100-500 years that it

Faerie Phiz

lives, increasing its magic resistance and spell-casting ability as well. The phiz grows in magical glades and in places where pixies, sprites, and other sorts of faeries frolic; it is on excellent terms with treants. The phiz always has an extensive knowledge of an area's history and memories of anyone who has ever passed before its eyes. It is capable of remembering entire conversations that may have occurred throughout the span of its life. It is also prone to know volumes of lore and speak many languages that no human or elf can even hope to find nowadays, much less remember.

Ecology: The phiz is not disposed to give its sagelike knowledge to anyone because it does not wish to be haunted by every philosopher and sage in the realm. A phiz is rarely senile despite its great age, although to fool some seekers it pretends to be. The phiz is reclusive and often acts old and weary or irritated with the intrusion of its privacy. The phiz is not afraid of death (a few even welcome it) and cannot be tricked or forced to reveal knowledge and information by threats or coercion. It would rather die by the ax than give information to those arrogant enough to threaten it. The phiz is disinterested in wealth and often laughs at those foolish enough to promise gold and riches. The only way to receive any information from a faerie phiz, other than its possible willingness to divulge it anyhow, is to offer it powerful magical items or rich faerie food—a very dangerous proposition.

This faerie food may only be found through a few very dangerous methods. One such method is to seek out and join a faerie ring. A faerie ring is a circle of mushrooms where tiny faeries, such as atomies, grigs, brownies, pixies, and sprites commonly dance. The seeker has only to enter the circle, then dance or sing for a few minutes in hopes of being offered some food. The food appears to be bread, cheese, fowl, beef, or vegetable dishes of the normal kind, only made by faerie hands. It is harmless and very delicious. The dance seems to last for but a few moments, but thanks to the magic of the faerie ring has a 40% chance of taking seven years in human time. The seeker may also look for a faerie hill, entering only by the graceful invitation of its tiny inhabitants. Once inside, the seeker should be careful not to eat or drink any of the delicious food or wine of the faeries. The seeker is faced with inescapable imprisonment if he so much as tastes one morsel of the heavenly food. The taster is usually *polymorphed* into a faerie or serves as a slave to the more evil and vile faeries, such as the drow or the quickling. Dryads sometimes lure seekers with such foods, but the danger of capture still remains.

In any event, the phiz is only hungry once a human year. A year to a human is only a single day for the phiz, so it does not hunger often. The phiz is usually hungry during a season particularly pleasing to it such as spring, for those of good alignment, or winter, for those of evil alignment. The food is not actually eaten all at once but is stored (like a squirrel's trove of nuts) inside the phiz in its extra-dimensional stomach. The phiz nibbles on this supply for an entire year. This and the fact that the correct food is hard to attain without dire consequences keeps most adventurers away from the phiz, much to its delight. The phiz is fed by sprites and other fay folk and as a result never goes hungry, despite the lack of seekers.

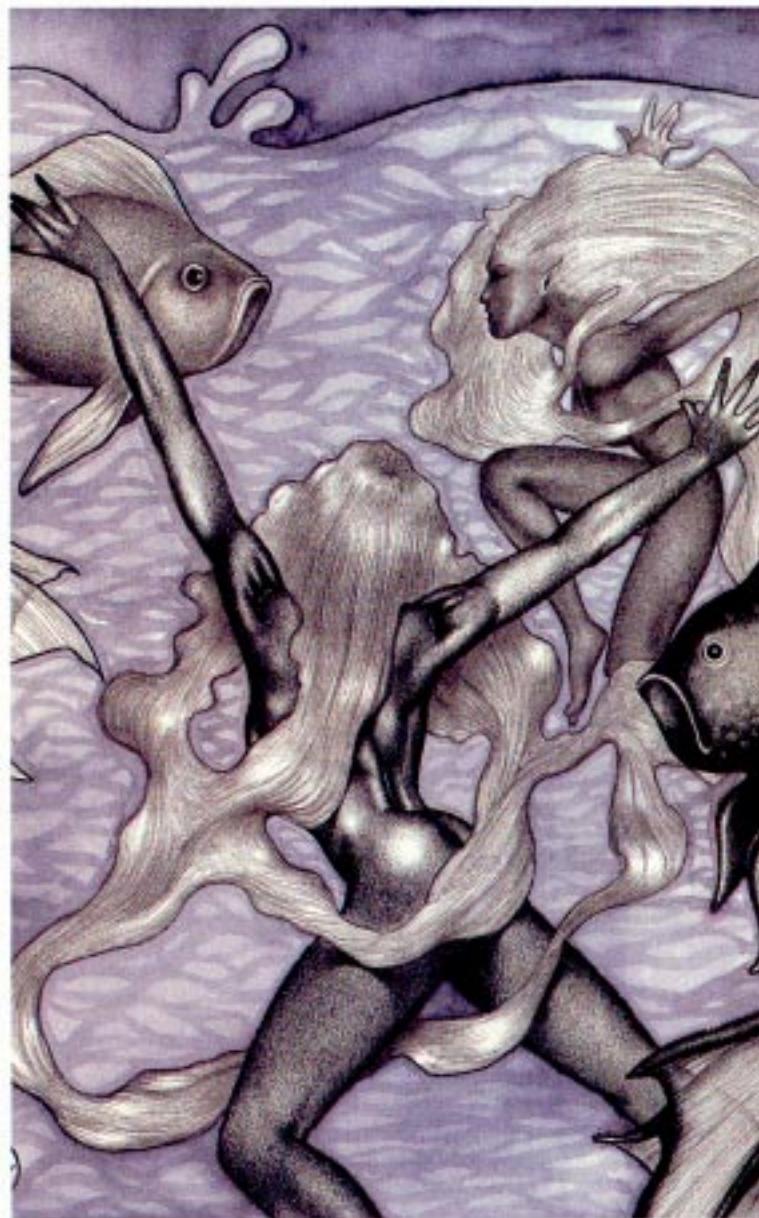
Asrai

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate lakes, rivers, and seas
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	School
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Vegetarian
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)
TREASURE:	See below
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic good
NO. APPEARING:	2-20
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	Sw 18
HIT DICE:	1/2
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Hypnotism
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T
MORALE:	Unsteady (5-7)
XP VALUE:	15

The asrai are tiny, delicate female faeries who melt away like ice into a pool of water when captured, exposed to direct sunlight, or when removed from their watery homes. They appear as small beautiful water nymphs no more than 4½ in height. The hair of the asrai is long and gold and shimmers warmly as they glide through the cool blue waters. They are wonderfully adept in the element, dazzling those who look upon them with their artful swimming.

Combat: The asrai are for the most part defenseless and never attack out of malice or vengeance. They may bite opponents who attempt to scoop them from their native water as a warning, but usually swim away instead. They are able to *hypnotize* characters when a school of them works in unison. To do this, they swim around at the surface of the pool creating a weaving, darting water dance that has the effects of a *hypnotic pattern* spell. Their golden hair turns and twists, forming a myriad of captivating sparkles that hold the attention of the character for as long as the asrai wish.

Habitat/Society: The asrai are wanderers of fresh waters and travel in schools like fish. They are highly intelligent but very fearful of mankind and can almost never be persuaded to talk, as so many of them are fearful of being tricked and captured or exposed to sunlight. They never touch the surface of the water, always staying just beneath it. Asrai may appear during a full moon, as they like to swim in the dim light that plays on the surface of the water. They love pearls and other lustrous, shiny objects, although they are too small to carry many of these things. A single school of asrai may have one or two small objects of very little value but of great beauty to them. They enjoy the company of all water animals great and small, and are often the companion of water nymphs, sirines, selkies, mermaids, and other such beings. They never venture onto land, as they would instantly die.



Ecology: The asrai are fond of algae and all freshwater plants. They also eat foods thrown on the surface of the water, acting like minnows (they have been mistaken for such). They do not eat any sort of meat even if it has been cooked and prepared. They are in turn not eaten or attacked by any other water creature. These small ladies of the water live only nine years each, at which time the asrai dissolves into water. This water later spontaneously forms 2-5 new asrai equal in all respects to the "mother."

by Randy Maxwell

Unearthed Mundana!

Nonmagical treasures to please any dragon-slayer

After veritably snatching victory from the jaws of defeat (or the jaws of something equally unpleasant), the player characters in an AD&D® game are rewarded with a treasure trove of scrolls, rings, staves, and other magical items. It seems a fitting reward for the trials and tribulations the adventuring party has been put through. However, after awarding the magical goodies, the Dungeon Master is often at odds with the very powers he has unleashed in his game. In an attempt to keep the campaign balanced and to avoid the headaches of PCs becoming too powerful too quickly, the DM might reward the PCs by handing out large amounts of gold and oversized gems and jewels. Unfortunately, the huge amounts of money are often unrealistic and can become just as disruptive to an ongoing campaign as the magical items.

To avoid these problems, the DM may use the following list of "Unearthed Mundana." All the objects and items described below are nonmagical, but they are by no means mundane. Instead of heady magical items or diamonds the size of row-boats, there are items that are valuable and useful in themselves. The DM can use them to reward PCs for their labors without fearing she has given an undue advantage or unbalanced her campaign. The DM is free to eliminate those items she does not wish to use or that do not mesh well with his campaign.

Scrolls

The following are a number of nonmagical scrolls. These scrolls are generally found in scroll tubes like their magical brethren; in some cases, the scrolls are simply rolled up and bound with a cloth ribbon or leather tie. The scrolls themselves contain no magical writings or ciphers, but they require a *comprehend languages* spell to read them if they are written in another language. Also, depending on the value of the scroll and at the DM's option, it may be protected by *symbol*, *explosive runes*, or other magical traps. The gold-piece sale value of the

scrolls depends on the variables listed in the description, the condition of the scroll (pristine, yellowed and brittle, badly water-marked and stained, etc.), and the exigencies of the DM's campaign. The prices listed on the *Unearthed Mundana* Table are only guidelines.

Botanical: Botanical scrolls are most often inscribed by and are valuable to sages, druids, foresters, and farmers. The scrolls detail the proper procedures for sowing, growing, and tending a particular plant, giving information on where, when and how the plant grows best. The scrolls also discuss the weeds, insects, or diseases that are inimical to the vegetation and how to rid the plant of them. About 20% of botanical scrolls detail plant-based monsters, such as shambling mounds, yellow musk creepers, obliviax, etc. If the DM deems it necessary for the PCs to have pertinent details on a particular plant-based monster, he can simply give them the information directly from the *Monstrous Compendium* (or whatever source) in the form of a botanical scroll. The sale value of a botanical scroll depends on the rarity and usefulness of the plant involved. A treatise on how to grow a rare plant used as an ingredient in a *potion of dragon control* would bring a high price, while a scroll with information on fertilizing roses would be at the lower end of the scale.

Entomological: Entomological scrolls detail insects, normal, giant, and otherwise. These scrolls are of particular interest to sages, druids, beekeepers, and farmers. The scrolls detail the anatomy, diet, and behavior of the insect under discussion. Their value is dependent on the insect discussed; obviously, scrolls detailing normal ants are less valuable than ones describing their giant cousins. The DM may use entomological scrolls as a way to relay information from the *Monstrous Compendium* to the PCs. (Note: The category of "insects" can be broadened to include arachnids, e.g., spiders, scorpions, etc.)

Engineering: Engineering scrolls are

among the rarest and most valuable scrolls a PC party can find. These writings are usually inscribed by engineers for architects, artillerists, miners, shipwrights, other engineers, and a host of other occupations that need engineering expertise. The scrolls are valuable because they save a great deal of construction time. If the scroll details a ballista, several ballistas can be built immediately using the scroll instead of waiting until a prototype has been constructed and tested. These scrolls usually come in a set of five or more, and they are like blueprints on how to build a particular object. The scrolls can detail how to build an entire castle or temple complex; give all the information needed to build a catapult, siege tower, or other engine of war; or may be simple diagrams of the best way to shore up a sagging roof. The cost of an engineering scroll is directly dependent on what it describes. A set of scrolls detailing the construction of a Dragonship spelljamming ship would bring a very high price, while the blueprints for a common blacksmith's forge would not. Also, the value of engineering scrolls is associated with their rarity and usefulness. A scroll on the proper construction of a ballista or catapult would bring much less in a long civilized area that has no threatening neighbors than in a frontier barony on the brink of war.

Herpetological: These scrolls are about reptiles, amphibians, and reptilelike creatures. They are of interest primarily to sages and jungle-, marsh-, and swamp-dwelling druids and hunters. The scrolls describe the anatomy, diet, and habits of various reptiles. Particularly valuable are those scrolls detailing giant reptiles and dinosaurs, as are those scrolls concerning lizard men. The DM may use a herpetological scroll to deliver information from the *Monstrous Compendium* to the PCs about a reptilian opponent.

Historical: Historical scrolls are those documents that record the events of history or that have historical significance in and of themselves (such as peace treaties, declarations of war, land grants, etc.). These documents are written by royal scribes, sages, and historians and are valuable to the same. Their value is dependent on their accuracy. Often scribes tend to curry a king's favor or, at least, avoid the king's wrath by embellishing the truth or by down-playing certain aspects of the events being described. In more blatant cases, defeat may be described as a victory and the king's cowardice as the height of bravery. The value of historical documents is also fairly relative. A scroll detailing the glories of a king that everyone knows was a coward and a liar is of little value, but the original peace treaty between two nations detailing the exact territorial boundaries agreed upon may stop a war and be beyond price.

Also, documents detailing recent events still fresh in everyone's memory are less valuable than documents on the ancient past. Rare historical scrolls may describe the location of lost cities, temples, or castles, giving PCs important clues on where to look for them. While historical documents often prove valuable, payment for them is usually delayed while their accuracy and authenticity is checked against other documents.

Ichthyological: Ichthyological scrolls detail fish and fishlike (or sea-dwelling) creatures. These scrolls are valued by sages, coast- and shore-dwelling druids, and fishermen of all kinds. The scrolls describe the anatomy, diet, behavior, and other pertinent information concerning certain fish. Their value is dependent on the creature discussed. A scroll detailing mermen, locathah, or sahuagin is more valuable than a treatise on catfish or trout. These scrolls can be used by the DM to pass along information concerning water-dwelling creatures to the PCs.

Letters of credit: Letters of credit are issued by merchant houses, temples, nobles, and royal courts. They insure that any bills incurred by the bearer will be paid by the merchant house or nobleman endorsing the letter. Letters of credit are especially valued by merchant houses. They serve as a kind of IOU between the houses, and they avoid the necessity of transporting and guarding large quantities of gold. The letters are invariably long-winded documents encrusted with seals and sigils to assure their authenticity. Most letters state the identity of the bearer, so proof of identity must be established before the letter will be honored. However, some letters state that debts incurred by the unnamed "bearer" will be honored and paid by the endorsing merchant house or nobleman. Most letters are limited in scope, allowing the bearer a maximum of 500 to 1,000 gp, while a few rare ones are virtually blank checks. Merchants and banks will not honor letters of credit from merchant houses or noblemen of which they have never heard. Letters of credit ought to be a recent phenomenon, and it is unlikely that PCs will find such things in old tombs or ruins.

Ornithological: These scrolls offer information on birds and birdlike creatures. They are of particular interest to artists, bird-watchers, falconers, fletchers, fowlers, sages, and some clerics (if the feathers of certain birds are used for ceremonial purposes). The scrolls discuss the anatomy, diet, and migratory and other behaviors of birds. Their value is determined by the value of the bird being discussed. A scroll on the care and feeding of rare and exotic parrots is worth more than scrolls on the proper way to pluck chickens. The DM may allow PCs to study an ornithological treatise (in the form of a page from the

Monstrous Compendium) so they might better understand the behavior of aarakocra or a giant owl. Many of these scrolls contain painstakingly detailed renderings of the bird in question and are valued more for their artwork rather than their ornithological data.

Planar: Planar scrolls are those documents that discuss the various planes of existence and the creatures that inhabit them. These scrolls are valued by sages, spell-casters, and anyone interested in traveling the known planes. These scrolls are relatively rare, and their value is determined by the plane or creature discussed. Scrolls dealing with the evil lower planes are generally more expensive than those discussing neutral or good aligned planes (primarily because of the dangers involved in entering or leaving those lower planes). The same is true for discussions of planar creatures. A scroll about the friendly and helpful zoveri of the Seven Heavens is easier to come by than a treatise on the deadly pit fiends of the Nine Hells, though both are still difficult to find. The DM can pass on information from MC8 *Monstrous Compendium, Outer Planes Appendix* or details from the *Manual of the Planes* to the PCs using these scrolls.

Religious: Religious tracts cover two types of writings. The first are those scrolls about the philosophical nature of the religion. These scrolls are often penned by great patriarchs and matriarchs of the religion or are diatribes written by a council of religious scholars. They are often not so much valued for what they say but for who wrote them. However, many are works of deep reasoning and thought provoking arguments and are valued solely for their insights.

The second type of religious scroll are those detailing rites and rituals. These essays describe the color of robes that should be worn for the rite, what time of day to hold the ritual, what time of year, the exact words that must be spoken, and all the many minor details of a complicated rite. Religious tracts are usually only valuable to the particular religion involved. A temple dedicated to Odin is unlikely to be interested in scrolls written by a patriarch of Zeus. However, religions of opposing alignments and those in direct conflict with each other may be interested in the scrolls detailing the foe's rites and rituals. Once an opposing temple has such information, it can make it very difficult for the other temple to perform its rites and rituals properly (for example, *control weather* spells can be used in an attempt to rain out certain rituals or the necessary commodities needed for a ritual can be completely bought out or destroyed making it impossible for an opposing religion to perform its rites).

Sage: As the name implies, sage scrolls are those either written by sages or of interest to them. Sage scrolls cover every topic of interest to sages, which means

every topic under the sun. A sage scroll may contain information on any subject, but for ease of reference the DM might limit sage scrolls to the choices given in Table 61: Fields of Study (AD&D 2nd Edition *DMG*, page 107). The value of such scrolls depends on their focus. The writings are roughly divided into general, specific, and exacting types of scrolls. The more exacting the information, the more the scroll costs. A scroll discussing gnomish music falls under the general heading and costs less than a specific scroll discussing gnomish marching songs, while a scroll containing and discussing the music and lyrics of a particular gnomish song would be exacting information and would be the costliest of the three.

Unlike the entomological, ichthyological, and other scrolls concerning various species, sage scrolls include most essays on true monsters or those creatures that can be classified under many different headings. These writings detail such creatures as gargoyles and the entire gamut of dragons. Sage scrolls also include such creatures as pegasi and owl bears, both of which could be placed in either the ornithological or zoological categories. The DM may find a sage scroll useful in delivering information to PCs about a particular creature.

Sage scrolls also contain many essays on languages, glyphs, and sigils. The DM will find this extremely helpful when attempting to incorporate runes and other types of hieroglyphics in an adventure. The DM can supply the translations of the common alphabet to the Thorass, Espruar, or Dethek alphabets, on pages 8-9 of the *Cyclopedia of the Realms* from the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign set, or the runes and glyphs from page 17 of the *Guide to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® Setting* in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK campaign set.

A sage scroll is also a convenient way of introducing new elements and directions into an ongoing campaign. DMs wishing to incorporate psionics or spelljammers in their adventures can introduce PCs to the idea through a sage scroll. As PCs investigate and learn more about the new element, it can be slowly and smoothly incorporated into the campaign. (Giving warning of the RAVENLOFT® setting through a scroll might be a good idea, too!)

Spellcraft: Spellcraft scrolls are not magical writings but writings about magic. They are valued by alchemists, sages, and spell-casters of all types. These scrolls are essays on various substitutions for material components or alternate somatic gestures or verbal components that may be used in some spells or under specific circumstances. They also cover the best way to use a spell to derive the maximum benefit from it and when not to use certain spells. Some are philosophical essays, such as the use of certain spells and their effect on the spell-caster's alignment, the deleterious effects

of some spells on a spell-caster's mental or physical health, etc. Game-variant information from articles in this magazine may be introduced in this manner.

Approximately 30% of these scrolls detail how to construct or make a magical item. The scroll itself is nonmagical and is not written in magical runes, but describes the necessary ingredients for and exactly how to brew a *potion of flying*, make a *ring of animal friendship*, inscribe a spell scroll, etc. (For a good example of this type of scroll, the DM should note the recipe for homunculus creation, on page 77 of the *DM's Sourcebook of the Realms* of the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign set.) The value of these scrolls is directly tied to the magical information it reveals. Scrolls that talk only about spells or give possible alternate material component, verbal components, or somatic gesture substitutions are the least expensive of the writings (unless such alterations may improve the spells!). Scrolls detailing the manufacture of a magical item are the most expensive. If the DM wishes to randomly determine what magical item the scroll describes, roll on Table 88: Magical Items, on page 135 of the *DMG*. After the type of magical item has been determined, roll as directed on Tables 89-110 in the *DMG* for the exact item.

Trade secrets: These scrolls give information on the secrets of a craft. Master jewelers, metalsmiths, armorers, and other skilled craftsmen often inscribe scrolls detailing the secrets of their trade in order to pass them on to the next generation. These scrolls are usually well guarded and hidden in guild halls or on a master craftsman's estate. Essays revealing the secrets of the various trades are valuable to sages and especially to the trade or guild in question. The value of the scroll depends on the nature of the secret it reveals. A jeweler's scroll describing how to discern the differences between an excellent ruby and an average one is worth less than a scroll revealing an ancient dwarven technique for polishing an average ruby to make it look like an excellent stone. Discretion is required when dealing with trade secrets. The guild or tradesmen in question will be none too happy that such a scroll is no longer safely in their hands. Nasty accidents can befall those who are too free with any information the scrolls reveal. (In actual history, the techniques of sword-making, silk-making, and glass-blowing were considered to be secrets of the highest order to some states, who were often willing to kill spies to keep their secrets safe.)

Warfare: These scrolls are either depictions of the tactics and stratagems used in an actual battle or are theoretical essays on morale, logistics, cavalry tactics, etc. The scrolls are valued by historians, admirals, generals, and military men of all types. They are often more valued for the detailed maps that accompany them than for their

military information. Their value is dependent on the tactics described. Many of these scrolls are out of date, and their stratagems have long since been rendered useless by a counter-tactic (the orcish flying wedge, dwarven dreadnaught phalanx, the kobold wheel formation, etc.), but are still valued by military historians. These scrolls are helpful in a campaign or adventure if PCs have become stuck at a bottleneck where a good tactic or stratagem would be useful. The DM can surreptitiously offer PCs assistance at breaching an opponent's defenses or overcoming an obstacle through a scroll on warfare.

Zoological: Zoological scrolls concern themselves with the animal kingdom. These scrolls offer information on animals of minimal, normal, and giant varieties. They are of particular interest to farmers, ranchers, swineherds, shepherds, hunters, furriers, etc. The scrolls discuss the anatomy, diet, and behaviors of the animal. The value of the scroll is determined by the value of the animal being detailed. A scroll on breeding champion horses is worth more than scrolls on the behavior of house cats, and a scroll on the care of elephants might be valuable, indeed, to the right person.

Rings

Rings can be designed to serve special needs and purposes other than those of magic or mere ornamentation. The following rings may be ornately crafted or designed to draw the least amount of attention to themselves or their wearers. The prices listed on the Unearthed Mundana Table are for average rings of average quality. Rings crafted of finer or baser materials may be costlier or less expensive. However, the value of such rings is primarily a result of their function rather than the material from which they are made.

Assassin's: The assassin's ring is actually two rings of steel, one larger than the other, joined by a short length of very thin wire. The first ring is placed on a finger, then the wire is carefully wrapped and coiled around it. When the wire is completely wrapped, it is covered and held in place by the larger ring. To use the ring, the assassin uncoils the wire, joins a ring at either end, then uses the device to garrote a victim. The steel rings protect the assassin's fingers from being cut by the wire as he pulls the loop of wire taut around a victim's neck. Assassin's rings are notoriously unreliable; during an attack, the wire inadvertently comes loose from one of the rings 40% of the time. The rings are most often used by a team of footpads or robbers, with one thief threatening to garrote the victim while the other steals the victim's valuables.

Compartment: Compartment rings are rings made in such a way that a secret compartment has been built into the ring's design. The secret compartment is

large enough to hold a dose of poison, a material component needed for a spell, a pinch of magical dust or powder, or even a small scrap of paper to secretly pass information to or from a spy or prisoner. For obvious reasons, these rings are valued by assassins, spies, and wizards. They tend to be large and ornate (some would say gaudy), though they are rarely made of any material more valuable than silver or set with other than ornamental or semi-precious stones. Some compartment rings open easily with a slight pull, while others require a complicated procedure to expose the small compartment (pulling up on two or three gems, pushing down a certain gem while turning another two and a half turns counter-clockwise, etc.).

Slash: Slash rings are exactly as the name implies: rings designed to slash or cut. They are made of iron, steel, copper, or brass, with brass being the favored metal for such objects. Slash rings are favored by fighters, ruffians, tavern bouncers, and street bullies. The rings have little or no ornamentation, being a simple band of metal with a large, sharpened ridge running across its face. The rings are effective in any punching contest, as they deliver +1 damage to any Punch damage result on Table 58: Punching and Wrestling Results, on page 97 of the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*. The bonus is not magical. Cutpurses also use slash rings to cut the ties between a man and his purse, thus relieving the unwary victim of the troublesome weight of his coins.

Spike: Spike rings are another device primarily used by assassins and probably were invented by them. A spike ring is a very ornate piece of jewelry. Hidden under the stones and filigree of the ring's design is a needlelike spike that belies the ring's beauty and reveals its sinister purpose. By turning the ring's design one way or the other, the spike is raised or lowered so that it projects menacingly from the ring or is hidden in the intricate design. An assassin coats the spike with a powerful poison and can thus inject a victim without being noticed. In some cases, the mark made by the ring is so small it is overlooked entirely and the cause of the victim's death remains a mystery.

Staves

Many staves are nothing more than they appear: sticks for old men to lean on or to help pilgrims on their way. However, there are staves that are nonmagical but have other uses than support for the weary. The following are the more common nonmagical staves PCs may find in their travels. The prices listed on the Unearthed Mundana Table are guidelines only, as actual prices may vary widely depending on an item's craftsmanship and availability.

Hollow staff: The hollow staff is beloved of smugglers, thieves, and spies. The staff

appears to be a large, roughly hewn piece of wood used by travelers and pilgrims throughout the lands, but it is actually completely hollow. These staves are cunningly made to come apart in the middle. The thief, spy, or smuggler can then secret gems, jewelry, sketches of fortifications, war plans, etc., in the hollow interior, then simply walk away with them. Approximately 10% of such staves have a glass lining and stopper so even potions, acids, perfumes, expensive wines and liquors, or alchemical liquids can be hidden in the staff. The staff is of no use in combat, as its lightweight construction does no damage and it invariably breaks in the middle if used in a fight.

Sword cane: Sword canes are favored by noblemen and aristocrats and are most often found in an urban setting. Such canes appear to be expensive, well-crafted walking sticks. The cane's shaft is of hardwood, usually oak or hickory, and can be wielded like a small club for 1d4 hp damage. The cane's handle is made of some expensive material, such as ivory, silver, or gold. The cane's handle is actually the hilt of a long stiletto-type blade concealed in the cane's shaft. The blade slides easily in and out of the cane's shaft and is treated as a short sword in combat (1d6 hp damage). Approximately 20% of all sword canes have silver blades. Silver-bladed canes are extremely popular in areas afflicted with lycanthropes and undead (the price for a silver-bladed sword cane is tripled for the RAVENLOFT setting).

Thief's staff: Rogues of every description value thief's staves. These staves were in fact small canes invented by halflings, but they were so obviously useful and convenient they were adopted by large thieves as well. A thief's staff always appears to be a walking staff used by travelers and pilgrims everywhere. The staff's head is a roughly carved ball, and the foot of the staff is shod with an iron boot. The staff is not quite as innocent as it appears. The head can be removed and is attached to a long, iron pry bar that slides easily in and out of the staff. In addition, when the iron boot is removed from the foot of the staff, it reveals a hidden compartment for storing booty or thieves' tools. In combat, the staff may be used like a quarterstaff for 1d8 hp damage, or the iron pry bar may be removed and used as a club for 1d6 hp damage.

Miscellaneous items

The following is a miscellany of goods and objects PCs may find desirable or useful. They are much less expensive than magical items but often prove to be equally as useful. As with scrolls, rings, and staves, the prices listed for the following items may vary depending on the quality of the materials used and the craftsmanship involved.

Cloak of camouflage: Cloaks of camouflage are used primarily by army scouts, hunters, rangers, thieves, and spies. The

value of these items depends directly on how well made the garment is and how well it matches the terrain it is attempting to blend in with. These cloaks are designed to match only one type of terrain or surroundings, which means a cloak designed for the arctic will be white to match the snow, one designed for the forest will be striated green to match the green leaves, desert cloaks will be sand colored, etc. A camouflage cloak bestows a certain amount of natural invisibility (actually concealment) to the wearer by letting him blend into his surroundings. Camouflage works only outdoors in a natural setting, making them completely ineffective underground, indoors, or out of doors among buildings. They also offer no protection or bonuses against infravision. The wearer of the cloak has a normal chance of being seen if he moves or if he wears the cloak in terrain the cloak is not designed to match. The chance of concealment bestowed is:

Background	Concealment
Heavy growth	20%
Light growth	10%
Open fields	5%
Snow	20%
Desert	20%
Rocky	5%
Night (black)	25%

The above percentages apply to an average cloak of average quality. Garments of excellent quality increase the invisibility by 1d4 percent, but such garments cost twice the maximum listed price. Poorer quality garments decrease the invisibility percentage by 1d10 percent (poorly made camouflage garments can actually attract attention to the wearer rather than conceal him). However, poorly made cloaks cost as much as a cloak of average quality. The major drawbacks of these cloaks are they are insufferably hot in warm weather and tend to snag and hang on underbrush or any other protrusions.

Spiked gloves: These gloves are made of thick, soft leather and covered with small, sharp iron studs, lined inside with strips of thin, hard leather to protect the wearer's hands from the studs. These are used primarily by fighters, tavern bouncers, and ruffians of all sorts, and are usually only found in urban settings. A punch from a spiked glove does 1d4 in damage in addition to any damage given on the Punch damage result in Table 58, on page 97 of the PH. These gloves are similar to the Roman *cesti* used by gladiators.

Swordsman's gauntlet: A swordsman's gauntlet can actually be used by virtually anyone who wields a weapon with a handle, such as a mace, war hammer, axe, etc., and who also expects to be involved in a prolonged battle. The glove is made of thick, soft leather to absorb the shock of metal weapons striking each other. Its most obvious feature is the long, thick leather

Unearthed Mundana Table

1d100	Item	GP value*
01-06	Botanical scroll	5-100
07-11	Entomological scroll	5-100
12-13	Engineering scrolls	50-2,000
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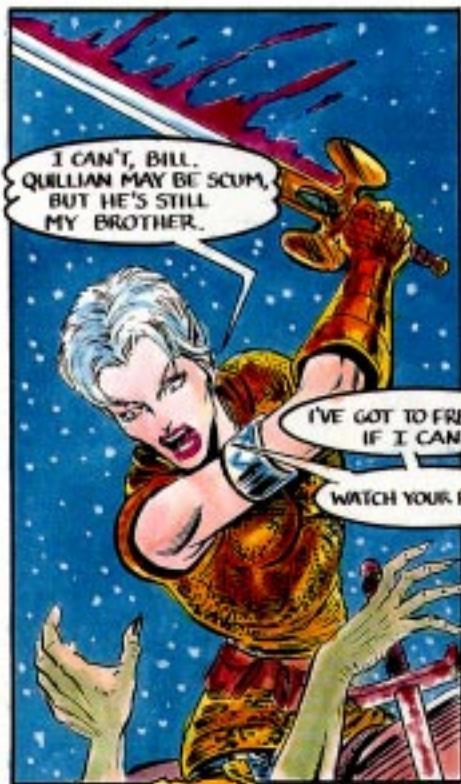
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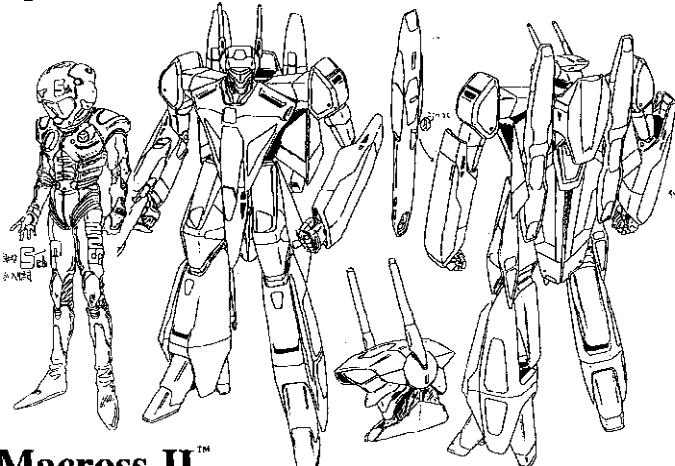
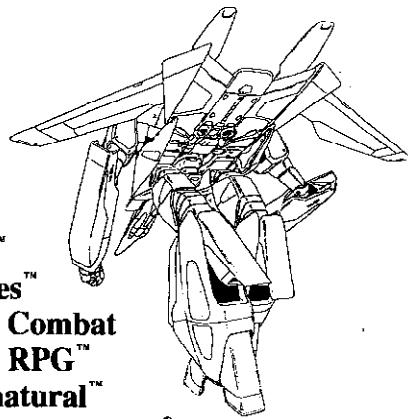
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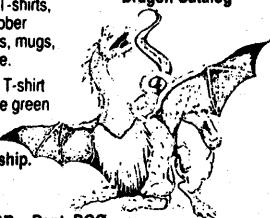
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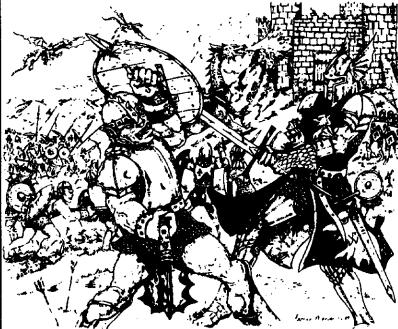
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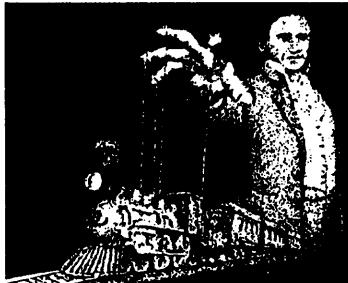
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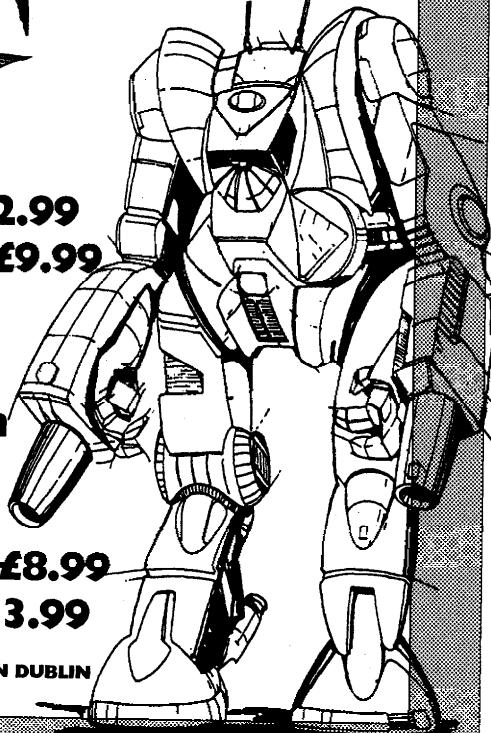
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Through the LOOKING GLASS



Tools of the trade: Weapons against the unpainted

by Jean McGuire

Over the years that the role-playing hobby has been in existence, many articles have addressed the various aspects of painting miniature figures. These articles, my own included, have covered many aspects of this art but missed a vitally important one. Almost without exception, they have touched only briefly on, or passed over entirely, the basic foundation underlying all miniatures painting. I have seen innumerable beginners, and more than a few who are not, looking over the painting tips given in such an article or pamphlet and asking in bewilderment, "But what do I do all of this *with*?"

Therefore, this article explains the basic tools of the trade—what they are, where to get them, and why you need them.

Several things are required for painting miniature figures. You need a work area, preparation tools, glue, paintbrushes, paint, and, of course, figures. I will address each of these in turn.

Space to work

The first requirement, as with any task, is a place to work. As one example, the new workbench I am building is rather elaborate, with built-in lighting, a formica-covered work surface, rows of narrow shelves for paint, and more shelves for drying figures, diorama materials, etc. However, most of my work has been done on a battered kitchen table I bought for a few dollars at a yard sale. Any stable, solid, flat surface of the proper height will do.

If you can, try to dedicate a work area solely to painting. While it is entirely possible to unpack all of your tools, paints, and figures from a drawer each time you feel like painting, then put them all back when you are done, it is an unholy nuisance and risks damage to drying paint and figures. I like the freedom to sit down and paint for a few minutes when the mood strikes me. It is said that the mark of the professional writer is the ability to put words on the

page, come inspiration or none. Something of the same is undoubtedly true for artists. I'm an electronics technician, not a professional artist, so I need to take advantage of all the inspiration I can get!

The most important factor in choosing your work area is light. It is best to have natural light available whenever possible; it is brighter, and colors are truer, than artificial light. I work with my back to a window, with the light coming over my shoulder. Fluorescent light is the next best choice.

The best way to choose your location is by experimentation. Take a painted figure, then sit and look at it in the area where you will work. If you can clearly see all of the details, especially the minute flaws in the painting, you have a spot that works well. If necessary, add supplemental lights. I have a 4' shop light, which cost about \$8 at the local discount building supply center, hanging above my present work table. A fluorescent desk lamp works almost as well.

Choose a work surface at a height you are comfortable with. Again, experiment. If you have to scrunch down a bit to see what you're doing, your back and shoulder muscles will be screaming after an hour or two. You can't paint when you can't move your arms! Your workbench should also be easy to clean up, as should the floor under it. Paint spills happen. For the protection of your work, choose an area safe from the two greatest destroyers of miniatures: small children and cats. Both seem to find painted figures irresistible. In addition to destroying your figures, children and cats are also vulnerable to lead poisoning from chewing on them.

The basic steps to painting are *preparation, priming, painting, and finishing*. Each of these requires certain tools and materials. The actual work involved is outside the scope of this article. The tools are detailed here.



Tools for preparation

As they come out of the box, miniature figures are rarely ready for painting. Some companies are better than others about this, but even the best figures often need touch-ups before priming and painting. Preparation entails removing mold lines and stray metal (called "flash"), assembling large models such as dragons, and sometimes modifying figures to suit the roles you have in mind for them.

Looking through my tool box, I find 37 assorted files, a handle for them, a package of emery boards, several X-Acto knives and various blades, two pairs of tweezers, a pair of jeweler's chain-nose pliers, a pair of small curved scissors, a pin drill, a potter's cleanup tool, a very small hammer, and a bunch of toothpicks. A Dremel Moto-Tool is in its box on a nearby shelf.

Don't panic—I'm certainly not suggesting that you rush out and buy all of that! That assemblage accumulated during the 10 years or so that I have been painting. My best files, for instance, a fine set of a dozen Swiss-made needle files, were bought at a yard sale for around a dollar. That was luck; they're worth closer to \$50. In actual fact, the following list should suffice to get you started:

Small X-Acto knife and blades
Miniature needle files: flat, half-round, round, triangle
Large coarse file or piece of medium-grit sandpaper

Pin drill and tiny bits
Wire cutters
Emery boards

The knife and a few narrow blades are excellent for careful removal of mold lines, cleaning out the thin skin of metal that often fills closed spaces such as between an arm and a body, and trimming off unwanted bits of decoration. Be careful with these! It may seem an unnecessary caution to point out that they are very sharp, but it is very easy to slip and stab or slice yourself badly. For that reason also, discard blades immediately when they begin to get dull. It cannot be emphasized enough that a dull knife slips readily and because of that is much more dangerous than a sharp one. You can buy these in hobby stores, but discount home centers often have better prices, although less of a selection.

A large, coarse file is used to flatten off the underside of the bases of the figures. In most cases, the lead enters the mold through the base area, and there is almost always some irregularity where the figure was removed from the strip of lead. This bump is often large enough to make the miniature unstable. Hence the file, or sandpaper wrapped around something hard (like a scrap of wood). Either option is readily available at a hardware store or home center.

Small "needle" files are often more economically priced in sets of six or a dozen.

Get good ones—they give much smoother, cleaner work than cheaper, coarser files. At a minimum, you should have round, half-round, triangle or knife-edge, and flat files. Having more available is much like having more colors of paint: You can do more with less improvisation. Most well-stocked hobby shops and some hardware stores carry a good selection of needle files. I have three sets: small, tiny, and really puny.

Emery boards, found in the cosmetics section of your local drugstore, are wonderful for filing large areas such as shields. They have the additional advantage of flexibility, allowing curved shields, edges of bases, and so on to be filed without unsightly flat spots.

A helpful hint on care and maintenance: Small wire brushes are sold with which to clean files. They are well worth the investment. Lead is a very soft metal and clogs files very quickly. Keep your files clean—they cut much better. Emery boards, of course, are simply discarded when they begin to get dull.

I also have a small tool with one curved end, one straight end, and a wooden handle stamped with the name of some pottery supply company. I don't know where or when I happened to acquire it, but it is just perfect for certain tasks in cleaning up figures. Your tool kit will quickly acquire a few of these "found" tools. They are all around you, waiting for your ingenuity to put them to use.



A pin drill, sometimes called a pin vise, is a small shaft, much like an X-Acto handle, that grips a tiny drill bit and, turned by hand, makes appropriately tiny holes. Matching sets of holes in, for example, a dragon's neck and body, with bits of wire or cut-off pins inserted, serve the purpose of a furniture-maker's dowels, [Your editor has used sections of paper clips with good results.] A pin-reinforced joint is many times stronger than the same joint merely glued. X-Acto makes a pin drill, and I have seen others, generally available where you buy knives and blades. Radio Shack sells a small hand-cranked drill, meant for putting small holes in printed circuit boards. I have not yet experimented with this, but I suspect that it would work even better than my pin drill. The only disadvantage that I can see is that it needs two hands, so the piece being drilled must be firmly anchored. Wide rubber bands, popsicle sticks, and clothespins are good for devising improvised vises.

I mentioned earlier the Dremel Moto-Tool. One of these little hand-held grinders or its many imitations can be invaluable for certain things. With a fluted spherical or conical "shaper" tip, you can clean out the slots for attachment of wings, legs, necks, and so on that are found on the larger figures. Mine also takes the same bits as my pin drill, allowing me to produce tiny holes much faster. This tool is quite an investment, usually in the \$40 to \$80 range, depending on how

fancy you want to get. Home centers and discount stores generally stock basic models, while good hobby shops have fancier types. The flexible-shaft variety is expensive but a good investment if you do a lot of conversion work or like to build the larger kits like dragons; the standard models get very heavy, very fast, when you're doing a lot of finicky work. Before you buy a new one, check out a few yard sales and swap meets. My first one came from an estate auction.

The glue that binds

My glue box contains five-minute epoxy, three kinds of super glue, two kinds of epoxy putty, rubber cement, white glue, plastic model cement, contour putty, some toothpicks, a roll of steel wire, and a few empty blister-packs from miniatures packages (in which to mix the epoxy). Again, I have more than the minimum, especially because I have been experimenting with different brands lately. The essentials include:

Cyanoacrylate glue (super glue)

White glue

Plastic model contour putty

For assembling figures and some of the final work, you need glue. The best I have found is Zap-A-Gap/CA+, by Pacer Technology. It is a superb, quick-setting cyanoacrylate glue. If the store where you buy miniatures doesn't stock it, they should. Elmer's Wonder-Bond also works well

and is more widely available. Gel-type super glues are handy in certain areas because they stay where you squirt them. Acetone, or nail-polish remover in a pinch, dissolves super glue—handy when you've glued yourself to the miniature. White glue, such as Elmer's Glue-All, is useful for attaching small figures to pieces of cardboard or wood for easier handling while painting. It and rubber cement also function in diorama building. Five-minute epoxy gel is nice for badly fitting parts with gaps beyond Zap-A-Gap's gap-zapping ability, as is the epoxy putty. The latter and the plastic contour putty fill in joints before priming, and both can be sanded once hard. All of these are quite widely available.

Don't throw away the package when you take out the figures. The boxes with foam partitions such as Ral Partha and Grenadier use are obviously excellent for figure storage, but don't overlook blister packs. They provide little plastic dishes for mixing epoxy or paint, cardboard for temporary bases, and little pieces of foam to protect your figures during transport. Incidentally, the best way I have found to carry a few figures, such as characters en route to a game, is wrapping them in one of those left-over pieces of foam and stuffing them in empty 35-mm film cans. I buy the plastic film cans for a nickel each from a local camera shop, which saves them from film brought in for processing.

Some people like to work under a magnifying glass; I can't. If you find that you



work better with one, by all means do so. The lighted ones on adjustable stalks are a bit pricey but very convenient. I do have a small hand-held magnifier with a built-in light powered by a couple of penlight batteries. This is nice for close-up inspection of details and final checking of my work.

Priming time

Once you have the miniatures prepared, you should prime them. This might seem to be unnecessary advice to many readers, but a lot of people paint directly on the bare metal. If you're one of them, you will be surprised at how much better your work will look, and how much more durable it will be, put over a coat of primer. Ral Partha, Floquil, and Armory all sell spray primers. As far as I can determine, they are all roughly equal in quality, although Floquil spray cans seem to have more than their share of nozzle problems. Choose whichever is most available locally. Those of you who remember my article on undead (in DRAGON® issue #138) will be happy to know that Armory is now selling black primer! It is unmatched for the first coat on skeletons and other undead. Paint-on primer is an option, and I keep a bottle of it (Armory) around for touch-ups, but spray primer takes the drudgery out of most of your priming.

An essential supply for priming is newspaper, and lots of it. If at all possible, do your spray priming outdoors. First, the droplets of spray float around in the air, so

it is very easy to get a faint haze of primer all over *everything* within 10' of your spray can. Second, as with any spray paint, you should avoid breathing the fumes. If access to an outdoor work area is not possible, an improvised spray booth can be constructed with clear plastic sheeting, duct tape, and a window fan (blowing out, of course) — I highly recommend it.

Paint your (miniature) wagon

For the next step, painting, you obviously need paint and brushes. These will, in fact, probably be your biggest initial expense. You get what you pay for. While it is possible to paint an entire figure reasonably well with a child's #3 watercolor brush—I did it once, on a bet—you certainly cannot do your best work. I buy my brushes at art supply stores rather than hobby shops, as brushes are generally cheaper and are offered in a much wider selection at the former.

Some people swear by natural hair bristles, some swear at them. If you are using solvent-based enamel paint, these brushes last longer. I personally prefer white nylon, as it seems to keep its shape much better (this is essential, as most of your painting will be with the very point of the brush). Contrary to my own advice of the last paragraph, the ones I'm using most right now are Armory's white nylon brushes, which I purchased as a set complete with holder.

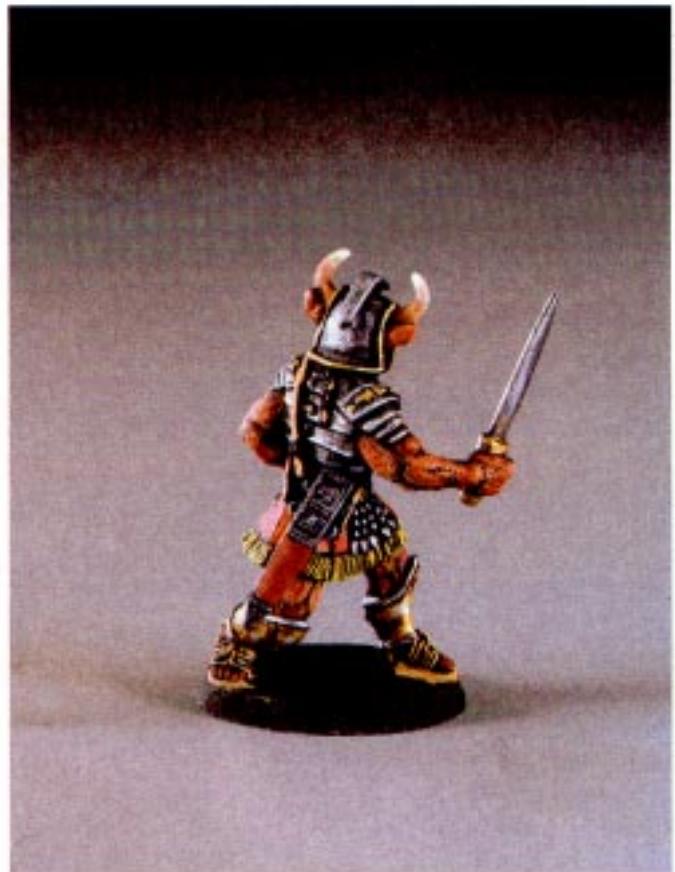
You will need one fairly large brush (#1 or #2) for large areas such as dragon

hides, one cheap #0 for dry brushing, and three brushes in increasingly tiny sizes for the actual painting. Don't go by the labels on the brushes: one company's 3/0 may be actually smaller than a competitor's 5/0. Select brushes that keep their shape well. You will want one for moderately large areas like cloaks and shields, one for smaller areas like shoes, and one for tiny details like eyes. As your brushes wear out, put them aside to use for dry brushing, which tears up good brushes.

You will also need a place to put those brushes. They should be stored with the brush end up, so the bristles do not dry bent and so that they can dry quickly. A small jar will do, although it can be a nuisance to find the brush you want in the thicket. A plastic rack, such as the ones Tandy Leather sells for leathercraft tools works quite well, although the brushes slide sideways if you don't put them in straight. If you have access to a drill press, or a hand-held drill in a pinch, put two or three rows of holes in a 6'-long chunk of a 2x4—presto, instant brush holder.

Next, of course, there is the paint. There are two choices: enamel and acrylic. At the risk of offending the enamel partisans, I unequivocally recommend acrylic paint. It is easier to deal with, cleans up with water, does not eat brushes as enamel does, and is less toxic. In addition, it dries within minutes. Later coats will not dissolve and smear earlier ones as enamel will.

For those who favor enamel, Humbrol is



expensive but very much preferable to high-gloss plastic model paints such as Testor's and Pactra. Floquil railroad and military flats are realistic but rather limited in color selection. Most of the techniques of painting do work reasonably well with enamel, but you must experiment. Fresh paint has a tendency to dissolve previous coats, resulting in unwanted blending and smears.

I have been using Ral Partha's new official AD&D™ paints for about a year, and I am more than pleased. They give a good finish and are available in an excellent range of colors. They have become my paint of choice. I also use Polly S and Armory acrylics. In addition, I use Citadel and Winsor & Newton inks for special effects, and I have a few jars of odds and ends: pearl purple Pactra Racing Finish, a bottle of opalescent nail polish that I bought in a discount drug store, a carefully preserved bottle of the old Heritage phosphorescent paint, and some custom-mixed colors that I bottle up and save.

A good initial stock of paint should include:

Black	Med. Gray	White
Red	Deep Red	Orange
Yellow	Yellow-Tan	Green
Dark Green	Blue	Dark Blue
Violet	Dark Brown	Med. Brown
Red-Brown	Flesh	Ivory
Gold	Silver	

From these, you can mix any other colors as you need them. Over time, you will add to your collection of paint—I just counted 81 little jars on my work table—relieving yourself of some of the work of mixing, but the practice you have gained in creating custom colors will be invaluable in achieving the sort of results that characterize expert work.

There are also special paints for special effects. Inks are unbeatable for washes and unusual surfaces, such as dragon scales. Winsor & Newton drawing inks work, but they are not water-soluble and they tend to leave far too glossy a finish for most figures. They do, however, make superb glazes on dragon scales. Citadel's Expert Set inks, specially formulated for miniatures, are superb. They come in convenient dropper bottles. That Pactra pearl purple, although an enamel and hence rough on my brushes, adds an unearthly glow to evil magical swords. Armory's "Silks and Satins" line has some excellent pearly colors, and Ral Partha has a few in boxed sets—check out the BATTECH* colored metallics. For those of you who have been around for a while, remember Heritage's gem colors? I recreated those, after some experimenting, with excellent results. I have a little bottle of Armory's now-discontinued pearly top coat, some of the Polly S's "dust," 12 different metallic colors, and Ral Partha's "Dragonscale" creams.

Many hobby stores sell small empty glass bottles, usually in half-ounce or one-

ounce sizes, to hold paint for airbrushes. They cost very little and are remarkably useful for holding custom-mixed paints. You'll eventually find yourself mixing the same color over and over. For example, I have a small bottle of greenish flesh tone I use for orcs; it makes it much easier to get my orcs all about the same shade.

You will generally want to put a protective finish coat on your figures to protect the paint from handling. Testor's Dull-Coat works extremely well. Ral Partha has also introduced a matte protective spray. For areas that should be shinier, use paint-on semi-gloss and gloss finishes after the flat coat has dried.

It is not uncommon, especially with older lines of figures, to get one with a base too small for stability. There are several ways to add a nice base. Citadel sells plastic bases to which the figure can be attached. I find them too thick, raising the figure too high above others whose original bases are adequate; the only solution to this problem is to transplant *all* of my figures to plastic bases, which would be expensive! The best add-on base I have ever seen is simply a penny (it sticks better if you use it tails-up). Pennies are round, heavy, and cheap. Cardboard counters $\frac{1}{2}$ " and $\frac{3}{4}$ " across also work very well, but they tend to wear out after heavy use. Some expert painters build up bases for each figure out of material such as epoxy putty or Sculpey. I have seen figures whose bases incorporate magnetic sheeting, cut into squares and built up with putty,



MINIATURES

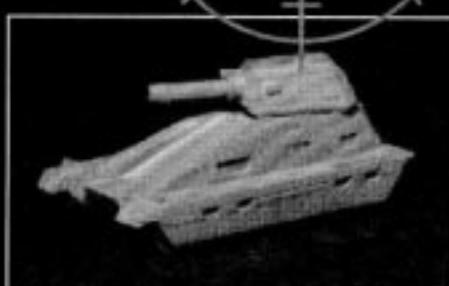
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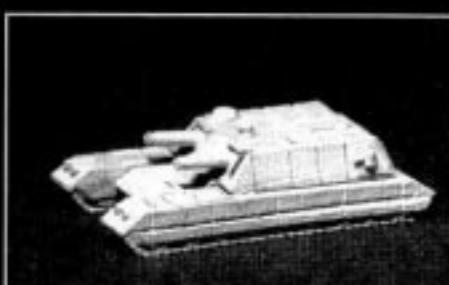
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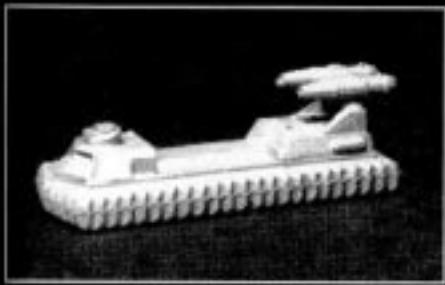
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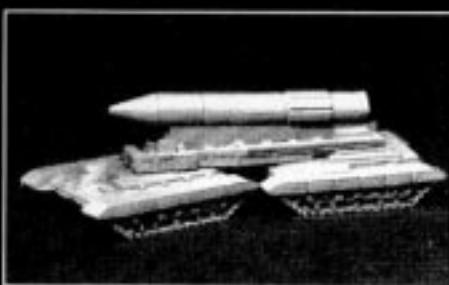
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which enables them to be stored and transported in boxes with thin metal floors. This avoids the whole problem of packing the miniatures for travel. Your local hobby shop probably stocks or can order the flexible magnetic sheet; if not, it is available by mail order from Edmund Scientific, Jerryco/American Science, and some surplus suppliers (check hobby magazine advertisements). In any event, use cyanoacrylate or epoxy glue to fasten the figures to their permanent bases.

Finally, gather an assortment of bits and pieces for the final touches that turn good figures into great ones. The "grass" fuzz sold for model railroad scenery can be used over the entire base of a figure, especially if that base is a penny, or it can serve as moss in the cracks between stones. Various grades of grass,* from fine to coarse, and various shades of color for the same add realism. A few rhinestones from yard-sale costume jewelry add immeasurably to any dragon's lair. Try a tiny sea shell next to a mermaid, or a few modeling-clay bones by a ghoul. The Armory, a hobby supplies store that advertises in this magazine, sells decals that make perfect shield designs.

When you decide to try diorama building, your imagination is the only limit. I keep a stock of model railroad vegetation in various colors; natural things such as twigs, bits of bark, driftwood, small pebbles, and sand; rhinestones; and all sorts of found objects. Sculpey is a soft, easily worked plastic modeling clay that hardens when baked (a toaster oven is perfect for that, by the way). I make common diorama additions such as bones, mushrooms, snakes, skulls, and so forth in large batches and store them in little compartmented boxes until I need them. Your hobby shop or craft supply store should stock Sculpey, Milliput, or a similar prod-

uct. Unusual stones, pieces of driftwood, wood plaques, and more can form diorama bases.

One "tool" that I have not yet mentioned is your reference library. In one sense, the historical/Napoleonic painters have it a bit easier, as lots of books on their period are available, with numerous color illustrations. For fantasy and SF painters, on the other hand, other works must be made to serve. Painting dragons? Look at a few field guides to find out how the color patterns flow on real reptiles. Wizards? Fantasy art has plenty. TSR's line of trading cards is invaluable. My reference shelf contains books ranging from all of TSR's art books to a set of Peterson Field Guides to birds, reptiles, plants, etc.

Now that you have your tools and paints, you of course need figures to work on. There are literally thousands of miniatures on the market, of every imaginable type. How do you choose?

Get the best, skip the rest

A good figure is one that is well-cast. One advantage of blister-packed miniatures vs. boxed ones is the fact that you can see what you are getting. It is disappointing to open a box and find that you have to do half of the carving yourself to reveal the figure lurking beneath flash and globs of stray lead. Figures in dramatic action poses look wonderful on display or in dioramas. However, many look rather ludicrous in actual game use, especially those in rather extreme poses. Conversely, figures in excessively static poses look like they are posing for mug shots! Consider the figure in light of the use you intend for it.

Look for a figure that appears realistic even before painting. Some, for example, have decorations on clothing, shields, etc., molded in such high relief that the appears to be some sort of strange

growth. Consider the scale of the figure: In 25-mm scale, a shield decoration that sticks out only 1 mm, just about 1/25", would protrude over 2" in full scale! Faces are another problem area. There are two common extremes: the faces so coarse they look like caricatures, and the ones so delicate you can't find the noses. Just as a lifelike face is one of the most telling signs of an expert miniatures painter, so too a well-formed and paintable face is a sign of a well-sculpted figure.

Check for "mushy" areas, where adjacent parts of the figure—a hand and the weapon it holds for instance, or a cloak and the underlying sleeve—blend into each other instead of being clearly distinct. As well as being common in badly sculpted figures, this tends to occur as the casting molds get old and worn. If possible, I like to buy new releases immediately, even if I know I won't have time to paint them, just to get castings made while the mold is new. It matters.

So, now you have your work area, your tools, your reference books, your paints, and a supply of fine figures. Go forth, then, paintbrush in hand, to do battle with the dull, plain, and the boring, and let your colors shine!

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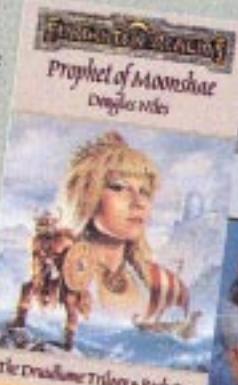
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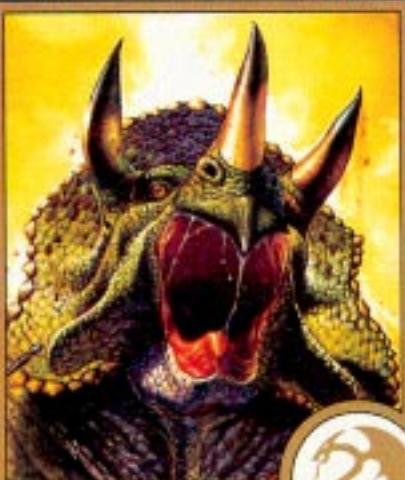
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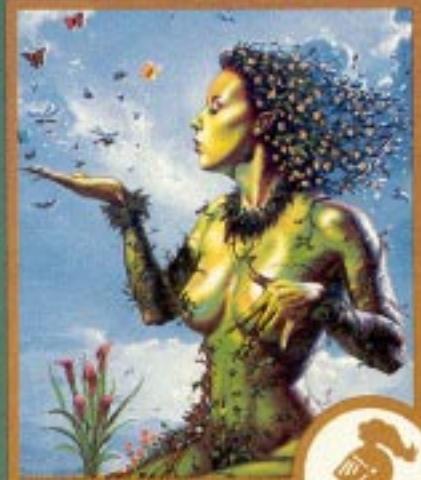
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