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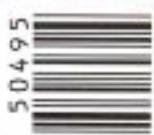
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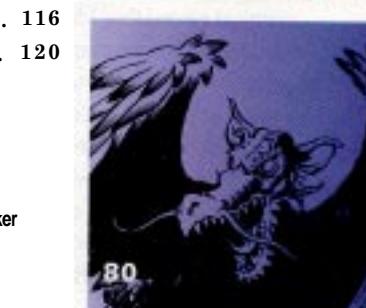
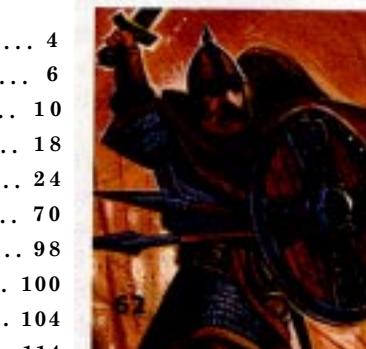
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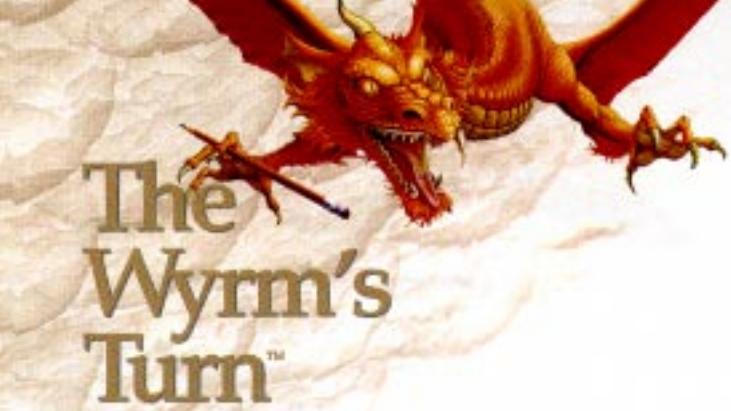
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On the Cover

Fred Fields blends fantasy with science fiction in this month's anniversary cover.



The Wyrm's Turn™

Why'd It Have To Be Dragons?

There's a reason we don't call it "Dungeons & Kobolds."

Ogres, giants, goblins, and many other of the traditional monsters are basically just big, ugly, bestial men, not far divorced from the sort you encounter at your local tractor pull or board meeting. Like a lot of Star Trek aliens, they're humans with a nose or ear job. They aren't all that different from us. (Well, most of us.)

Consider the poem *Beowulf*. In it, Grendel's pretty much an ogre who crashes the party at Heorot and wipes up the floor with some of Hrothgar's folks for no particularly good reason. When Beowulf shows up to slap Grendel down, he's totally justified. He catches the brute in the act and rips off his arm. There are witness and everything.

It's a little different when Grendel's mother comes to town. She probably could have done a better job bringing up her little boy, but she's got a reason to want some revenge. You can't really fault the maternal instinct.

This time, Beowulf has to leave his own jurisdiction, even swim down to a subterranean lair, then mix it up with somebody's mother! If you read the Old English carefully, you see that he even resorts to hair-pulling. Ultimately, he can't win the battle without the help of a magical sword that Ma Grendel has conveniently kept waiting for him. It's a great fight, but Beowulf seems just a little more out of his element. Maybe there's a case for brutality, here.

So they make Beowulf king. Who's going to object? And everything's copacetic for years, until a thief slips into a dragon's lair and lifts a trinket. As the

king, Beowulf's responsible in part for the actions of any of his people, so when he goes to fight the dragon, the situation's more ambiguous than ever. Beowulf's gone from fighting a land-based belligerent thug to a vengeful aquatic mother to a flying, firebreathing reptile who's legitimately angry that some creep broke into his barrow.

Beowulf isn't the only story that defines dragons, but it's one of those that shows the dragon as an awesome, terrible force because it's so alien to us. Some might argue that the most horrifying monsters are human, but I say that it's because there's something hideously inhuman in them that makes them monsters. (Sure, it's creepy that Ted Bundy looks like such a nice boy, but it's *monstrous* that he killed people.)

A dragon, on the other hand, makes no pretensions to humanity; it's all monster. So what does that say about our game?

At its simplest, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game is about exploring dangerous locations and fighting monstrous opponents. That's not to say that there aren't dozens of other pleasures in role-playing, but that's the basis for it all—your basic dungeon crawl with a big monster at the end. Ultimately, it's a way of facing and defeating the inhuman... while not taking it all so seriously that you're not having any fun.

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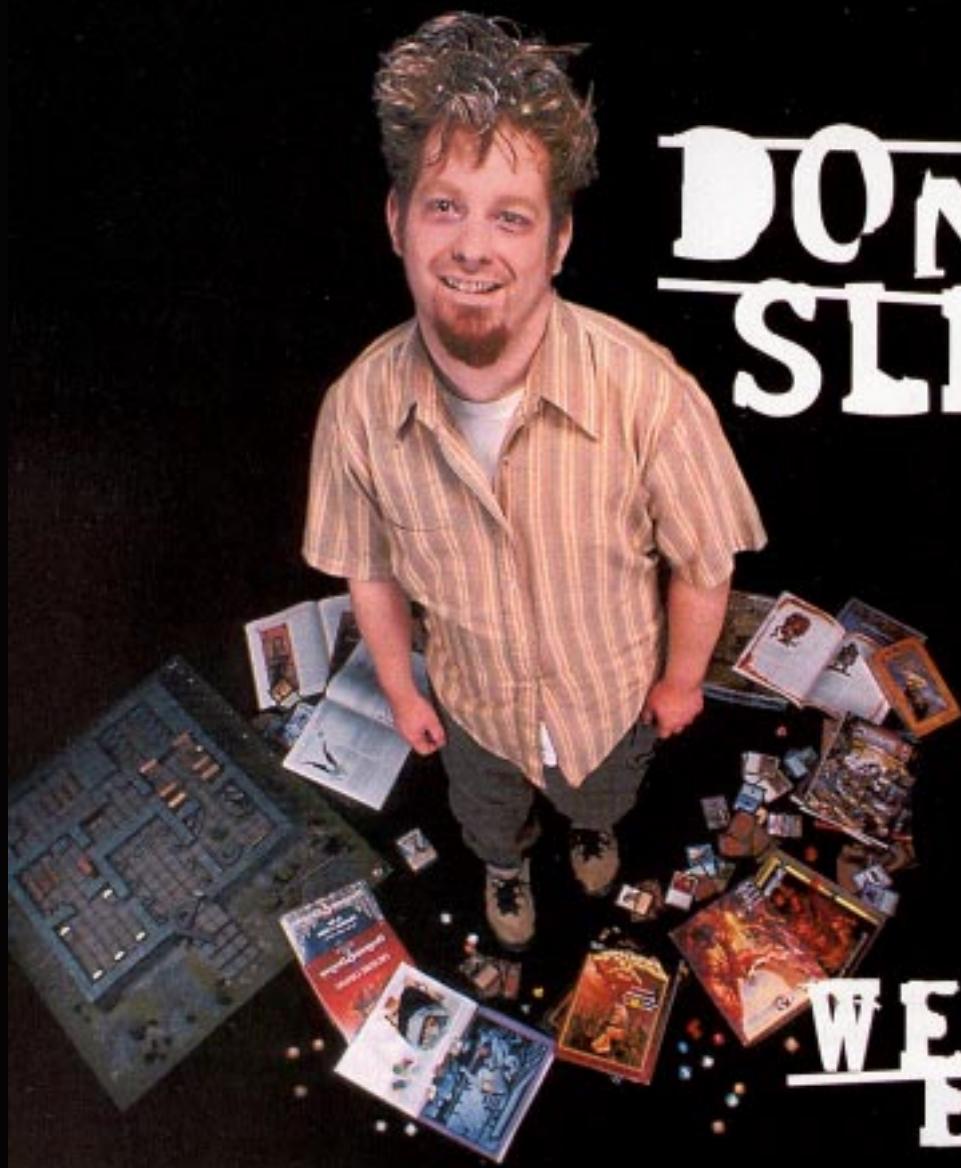
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Wizards & Templars

Dear DRAGON Magazine,

I'd like to praise Ted Zuvich's outstanding work in his article, "The Laws of Spell Design" (issue #242). The article was very well thought out and is very useful.

Referring to Keith Coon's letter (in "D-Mail," issue #244), Eric Oppen's article "Servants of the Jewelled Dagger" (in issue #152) outlined the lives and habits of the Duergar. I like Keith's suggestion for an "Ecology of the Spriggan"—they're a great bunch of beasties. Myself, I'd love to see "Ecology of the Yeth Hound."

I'm not a fan of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, but I do like Ed Greenwood's writing. "Wyrms of the North" is a brilliant column, which I adapt for my own

many beards? Additionally, the wizards always seem to adopt a certain pose—why does fire, light, or electricity always flare about in the wizards' hand(s)? Let's have some wizards with character, please. Wizards are meant to be complex, but we generally only see them about to blast a monster.

To illustrate what I mean, I refer to the two most interesting examples of art depicting wizards (in my opinion, at least). In the AD&D® 2nd edition *Player's Handbook* (page 60), we can see a smiling wizard, happy because he's just completed a (badly-made) pot. The other example is found on page 63 of *The Book of Magecraft*, for the BIRTHRIGHT® setting; in this picture, we see an apprentice horrified at the results of his miscast

spell, and his despairing mentor.

There's more to wizards than simply blasting foes, as the two examples illustrate. Therefore, fantasy art should reflect this. Does

anyone agree with me on the topic of wizards in art, or am I talking hogwash?

Finally, I refer to Don Perrin's "Knights of History" article (issue #243). I'd like to supplement his bibliography, which I've broken down into two categories: RPG materials and non-fiction books. I've read many books about the Knights Templar, including most of the ones suggested in Mr. Perrin's bibliography, and while those books provide an agreed history, all they offer is one broad historical view. The books I mention here are a sample that provide "alternative" views of the Templars. In my opinion, alternative views are more useful for providing DMs with ideas for adventures.

RPG materials: The following articles, both from DRAGON Magazine, offer advice on creating knightly orders: "The Code of Chivalry," by Mark Easterday (issue #125), and "To All a Good Knight," by Tom Griffith (issue #195). The Complete Paladin's Handbook also offers a section on this topic, as do Chaosium's "Secret Societies" sourcebook (for the Nephilim® RPG), and White Wolf's Dark Ages Companion (for Vampire: the Dark Ages); both offer useful information on the knightly orders.

Non-fiction books: Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh & Henry Lincoln, *The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail*, London, 1982. Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh & Henry Lincoln, *The Messianic Legacy*, London, 1986. Michael Baigent & Richard Leigh, *The Temple and The Lodge*, London, 1989. Graham Hancock, *The Sign and The Seal*, London, 1992. John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood*, London, 1989.

Julian Neale
Cheshire, England

Thanks for the good tips on templars sources, Julian. Unfortunately, we had to delete your list of websites because we couldn't find them (perhaps due to a typo in the original letter or a change of location). Any good web search should turn up plenty of sites, and we'd be delighted to hear of any good sites relevant to other magazine articles.

Speaking of the web, in addition to email and regular mail, you can share your opinions with the magazine staff on the first Friday night of each month, at 10:00 Eastern Time, in the chat rooms of the TSR website. Be sure to visit the site ahead of time to download the appropriate software, then come armed with your most pointed questions and comments! You can find the site at www.tsr.com.

There's more to wizards than simply blasting foes . . .

use. Could he please write one of the articles featuring my all-time-favorite dragon species, the shadow dragon?

I want to now make a few comments about art. Not the quality of art—TSR's artists have produced excellent work over the years. Incidentally, I've never seen a letter praising Jim Holloway's work. Many times, the expressions on the hapless adventurers' faces in his art has made me smile. Continue your good work, Jim.

It seems to me that wizards are painted in three stereotypes, which I'll call the sorcerer's apprentice, the attractive woman wearing skimpy clothes, and the bearded Gandalf clone. Why so

More Honey & Vinegar

Dear DRAGON Magazine,

After reading "Honey and Vinegar" in issue #246, I decided to give my opinion of the latest issue of DRAGON Magazine; I have been a reader of the magazine for nearly 20 years now, so I thought it was about time.

As with the majority of issues, the cover artwork was superb, and every time I look at the picture I notice something new and exciting about it. I do not remember seeing much of Michael Sutfin's artwork before, but from now on I will make sure to keep an eye out for it. And I must say that Phil Robb's artwork for the ALTERNITY® article gives the game a heroic and brutal look that I was hoping it would have. ALERNITY is one game I am waiting for with much anticipation.

So what articles did I like? Well, overall, I liked all of them, for it is a rare month when an issue contains an article that is badly written or not of any interest to me. But, as far as what articles I would use, from issue #246 I would definitely say that "A Few Good Henchmen" and the characters from "Rogues Gallery" will soon be entering my local campaign. This is not to say that the other articles were of no interest to me, but it does mean I have no current use for them.

Mind you, Peter Adkison's chart for quick henchmen certainly proved useful, just like the other articles he has written over the last few issues. I now use his card method for working out individual XP and his situation dice — which, by the way, the players in my campaign think is an excellent idea.

I have never been too fond of "The Wizard's Three," but that's mainly because I never get too excited about articles that contain yet more spells for the AD&D game, unless, of course, the spells center around a new type of magic or mage, as the air elementalist of a previous issue. "Bazaar of the Bizarre" and "Wyrms of the North" do nothing to enhance my campaign, but I enjoy the articles.

What I tend to glance at first is "Forum," "Knights of the Dinner Table," and "Roleplaying Reviews," which I notice in this issue was written by Allen

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Varney instead of Rick Swan. I disagree with Eric Silveira over *Floyd*, however, as I miss it already and look forward to further adventures of that excellent strip. Good, solid articles that contain depth, originality, and, of course, something I can use in my campaign, are what I enjoy the most.

Please keep up the good work! And, by the way, if we are putting in a vote for who we want to see in "ProFiles," I would like to vote for Ed Stark, who has written some superb products for the BIRTHRIGHT Campaign.

J.D. Sivyer
Setnton Park, Western Australia

As a fan of "Floyd," you must let us know what you think of "Nodwick" (see below), which we think is the funniest thing since "Knights of the Dinner Table." As for what kinds of articles you'd like to see, rest assured we're on the same wavelength. "Useful" is our byword.

April Fools

Dear DRAGON Magazine,

I have previously read DRAGON Magazine's April issues with a mix of dread and anticipation; I look forward to "D-Mail" for its humor but cringe at having to wade through the mire of foolish monsters, characters, and fiction. Issue #246 fooled me by being completely the opposite.

Even though they were my favorite, the fact that there were no "funny" letters to print last issue is a mark that the level of informed, intelligent gamers has generally increased over the years, perhaps because of the high quality articles to which DRAGON Magazine has recently been dedicated.

A good example is "The Wizard's Companion," in which Lloyd Brown III presents a wide variety of different homonculi and describes them in detail. The article is put together in a user-friendly format and has made it easy for the DM hurting for time.

The "Bazaar of the Bizarre" department, "Cauldrons and Cookery," by B.A. Landires, was also useful, allowing DMs to flesh out fantasy laboratories and kitchens everywhere.

I thought that "The Ecology of the Flumph," by Johnathan M. Richards, was another typical April concoction, and though the flumph will never fly (or squirt, or poot) in one of my campaigns, the article was still well written and entertaining.

Although there are probably several more iterations in existence, I think that "Wyrms of the North" is just about played out. Turn Ed Greenwood and his writing expertise loose on another project.

Great job by Dale Donovan, Christopher Perkins, Bob Klasnich, and especially Elaine Cunningham. Keep up the

good work, and thanks again for an enjoyable April issue.

John L. Larson IV
Seaside, CA

While normally we're not out to fool our readers, we're glad we fooled you this time, John. That's not to say we aren't hoping for some funny-ha-ha letters for next year, but we'll stay focused on useful, enjoyable game articles. Just keep telling us which ones you've liked best, what you've liked least, and what you'd like to see done for the first time. Your opinions are changing what articles we buy every month.

In recent months, the volume of letters has grown enormously. Thanks to everyone who has sent one! Most of those letters, however, have been long, detailed, and generally superlative epistles to "Forum," where we'll never have room to print all of the excellent commentary on game mechanics, house rules, campaign preferences, and other role-playing issues. (But you can see how we've let the walls out to make a little more room over there.) Do keep sending those letters to "Forum," but while you're at it, drop us a line here at "D-Mail."



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By Aaron Williams

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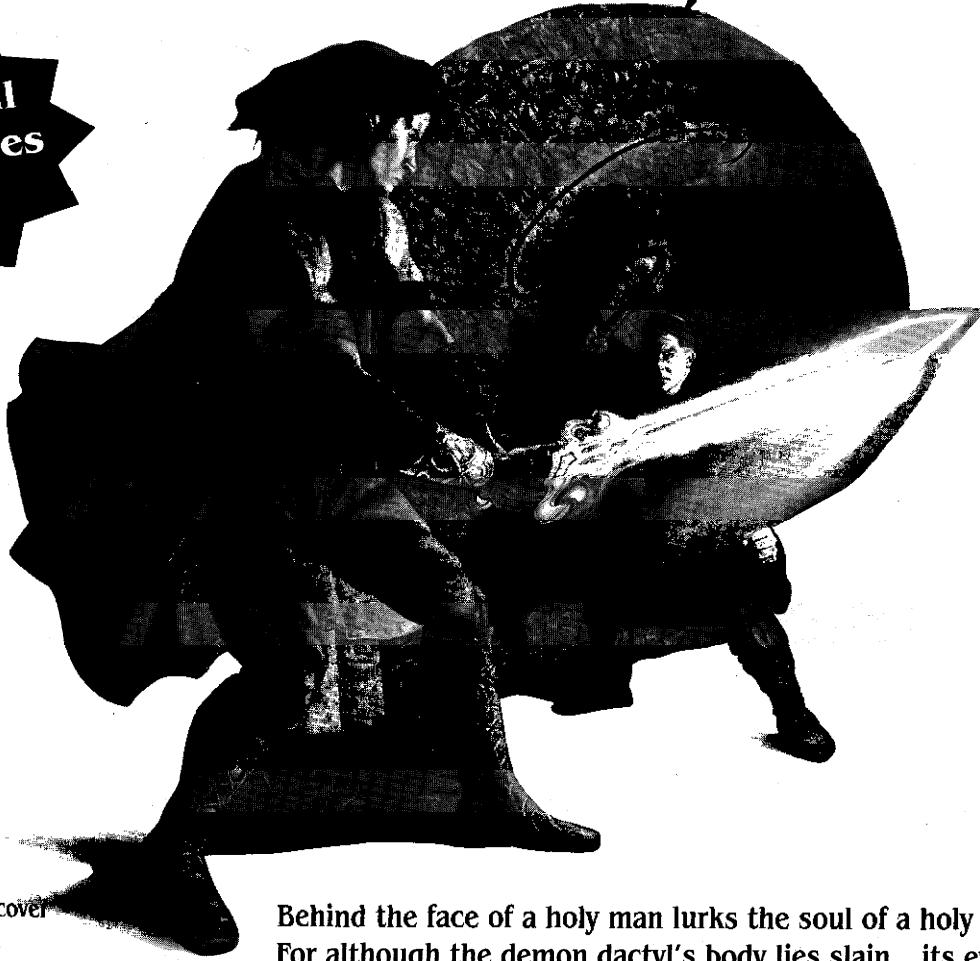
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Forum

Question of the Month

Respond to the Question of the Month or any other roleplaying topic by mailing "Forum," DRAGON® Magazine, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, USA; dmail@wizards.com. All material should be neatly typed or handwritten. You must include your full name and mailing address if you expect your letter to be printed (we won't print a letter sent anonymously), but we'll withhold your name or print your full address if you so request.

Should alignment in the AD&D® game represent an absolute value or a subjective guideline?

Weapon Balance

The question of the month about whether weapons should be adjusted to make a greater variety attractive to players (issue #245) sent my mind into the distant past of the early 80s. In one issue of *DRAGON Magazine*, there were two articles discussing weapon restrictions. One argued that weapon restrictions should be removed but that damage should depend on character class and the type of weapon. Under these rules, a fighter would cause a set amount of damage with whatever type of weapon he used (1d8, if memory serves). Other classes would cause less damage than the fighter with weapons normally allowed and even less with weapons that the class was normally restricted from using. Under these rules, one could have wizards wielding swords like Gandalf, or spear-carrying clerics of Odin. More importantly, one would not have every fighter carrying a long sword (far and away the best melee weapon in terms of speed and damage). With these changes,

The sword is one of the best weapons in human history.

the choice of weapons for a character could help in developing who the character is, rather than being chosen for damage capability.

Harry Pratt's letter on death knights (#244) also caught my eye. Along with dragons, free-willed undead have always been a personal favorite. His suggestions for modifying the powers of death knights inspired me to add a bit of history to my campaign world while

preparing some powerful opponents for my players. I decided that in the distant past, twelve paladins had been corrupted by a powerful evil. Each paladin had been corrupted in a different way, and the form of their corruption stayed with them. For example, one had given in to lust and was now accompanied by the banshee spirits of the women who had enticed him. Another fell to fear and now carries a far stronger *fear* aura than other death knights.

Scott Hall
Los Osos, CA

Superior Weapons

I am writing in response to the question of the month from article #245. Some weapons should remain clearly superior to others simply because some weapons are clearly superior to others. The sword is one of the best weapons in the game because it is one of the best weapons in human history. It is not a wonder that almost every culture ever to succeed at war eventually developed the sword at some point in their history. However,

in the game because it is one of the best weapons

why then did they bother creating weapons like the battle axe and glaive guisarme? They created them for three simple reasons: they were easier to use, they were trying to save money, or they thought the various weapons would be useful—and they were wrong.

The battle axe is an excellent example of a weapon that is relatively easy to use. You lift it, and then you let the weight make a big cut into the enemy. You don't have to know anything about an axe to use it well. The way it is built and

weighted forces one to use it correctly.

Perhaps the best example is the crossbow. Contrary to popular belief, the crossbow was not developed because it was more powerful than the long bow. The common English longbow of the time of Henry V was the deadliest weapon of the time. In the battle of Agincourt, nearly a quarter of the French knights carried crossbows into battle. Henry V brought no crossbows but instead enlisted dozens of peasants who had grown up with longbows for hunting. The English won with reportedly fewer than 100 casualties; the French casualties numbered near 10,000. Historians agree that Henry V won that battle because of his longbows.

Why did anyone invent the crossbow? Have you ever fired a longbow? Have you then fired a crossbow? A crossbow works much the same as a pistol, only with less kick and thus with even more ease. A longbow is all about finding the range and placing the angle. As a result, training for crossbowmen was 24 weeks. For the longbow, medieval

English records recommend hiring peasants, because it would take too long to train someone from scratch. The crossbow was invented because it was easy to learn, not because it was "better" than a longbow.

Perfect examples of cheap weapons are the club and staff. They are basically pieces of wood. Many weapons are variations on the theme. These include the mace and morningstar, which are really just pieces of wood with chunks of scrap iron stuck into them. It is true that

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people later took these weapons and made more "professional" versions of them, but these versions were not significantly better. Another great example of a cheap weapon is the military fork. A military fork is basically a pitchfork with its spikes straightened and sharpened. Every farmer has a pitchfork, a hammer, and a sharpening stone, so every farmer can make a military fork for free.

Weapons that people made because they thought they were better but were wrong include mostly polearms. Basically, they kept adding things to the ends of their fanning-tool shafts in order to deal with "special circumstances." A hook was for dismounting knights, a hammer was for a "good stiff blow," and an axe blade was so one could "do some real damage." Polearms were just glorified Swiss-army knives tied to the ends of sticks. After Alexander the Great's pikemen, polearms have never advanced, with the possible exception of the halberd, which is really only good for chopping off the ends of pikes.

With all of the above in mind, how then should DMs "encourage" players to use something other than the long sword and longbow. First, remind players that their characters probably do not know that a long sword is really better than an axe. The players may know, but they should pretend they do not; that is

what roleplaying is all about. Second, try raising the prices for swords and lowering the prices for other weapons to better reflect the true cost of making the weapons. Third, and this is only a suggestion, require an extra proficiency slot be spent on some weapons, especially bows. In addition, perhaps allow players to spend one slot to learn more than one "easy weapon," like all crossbows, or any kind of blunt heavy whacking thing.

The weapons and their stats are well represented in the various TSR products. The only problem with these weapons and their statistics is not how they are, but how players interpret them.

M. Kant
soren4now@yahoo.com

Big DMG

Except for the lack of a good index, the original 1st-edition *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* (DMG) was the best! It had more information for campaign construction that any book published since, and it adhered to the sacred "everything optional" rule.

Yes, the DMG should be bigger and contain more information. That's just the nature of the game. Do not — I repeat, *do not* — combine the *Player's Handbook* (PHB) and DMG into one book! The reasons are numerous and obvious (I hope). I do think space could be saved by not

reprinting the same information twice, as the current DMG and PHB seem to do. In short, the DMG should contain everything not covered in the PHB that the DM needs to conduct a campaign. The PHB should cover character construction (abilities, races, classes, etc.), spells, equipment, saving throw tables, etc. Anything a player needs to know should be present in the PHB. I say, when in doubt as to whether something should be in the PHB or the DMG, put it in the DMG.

F. Matthew Fagan
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One Book To Rule Them All

Regarding the presentation of the PHB and DMG, I've never found the DMG to be very useful. The two books could and definitely should be combined into one book.

As far as a 3rd edition goes, I've always thought of the *PLAYER'S OPTION™* line as a *de facto* third edition, but after nine years of DMing, these are the changes I'd suggest:

Adopt the proficiency rules from the article "Back in the Saddle" from issue #225, and try to have as many proficiencies in the new PHB as possible. Reintroduce the half-orc and half-ogre, and get rid of the gnome. (Blasphemy, right?) For classes, I'd keep the basic structure but eliminate multi- and dual-classed characters by adding several classes that mimic all the class combinations, following the examples in the article "In a Class by Themselves" from issue #243.

As in the 2nd edition, the various races would be limited to certain classes. Alignment rules must be eliminated or made more like the ones in the Palladium or Star Wars* games, where doing evil has real consequences. I'd also consider using the horror check rules from RAVENLOFT® in *all* the settings. I totally agree with Jon Goranson, who states that experience based on killing monsters must go; change over to a skill-based system like in *Star Wars* or *Vampire**. I'd keep the sub-abilities from *Skills & Powers*, and use the ALTERNITY® game's Durability rules instead of hit points.

William De Franza
Address Withheld

By Joe Pillsbury

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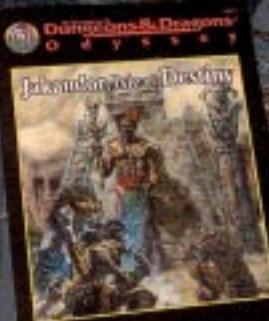
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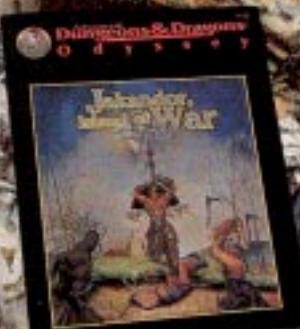
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Stop Running Inside!

I thought I would write in about the difference in indoor and outdoor ranges for movement, missile weapons, and spells discussed in the "Sage Advice" column in issue #246.

I can't explain the difference in spell ranges, but I can explain the reasons why the ranges for missile weapons and movement rates existed. First, missile weapons. To gain the maximum range out of any bow, javelin, spear or most other missile weapons—I assume this holds for crossbows too, but I've never used one, so I don't know—you must use an arched trajectory. Basically you've got to aim well above the point you want to hit. This is very difficult to do some place with only 10 to 15 feet of head room. The indoor ranges listed in the old rules were assuming that characters would be firing with a flat trajectory; thus, the shorter ranges.

Second, movement rates. Skip Williams points out that most runners do better indoors than out, so the old rules didn't make sense. But you really must consider a couple of points. Mr. Williams was referring to people running on a nice, flat, rounded track in a well-lighted area. The average dungeon or cave is none of these things. The areas that characters are likely to be running through are dark, with sharp corners, rubble, dead bodies, pits, and other obstacles lying in the path of the running, and tend to be full of various unpleasant creatures. All of these things slow prudent people. On top of this, if you want to see where you are running, you've got to keep a light source going. It's very difficult to keep a torch or lantern burning while running. Trust me, I've tried.

Daniel Harszy
Butte, MT

Don't Hate Me Because I'm Powerful

In the ten years I have been playing the AD&D game, I have encountered many people with an unnatural malice toward some members of the gaming community. They take the gravest offense from those who enjoy playing characters of truly heroic proportions. Indeed, even the fine books that present the rules of the game show a profound dislike of

so-called game-breaking characters and the players who create them through creativity and skill.

When you get right down to it, these characters are not bad. A character's personality is not necessarily inversely proportional to his combat ability. Many game systems encourage powerful characters.

What is required is a bit of maturity on the part of both the DM and the players. The DM must simply determine, before characters are created, what type of game he wants to run: a game with average characters of the

A character's personality is not necessarily inversely proportional to his combat ability.

type most often advocated by the rules books, or a game in which the PCs are of more heroic proportions, like the characters found in most fantasy literature and television. When that has been decided, the players must cooperate; they must be willing to create a character appropriate to the style of game the DM has chosen.

It is natural for players to want to play powerful characters. After all, most of the main characters in popular entertainment are far more than average individuals. Powerful characters are perfectly playable; when these characters are depicted in literature, they are rich and interesting. There is no reason that these individuals can't be just as wonderful as PCs, especially since many players can better roleplay the competent and capable hero than the character whose sole saving grace is a really good score in the groveling proficiency.

Dashiel Nemeth
Carmel, CA

Official Settings

Several of us have recently been having a very passionate conversation about the difference between the various campaign settings and what control a DM has over said settings.

One camp claims that the DM should not alter the boxed setting in any way, because to do so would change the setting and thus mean that the DM is throwing away his money. Seems that if you alter the setting in any way, you

might as well create your own.

Another camp argues that a DM can change anything he likes in any setting and it will remain the same. It's the DM's prerogative to do so.

The third camp (the one I belong to) suggests that the DM can keep what he likes and toss out the rest. The setting will remain basically unchanged and keep its original flavor as long as certain elements of the campaign is kept.

So I now ask, "What is a campaign setting, what is it used for, and how much can the DM change it without the whole nature of the set-

ting being destroyed?"

I would say that a campaign setting is basically a world created by the design team (in this case, TSR) to give the DM and players an interesting world in which to play. Usually, it has a theme, be it horror, fantasy, sci-fi, or whatever.

In the old days of gaming, many DMs felt that published settings and modules were little more than "canned campaigns" designed for the DM who didn't want to invest the time in creating his own world. We (very wrongly) snubbed the idea of using these campaigns.

We finally began to take a look at some of these campaigns and saw that many had some pretty neat stuff in them! Lord knows I've ripped off ideas from Middle-earth and GREYHAWK® and put them into my worlds.

Then along came the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting. I looked at it, and wow! Richly detailed with history, politics, and culture; this world was the sort of thing I'd always wanted to do in my own campaigns. It had a few things I didn't care for, but overall I liked what I saw.

I now understood that a campaign setting could be much more than just a "crutch" for the DM to rely on when he couldn't (or wouldn't) create his own campaign.

Some accuse the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting of being a setting for power-gamers and munchkins. They seem to feel that Realms folks see all the powerful magic that many of the NPCs in the setting have and thus expect to get all this magic as well! When presented with

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the response that a DM can do what he likes in his own campaign, these people respond that we should either stick to the rules in the setting or risk altering it in such a way as to destroy the flavor of the setting—that the setting would change and it wouldn't be the Realms anymore.

I disagree. Sure, there are some things that should be retained in the Realms. To change them would damage it. But what is it that makes the Realms the Realms? Is it the presence of certain NPCs? Is it certain cities or the pantheon of deities? What makes the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting unique?

I say it's a combination of all of the above and then some! The presence of the Zhentarim would be a good tip-off as to what setting a player is in. Waterdeep and Shadowdale are others.

I say that a DM can have any and all of these elements in any campaign at certain places in his world (be it "canned" or homemade), and the campaign can still be a unique setting. There are places in Ravenloft that resemble Mulhorand. There are places in the Realms that resemble Barovia. There are creatures that would be completely at home in either setting! So just what is it that makes each setting unique from the others? If I (as a PC) turned a corner and bumped into Strahd Von Zarovich, I'd

have a pretty good idea where I was (and then probably soil my armor in the process)! What if you met up with Elminster or one of the Seven Sisters? What if you journeyed awhile with Mirt the Moneylender or Volo? Would you be able to guess that you were in the Realms?

So perhaps it's the personalities that are the key here. Perhaps the unique NPCs are the primary indicator of a setting. The gods (which are personalities as well) are another indicator. One could argue that natural phenomena hold a key, but is there a unique natural phenomenon in the Realms? (Aside from Wild or Dead Magic regions, which weren't in the original set.) And who controls all of these? Who sees to it that the players have an opportunity to encounter these personalities?

It's the DM, the "grand creator." A world is what you make it. I can turn the Realms into Ravenloft if I wanted, or vice versa—though it would be silly Altering things that much *would* be going too far and be throwing away your money. However, I can tweak things a bit here and there, and the setting will remain unique.

For instance, I do not use the Cult of the Dragon in my Realms setting. (Got nothing against 'em—I just don't choose to use 'em). But there is absolutely no

doubt that it is still the Realms. Elminster goes plane hopping and is absent for months on end, yet the Realms remain the same. I've got a major-league war going on just west of Cormyr, but folks know what world they live on. And just because the NPCs in the *Heroes' Lorebook* have lots of magic doesn't mean I dole out treasure to my PCs.

Players in my campaign who would whine about the lack of magic are little more than voices crying out in the wilderness! I give the PCs what I want them to have, and I take away from them what I want to take away. I am responsible for what goes on in my campaign and if the party gets powerful too quickly then it's my fault, not theirs. If I ever change my mind and give out more stuff, then fine. I am experienced enough to know how to handle my players. I won't blame the setting for my mistakes.

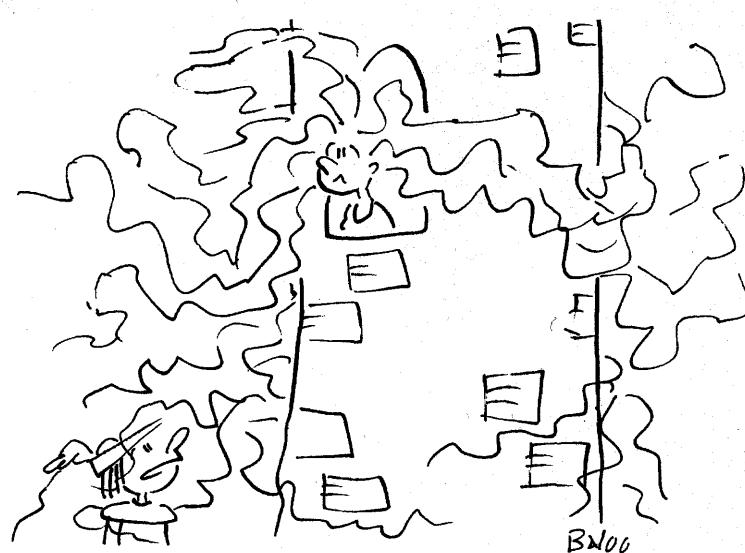
And the setting remains the same in all cases. *Everyone* knows that they are playing in the Realms. The Harpers still work to thwart the Zhents. The Red Wizards still work to expand their domain and develop strange magics. The Seven Sisters still go about their jobs on a daily basis, the caravan routes are still full (although at the moment they've had to find alternate routes to the West), and Elminster still gripes about Vangerdahast!

Occasionally I have the gods walk the Realms in disguise, but no one's the wiser. The elves are upset over the loss of their lands, and some have resorted to retaliating against certain individuals, but it hasn't changed the face of the Realms. Life goes on daily. The king is on his throne, and all is well with the world.

I strongly believe that a DM *can* make changes, can tweak things a bit here and there to make a campaign interesting, and still not lose the setting's flavor.

Dennis W. Young
Route One, Box 188-M
Centreville, AL 35042

By Rex F. May



"Gesundheit, Rapunzel."

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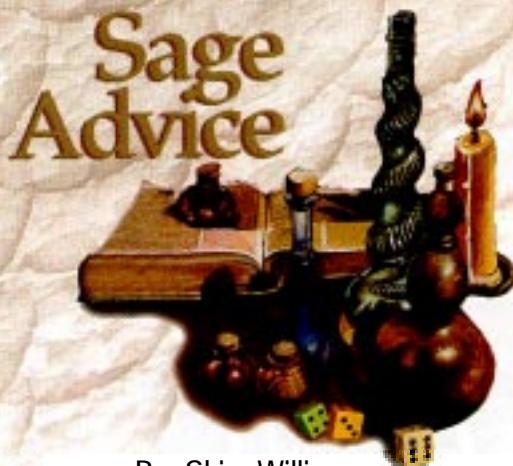
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By Skip Williams

This month, the Sage elaborates on character and creature abilities in the AD&D® game.

The *Skills & Powers* book has an optional revision to the nonweapon proficiency rules. Instead of a PC's initial rating at a proficiency being based on an ability score, it is set at a certain number. A relevant ability modifies the rating, and the rating can improve as the character expends character points while advancing levels. This is a more realistic approach, and I prefer it to the old method. The problem is that only the proficiencies listed in the *Player's Handbook* are covered in *Skills & Powers*. There are dozens of proficiencies listed in other books that aren't covered. Has anyone converted these extra proficiencies to the *Skills & Powers* system?

I don't know of anyone who has taken on this task, which would be monumental considering how many proficiencies there are spread out among all the optional books (many more than mere "dozens"). If you want to use the *Skills & Powers* system for proficiencies not included in that book, you're on your own, but I offer these tips:

Character-point costs to learn proficiencies should range from 4 to 6 (or 2–3 CPs per "slot"). Initial ratings should range from 5 (tough) to 8 (fairly easy). Note that *Skills & Powers* exceeds these limits, but only rarely.

The best way to assign initial ratings and costs is to look in *Skills & Powers* for something similar to the proficiency in question and assign similar statistics. For example, the information gathering proficiency (from the *Complete Thief's Handbook*) is somewhat similar to local

history. Its *Skills & Powers* statistics might be: Cost 3; Initial Rating 7; Relevant Ability Intelligence/Knowledge, Charisma/Leadership.

I've just finished rereading all the great information on the sahuagin in *The Sea Devils*, but I'm disappointed that there is no information on sahuagin PCs. What would the ability score adjustments, ability limits, and class and level limits for a sahuagin character be? I would expect them to have pretty hefty Strength, Intelligence, and Dexterity bonuses. What would be the chance that such a PC would have four arms?

The Sea Devils lacks any such rules because sahuagin are the result of an ongoing eugenics experiment that ruthlessly weeds out individuality. (The vast majority of adventure-minded sea devils are fed to the sharks at an early age.)

Sahuagin PCs could be possible for an undersea campaign, but 90% of them should be malenti (sahuagin who look like sea elves); the remaining 10% should be normal, two-armed sahuagin. Among normal (not malenti) sahuagin characters, there should be, at the maximum, 1% with four arms, and many of these should be missing a limb or three from hunting or war mishaps; four-armed sahuagin lead extra tough lives, especially during youth.

All the foregoing should be determined by dice roll, because sahuagin don't get to decide much of anything by themselves.

For sahuagin ability scores, do not give any bonuses or penalties. Instead, set very narrow racial limits. I suggest the following:

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In Europe, write to: "Sage Advice," *DRAGON Magazine*, TSR Ltd. 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, CB1 3LB, U.K.

You may also email your questions to thesage@wizards.com.

The sage cannot make personal replies; please include no SASE with your questions.

Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Charisma: minimum 11; maximum 15.

Intelligence, Wisdom: minimum 12; maximum 16.

Sahuagin are, overall, smarter and stronger than other demihumans, but only because they kill off the weaklings. In any case, it should be hard to qualify for this race.

For malenti, use the same class and level limits as half elves—but no wizards of any kind. For sahuagin, use the elf limits, but again, no wizards.

On page 92 of the *High-level Campaigns* book, it says that the chance of successfully brewing a potion is 70% +1% for every two levels of the creator. The example on page 95, however, says the chance is 70% +2% for every level of the creator. Which is correct, the text on page 92 or the example on page 95?

The chance to create a potion is 70% +2% per character level. (The text on page 92 has a typo.. Note that any roll of 96 or higher is always a failure.

In the *Skills & Powers* book, rangers can learn a skill called "sneak attack," which works just as a thief's backstab ability. If the ranger is high enough level to make multiple attacks, can he make multiple sneak attacks? What happens to the ranger's Strength bonuses? How can rangers even use this skill? After all, rangers must be good, and attacking without fair warning doesn't seem like a very "good" thing to me.

"Sage Advice" has covered part of this one before in regards to thieves. Once the ranger gets into position for the attack, only the first attack the character

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Adventure Game

TSR #6926

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Available June

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makes gains the "sneak attack" bonuses, namely a +4 attack bonus and a multiplier to weapon damage. Apply damage bonuses (from Strength, weapon skill, weapon enchantment, or any other source) after you apply the multiplier.

The ranger can choose which attack in a series of multiple attacks gets the bonuses, but any other attacks the ranger makes during round in which the sneak attack occurs are resolved normally. Note that a ranger of any level could gain "multiple attacks" just by using two weapons. The same rule applies no matter how the character gains multiple attacks.

A little DM mistrust of ranger sneak attacks is a fine thing. Sticking a sword through someone's back is arguably not "good." On the other hand, sticking a sword through someone's front isn't necessarily any better. A ranger is a warrior and will find it necessary to slay foes at least once in awhile. The important

provided they are of sufficient level. Players have good cause to gripe if you flatly refuse to allow them to explore this aspect of their characters. The *High-Level Campaigns* and *Spells & Magic* books contain helpful information (and rules) for creating magical items. *DRAGON Magazine* issue #242 (December, 1997) had an excellent article on the fine art of spell creation.

According to the AD&D CD ROM, it is impossible for a ranger to use weapon specialization, but I know I've read somewhere that they can. Is this in error in the program?

The program is right. Early printings of the *Complete Fighter's Handbook* contained an erroneous reference to weapon specialization for rangers and paladins, but the error was corrected in later printings. Note that if you're using the rules for creating custom characters in the *Skills & Powers* book, rangers and pal-

adin-based spells with ice effects hinder undead or other creatures immune to cold? That is, while a skeleton would suffer no damage from a *cone of cold*, would it be crushed by the stones from an *ice storm* or similar spell whose damage is dealt kinetically? What about a combined-effect spell, such as the 2nd-level spell *ice knife* from *The Complete Wizard's Handbook*, which deals damage both through cutting and cold? For that matter, would a *stoneskin* spell protect a character from an *ice storm*?

I appreciate your effort; however, "Sage Advice" has never dealt with this particular question. The answer depends on the spell. *Ice storm* delivers both impact and cold damage. A creature would have to be immune to both types of attacks to be immune; a skeleton, immune to cold, is still battered and suffers full damage. A character protected by a *stoneskin* spell is immune to an *ice storm*'s impact damage but still subject to its cold. (An *ice storm* also drains one "charge" from the *stoneskin*.)

An *ice knife* shatters on impact and inflicts only cold damage, leaving a creature such as a skeleton unharmed. Spells such as *wall of ice* cannot damage cold-resistant creatures unless dropped on top of them for an impact effect (though its cold still affects creatures immune to impact damage as noted under *ice storm*, above). A stationary *wall of ice* provides a physical barrier against any type of creature, but cold-resistant creatures usually can break through it with no ill effect save for the delay the effort entails.

I was reading the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* and noticed that scrolls are considered 6th level or one level higher than required to cast the spell. A wizard needs to be at least 9th level to make a scroll! What gives?

Nothing "gives." I assume you refer to the text on scrolls in Appendix 3. You have quoted the rule correctly. A spell scribed on a scroll always has a casting level (for determining level-based variables such as range, damage, duration, and resistance to dispel attempts) of one level higher than the minimum required to cast it, but never less than 6th level. The rule tends to make a scroll spell less potent when read from the scroll than it

Do cold-based spells hinder undead with ice effects or other creatures immune to cold?

thing to keep in mind is that a sneak attack ability does not give a ranger free reign to make unprovoked attacks on inoffensive creatures. A ranger should have a darn good reason to use this ability. For example, a ranger sneaking into an enemy encampment to rescue a prisoner might have cause to stab a sentry in the back on the way in or out, especially if the character can avoid having to fight off every creature in the camp by doing so. On the other hand, if the ranger comes up behind a fellow traveler on a road, he ought not to stab the poor fool in the back just because the opportunity presents itself.

I'm a desperate DM. One week ago I had a terrible argument with one of my players. Can you answer with a plain "yes" or "no": can the player's character research new spells and magical items?

No—not if you, the DM, don't want him to. (That's the "plain" part of the answer.) On the other hand, spell and magical item research is a legitimate pursuit for wizard and priest characters,

adins can purchase the ability to specialize in a weapon with character points. The expenditure of character points, however, means that these characters must give up some other class abilities.

I have noticed that out of all the *PLAYER'S OPTION* books and the *Player's Handbook* there is no mention of what weapons a ranger can wield when fighting with two weapons. Let's face it, a ranger wielding two bastard swords would be quite a funny sight.

The rule you're looking for is in Chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*, in the Attacking with Two Weapons section. The rule is fairly long, but it boils down to this: A man-sized ranger can wield a size-M or S weapon in the primary hand, and a size-S weapon in the secondary hand. An optional rule in the *Complete Fighter's Handbook* allows for two size-M weapons.

As hard as I tried to find "Sage Advice" columns in old back issues and answer this question myself, I couldn't. Do

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would be if the character who wrote the scroll cast it herself. (sometimes considerably less potent). In other words, the act of writing a scroll limits its power. Alert readers will notice that the caster could actually gain a casting-level boost from this rule. In such a case, assign the caster's own level to the scroll (A scroll spell never functions at a level higher than its creator's level.)

I know several DMs who allow characters to control the casting level of scrolls they write, so long as it is not less than the minimum level required to cast the spell. In most of these games, the actual casting level (not the spell level) is used to determine the failure chance when a character reads the scroll. Using unknown scrolls can be quite a gamble in such campaigns.

Can a druid choose to shapechange into an elephant?

How freely can a wizard with the persistent spell effect ability (from the *Spells & Magic* book) change the effect? For example, Andolfo pays 21 character points for a 3rd-level persistent spell and makes *fly* a persistent spell effect. Can he decide to change that to *shield* after taking the week of study? The persistent spell effect requires concentration. If something happens to break that concentration, how long does it take to start that spell effect again?

Once the character pays the CP cost for a particular level of spell, the character can make any spell of that level or lower persistent, provided the character can cast the spell, the DM approves, and the character gives up the required spell slot. The character can change the spell effect anytime, but it takes a week of effort to start a new persistent effect, and the old effect ends the moment the character starts working on a new one.

Once a spell has been made persistent, it is effectively permanent. The concentration requirement is misleading. The persistent spell does not end until dispelled or changed. If the character goes to sleep or loses consciousness, a persistent effect stops working, but the caster can invoke it again, just as if it were an innate ability or magical item. (I suggest an initiative modifier of +3.) Many per-

sistent effects give no benefit unless the character concentrates on them. For example, a character with a persistent *ESP* or *detect magic* effect does not gain information from the effect unless the character actually concentrates on using the ability. Such concentration counts as the character's action for the round in which the persistent effect is used.

Can a character with the modern language proficiency learn extra languages that exceed his Intelligence score allowance?

If the nonweapon proficiency rules are in play, a character takes the modern language proficiency to learn a single language. (It's a badly named proficiency.) Under the nonweapon proficiency rule, a character can learn as many languages

as he has proficiency slots available. The character's allotment of "languages" from Table 4 (*PHB*) becomes bonus slots the character can use to acquire extra nonweapon proficiencies, not just languages.

I've had a long argument with a player, and I've run out of ideas. How can I reconcile rangers of Mielikki being her specialty priests too? The player insists that as a specialty priest, a ranger of Mielikki should enjoy all the abilities listed in *Faiths & Avatars*, use the experience tables on page 183, and have ranger abilities, too. The Mielikki entry in *Faiths & Avatars* is about as clear as mud, and it also seems to me that her rangers aren't getting much more than the average ranger. It seems the only advantage is that Mielikki allows the druid/ranger multiclass.

The Mielikki entry on page 114 of *Faiths & Avatars* seems pretty clear to me. A "specialty priest" of Mielikki can be a ranger (or druid, or druid/ranger). Your player has misunderstood the information on default specialty priest abilities on pages 182–183; information in a power's description always takes precedence over the default abilities. (Page 183 also has a note about rangers of Mielikki under the "Paladins and Rangers" heading.)

In addition to the ability to be druid/rangers, rangers of Mielikki gain some extra proficiencies—any three of the four bonus proficiencies listed on page 114 and religion (as noted on page 113). Otherwise, rangers of Mielikki function exactly like the rangers described in the *Player's Handbook*.

The second note under the undead turning table in the *Player's Handbook* says that undead living on the outer planes can be turned as "special" creatures. Thus I suppose that only undead creatures are affected. A baatezu or a tanar'ri cannot be turned. Right?

If the note were correct, you'd be right. But the line should read "... and those creatures that dwell on the outer planes."

A good priest can turn evil creatures (evil priests turn good creatures) from the outer planes, provided the creature has 11 hit dice or fewer. (Neutral priests turn both or pick one set or the other to turn, as the DM decides.)

Can a druid choose to shapechange into an elephant? I know the *Player's Handbook* says that the size of animal change varies from a bullfrog or small bird to as large as a brown bear, but how about an elephant?

Actually, a druid can shapechange into an animal form no smaller than a bullfrog and no larger than a black bear (a roughly human-sized creature). Elephants, being considerably larger than black bears, fall well outside the druid's range. Note that a druid cannot choose to change into an elephant of roughly black-bear size. The assumed form's normal (adult) size must fall within the range noted above.



Skip Williams notes that his druid characters have never considered turning into elephants, but they have achieved some pretty spectacular effects by turning into porcupines—especially in close, personal combat.

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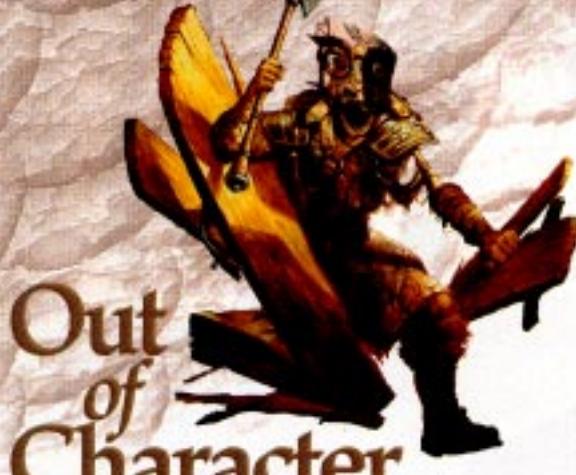


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Out of Character

By Peter Adkison

Peter's Quick Checklist for DMing Dragons

"HEY, LET'S GO AFTER A DRAGON!" Aw, those words are music to my ears. There are few things more enjoyable to a DM than a party of intelligent, appropriately outfitted characters going after the AD&D® game's most highlighted villain. It is, after all, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. Because of the awe factor associated with dragons, though, it's crucial that they be played well so that players will respect this most grand of adversaries. So, here's a quick checklist of things to make sure you're prepared for when your PCs step up to the plate.

No mercy. I tell my players that they should expect no mercy when they go against dragons. Dragons are the most cunning foes they're likely to ever face, and I play them with a no-holds-barred attitude. For instance, dragons might purposely finish off characters who are wounded (dropping them to -10 hp), and would recognize the ransoming value of capturing a PC, even a dead one, to use against the PCs should they prove victorious.

Thorough defenses. Because dragons are smart, and because they expect to be attacked, they prepare deadly defenses, consisting of both physical and magical traps designed to fool thieves, redirect

forces, and confound the intellect. Consider a teleporting dragon that has no entrance to its lair; it sleeps in a hollowed-out sphere deep within the earth.

Prepared for standard tactics. There are a number of "standard tactics" that PCs use, like thieves who hide in shadows, invisibility spells, hold monster, and so on. But if it's in the PHB, a 500-year-old dragon has probably thought of a defense against it. Think of every spell and ability—and what a dragon could do to foil it. Examples of such defenses include a magical aura that outlines intruders with *faerie fire*, or a spell that causes a rock to appear in any location where someone tries to *teleport* or *dimension door*, so that the person is in effect trying to transport into solid rock.

Polymorphed dragon. The *polymorph self* spell allows a wizard to change into another form and retain his or her original hp and spells. A dragon with some nice magical items might be more effective fighting in human form, using those items and retaining its original hit points.

Advance warning. Dragons will do everything they can to set up early warning systems so they know of any attack that's coming. Loud traps near the lair and spies in the outlying countryside are two possibilities.

Test the enemy. If a dragon gets wind of an attack, it could gain the initiative by attacking the PCs first. The attack might not include the dragon itself, but the dragon might be watching through a scrying device to see what abilities the PCs have. Or the attack might be an ambush designed to wipe out the PCs if possible, or at least to hit them hard enough that they choose not to pursue.

Have a DM Tip?

Share your expertise as a Dungeon Master by writing to:
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You may also email letters directly to
Peter at mavra@wizards.com.

Allies. Powerful creatures in my campaign never fight alone. Work hard to avoid the situation where several PCs can attack a dragon at once; instead, use other troops to tie down PC actions, allowing the dragon to pick and choose who it fights, if anyone.

False lair. I once played a wise old wyrm who, after realizing he was outnumbered, left a *simulacrum* for the PCs to fight and *teleported* away. This false lair had enough loot to look good, but the truly cool stuff was elsewhere. The PCs to this day believe they killed the dragon and took his hoard. Of course, now that I'm placing this in print . . .

Unique spells. Dragons are old and smart, and they're spellcasters, so it stands to reason they'd have some cool spells that they've made up. [Some of them appear in this issue's "Arcane Lore."] Having trouble figuring out a good way to implement any of the ideas above? Perhaps the target dragon had the same question and designed a spell to solve a "certain problem" relating to defending its lair or testing the enemy.

Unique magic. It's quite satisfying to see the look on the players' faces when, after playing for most of a weekend just getting to the dragon's lair, they find the creature has exchanged all those useless human-sized items for weapons only a dragon could use. One interesting sword I used was a "Dragon-slayer slayer," baneful to anyone who'd ever caused damage to a dragon.



Peter doesn't actually advocate trying to kill off PCs and making their lives miserable. But with dragons he's always willing to make an exception.

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The Return of The Missing Dragons

THE ORIGINAL AD&D® MONSTER MANUAL ENTRIES ON DRAGONS

did not include certain colors of the chromatic spectrum, specifically orange, yellow and purple. It did, however, include green, red, and blue dragons.

The three missing chromatic dragons were later described in "The Missing Dragons" article presented in *DRAGON® Magazine* #65 (1982). The color wheel was complete.

Since that time, the AD&D game has continued to evolve. Dragons are now far more formidable adversaries. Although "official" versions of yellow and purple dragons now exist, the "color wheel" idea is worth revisiting—and the original yellow, orange, and purple dragons worth adding to the current AD&D game.

In the ancient past, the secondary-color dragons (green, purple, orange) could have been the product of mating between two different primary-color dragons (red, blue, yellow). Most of these matings would likely be the result

by
Richard Alan Lloyd

illustrated by David Day

of the gods' experiments, since dragons would consider only their own color species attractive. Some might balk at the thought of a blue dragon mating a yellow dragon to create a green dragon. Most sages hold to the theory that Tiamat—arrayed with heads colored white, red, blue, green, and black—created evil dragons in her own image, giving rise to single-headed dragons of each type. Thus, there were no purple, yellow, or orange dragons. However, Tiamat may have experimented with her children before unleashing them upon the world, trying to create even stronger breeds. Secondary-color crossbreeds could have bred true with each other, starting new branches of the dragon overspecies.

Sages also speculate as to the possibility of another chromatic dragon—Tia-

mat's sister, perhaps—arrayed with heads of yellow, orange, purple, and other crossbred colors. Tiamat may have destroyed her sibling eons ago, but not before the creation of evil dragons in the image of their deceased progenitor.

Simply because yellow, orange, or purple dragons have not (yet) been encountered does not preclude them from inhabiting unexplored continents. Expeditions to verify the existence of such creatures could be financed by wealthy notables with an interest in science, much as Victorian Era expeditions explored the interior of the African continent. Player characters could be hired as escorts or be otherwise included.



Richard Lloyd lives in Chester, NJ, with his wife and two daughters. He runs his play-by-mail game "Great War" and writes for DRAGON Magazine when not fighting for his life in his older daughter's dungeon.

Dragon, Yellow (Salt)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Sea shore, salt marshes or inland salt lakes
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or family
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil

NO. APPEARING:	1(2-5)
ARMOR CLASS:	0 (base)
MOVEMENT:	12, Fly 30 (C), Burrow 6, Swim 12
HIT DICE:	12 (base)
THAC0:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3+ special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-8/1-8/3-18
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Variable
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Variable
SIZE:	G (30' base)
MORALE:	Elite (15)
XP VALUE:	Variable



YELLOW DRAGONS, or salt dragons, delight in the torment of all creatures, particularly those of good alignment. They prepare ambushes where their yellowish-white color helps them blend in with the sand or salt-encrusted rock.

At birth, a salt dragon's tiny scales appear almost crystalline, like lemon-colored bits of glass. As the dragon matures, the scales are bleached by the sun and become progressively lighter. Throughout the dragon's life, its scales continue to harden but remain their original small size, requiring the constant production of additional scales. This process makes the salt dragon supple, more like a snake than a lizard, allowing it to burrow quickly into beach sand or salt flats, using pass without trace to obscure any disturbance. The claws are proportionately larger than normal for dragons. This helps in burrowing and, incidentally, makes the claw attacks more dangerous.

Salt dragons speak their own tongue and a language common to all evil dragons. Twelve percent of hatchling yellow dragons can communicate with any intelligent creature. The chance to possess this ability increases 5% per age category.

Combat: A yellow dragon attacks with its claw/claw/bite routine or with its breath weapon—a cone of white salt crystals. On land, the dragon invariably uses its breath weapon first, usually from ambush. Salt dragons notice which of their opponents has been blinded, concentrating their attacks on still-sighted members of an attacking group, returning afterward to finish off blinded ones before they recover.

Yellow dragons do not pursue a fight they are losing, preferring to escape and return another day to gain revenge. They head to sea to escape land-bound enemies, and they swim to land to escape aquatic enemies.

Breath weapon/special abilities: A yellow dragon's breath weapon is a 70' long cone of salt (sodium chloride) crystals, two feet wide at the dragon's mouth and 15 feet at the base. Creatures caught in the salt spray must save vs. breath weapon or have their bodies—especially eyes, ears, nose and mouth—encrusted with salt. Victims are blinded, in terrible pain, and left choking for six melee rounds per age category of the

Age	Body	Tail	AC	Br. Weapon	Spells W-P	MR	Treas.Type	XPValue
1	3-6	2-5	3	2d4+2	Nil	Nil	Nil	1,400
2	6-14	4-12	2	4d4+4	Nil	Nil	Nil	2,000
3	14-22	12-18	1	6d4+6	Nil	Nil	Nil	4,000
4	22-31	18-24	0	8d4+8	1	Nil	1/2H	7,000
5	31-41	24-34	-1	10d4 + 10	2	20%	H	9,000
6	41-52	34-44	-2	12d4 + 12	3	25%	H	10,000
7	52-64	44-54	-3	14d4 + 14	31	30%	H	11,000
8	64-77	54-64	-4	16d4 + 16	32	35%	H,S	13,000
9	77-91	64-74	-5	18d4 + 18	33	40%	H/S	14,000
10	91-105	74-84	-6	20d4 + 20	331/1	45%	K S	15,000
11	105-121	84-94	-7	22d4 + 22	332/2	50%	H×2,S	16,000
12	121-138	94-104	-8	24d4 + 24	333/3	55%	H×2,S	17,000

dragon. Creatures saving vs. breath weapon suffer those effects for three melee rounds, per age category. During this time, the victim suffers a 4 penalty to attacks and a +4 penalty to AC. Prompt immersion in fresh water, or fresh water forcefully applied, limits the effects to one melee round per age category. The salt dragon knows this and does not fight near a stream or freshwater lake unless it has no option, and it uses lower water at its first opportunity to diminish the supply.

A second salt blast striking a creature already blinded and choking causes no additional damage. The yellow dragon knows this and does not waste its breath weapon. However a creature that has recovered from one blast may be fully affected by another.

Each successive blinding has a cumulative chance equal to the dragon's age category of causing permanent blindness. For example, the first blinding by salt by a young adult yellow dragon has a five percent chance of leaving the victim permanently blind. The second blinding has a 10 percent chance. Victims might not realize they are permanently blind until sufficient time has passed that the initial blindness, coughing, and choking should have ended. The loss of sight may be undone by a *cure blindness* spell.

At sea, salt dragons use their breath weapon underwater to create clouds of extremely salty water that affects swimming creatures, both native aquatic or air-breathers using water-breathing magic. The results (blindness, coughing, and choking) and penalties are the same as on land, but of half the duration.

Yellow dragons cast spells and use their magical abilities at 5th level, adjusted by their combat modifier. At birth, yellow dragons are immune to poison. As they age, they gain the following special powers:

Very young: *pass without trace* 3/day.

Young: *water breathing*.

Young adult: *lower water* 2/day.

Old: *control wind* 1 /day.

Venerable: *protection from lightning* 1/day.

Great Wyrm: *hallucinatory terrain* 1/day.

Habitat/Society: Salt dragons are found by the seashore, in salt marshes and near inland salt flats or seas. They are solitary creatures except when paired for mating and raising hatchlings. As is common in carnivore family units, the female is the hunter, while the male guards the lair and the young.

Yellow dragons along the seacoast often cooperate with sahuagin. Sometimes sahuagin serve as guards and servants of

a salt dragon in return for its protection. Yellow dragons farther inland cooperate with lawful evil humans or demihumans who can survive in the salt marshes or salt flats, providing protection in exchange for obedience and information.

Ecology: Salt dragons spend their early years entirely on land, mastering their breath weapons and the art of moving across (or through) sand, salt marsh or salt flats without leaving sign of their passage. At Young age they gain their *water breathing* ability and are willing to hunt at sea despite the obvious limitations to their breath weapon.

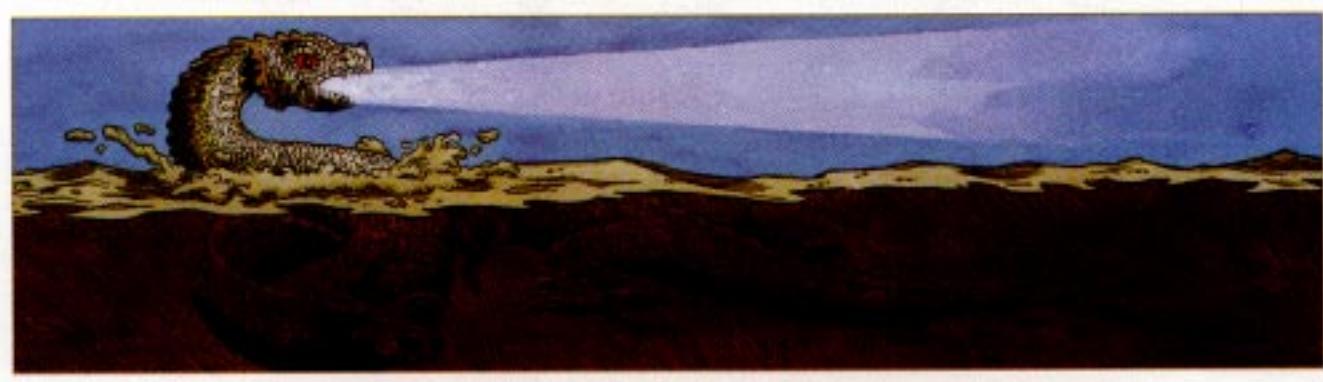
Yellow dragons enjoy meat in all its varieties. Along the seacoast, fish and aquatic mammals are the standard fare, while inland, cattle and herd animals are hunted. The cruel nature of the salt dragon drives it to seek intelligent prey for special occasions, raiding the settlements of good creatures. Captives are tormented until finally devoured.

Yellow dragons "salt" excess meat to preserve it for later meals for themselves and their servitors. Depending on the location of their lair and the nature of their guards and servants, the cooler areas of their cavern lairs might be filled with salted beef, goat, horse, or fish, as well as salted elf, human, triton, or merfolk. Owing to their immunity to poison, salt dragons can consume without ill effects old or spoiled salt meat that would be inedible to their servants, a useful survival trait should its lair be seized. Yellow dragons prefer to drink salt water but may consume fresh water if necessary.

Yellow dragons who live by the sea have bronze dragons as natural enemies, competing with them for food and seashore caverns. Knowing that bronze dragons are larger, stronger, and better spellcasters, salt dragons rarely fight a bronze without their sahuagin allies alongside. A Venerable or older salt dragon might challenge an Adult or younger bronze dragon alone after first casting *protection from lightning* upon itself.

Yellow dragons who live in salt marshes are aware of black dragons farther upriver where the water is not salty, but the two subspecies generally keep apart. Hatchling or Very Young dragons are sought (carefully) by bullywugs or yuan-ti for food. Yellow dragons who lair in salt flats or by salt lakes rarely have neighbors due to the desolation of the land.

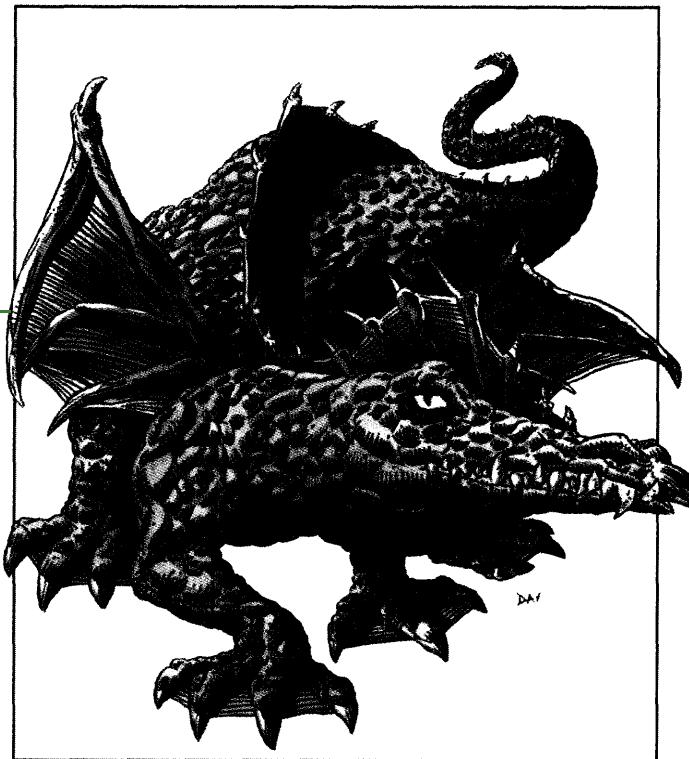
A yellow dragon bred with a blue dragon produces a green dragon. What gives the green dragon crossbreed its distinctive chlorine breath weapon is its yellow parent's sodium chloride (salt) processing ability and its blue parent's electrical ability. The combination allows gaseous chlorine to be separated from the salt.



Dragon, Orange (Sodium)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical rain forest riverbanks and lakeshores
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or family
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral Evil

NO. APPEARING:	1(2-5)
ARMOR CLASS:	-1 (base)
MOVEMENT:	9, Fly 30 (C), swim 9
HIT DICE:	12 (base)
THAC0:	8
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3+ special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-8/1-8/3-24
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Variable
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Variable
SIZE:	G (39' base)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17)
X' VALUE:	Variable



ORANGE DRAGONS are as likely to roar a defiant challenge as to attack from ambush, whichever they think will more terrify their intended victim.

At birth, an orange dragon's scales are a blazing orange. As the dragon matures, the scales become larger and thick, hardening like metal. Most retain their bold orange color, some developing splotches of yellow or red, providing excellent camouflage amid the continually blooming rain forest flowers.

Orange dragons speak their own tongue and a language common to all evil dragons. Fourteen percent of hatchling orange dragons have an ability to communicate with any intelligent creature. The chance to possess this ability increases five percent per age category of the dragon.

Combat: An orange dragon attacks with its claw/claw/bite routine or with its breath weapon, a metallic silvery stream, similar to black dragon acid. Although well suited for ambush, they have much of their red ancestor's impulse to attack on sight and are equally likely to attack boldly.

Breath weapon/special abilities: An orange dragon's breath weapon is a 60' long stream of pure liquid sodium, five feet wide at the dragon's mouth. Sodium burns when exposed to air; the oily saliva of the dragon prevents premature ignition in the dragon's mouth. The sodium itself is stored in the digestive tract in a nearly solid state and is not liquefied until powerful gastric and esophageal contractions bring it up to the mouth.

The orange dragon is a crossbreed of yellow and red dragons. Its sodium breath weapon is a result of its yellow parent's sodium chloride (salt) processing ability and its red parent's fire ability. The combination allows masses of metallic sodium to be separated out from the salt.

Creatures hit by this sodium stream are drenched, and within two melee rounds the saliva evaporates and the sodium is exposed to the air, bursting into engulfing flame. Creatures saving vs. breath weapon suffer half damage.

Sodium explodes when it comes in contact with water, so if well-meaning comrades of the victims try to wash off the sodium before it ignites, it instead explodes. The resulting blast

Age	Body	Tail	AC	Br. Weapon	Spells W/P	MR	Treas.Type	XP Value
1	2-9	2-9	2	2d6+2	Nil	Nil	Nil	1,400
2	9-20	9-17	1	4d6+4	Nil	Nil	Nil	2,000
3	20-30	7-25	0	6d6+6	Nil	Nil	Nil	4,000
4	30-46	25-39	-1	8d6+8	1	Nil	1/2H,S	7,000
5	46-61	39-56	-2	10d6 + 10	2	25%	H,S	9,000
6	61-76	56-72	-3	12d6 + 12	3	30%	H,S	10,000
7	76-91	72-86	-4	14d6 + 14	31	35%	H,S	11,000
8	91-107	86-100	-5	16d6 + 16	32	40%	H,S,T	13,000
9	107-123	100-114	-6	18d6 + 18	33	45%	H,S,T	14,000
10	123-131	114-124	-7	20d6 + 20	331/1	50%	H/S/T	15,000
11	131-139	124-134	-8	22d6 + 22	332/2	55%	H x 2, S, T	16,000
12	139-152	134-144	-9	24d6 + 24	333/3	60%	H x 2, S, T	17,000

causes damage equal to the damage the original target(s) would have suffered when bursting into flame to everything within a 15' radius.

The only practical way to prevent a victim from catching fire is immediately to drench him or her in oil to prevent the sodium from contacting the air. (There is, of course, an element of risk in this procedure, should the sodium ignite—a 1 in 8 chance—as the oil is being poured.) All clothing and armor must be removed and carefully cleaned of sodium while still oil-covered, requiring $8 + 1d8$ (9–16) turns. This can be hazardous if done while the orange dragon continues its attack.

A favorite attack mode of orange dragons is to expel a stream of sodium into a river or lake directly adjacent to a boatload of victims. There is a delay of one melee round because of the oily saliva mixed with the sodium. The resulting explosion causes full or half damage (depending on saving throw vs. crushing blow) to all boats and creatures within 15 feet, killing or incapacitating most or all involved, leaving them easy prey.

A volume of water (in cubic feet) equal to the possible hit points of damage inflicted must exist for the entire sodium stream to be exploded. If insufficient water is available, the damage is reduced proportionally. Orange dragons are aware of this and first use *raise water* to increase the effectiveness of a shrunken river or pond before spitting.

Orange dragons cast spells and use their magical abilities at 7th level, adjusted by their combat modifier. At birth, orange dragons suffer half-damage from poison, are immune to normal fires, and suffer half-damage from magical fire. As they age, they gain the following special powers:

Young: *pass without trace* 3/day.

Juvenile: *neutralize poison* 3/day.

Young adult: *raise water* 2/day.

Mature adult: *heat metal* 1/day.

Very old: *suggestion* 1/day

Wyrm: *hallucinatory forest* 1/day

Habitat/Society: Orange dragons are found along the river-banks and lakeshores of steamy tropical rain forests. The wetter the better, both for limiting the spread of fire and providing pools of standing water for spitting. They are solitary creatures except when paired for mating and raising young. Both parents participate equally in foraging for food, teaching the young, and defending the lair.

Orange dragons often ally with evil jungle or rain forest dwelling creatures, providing protection in exchange for obedience and information. This practice puts them into competition with black dragons, but usually the black dragon avoids fighting with the stronger, larger and more dangerous orange and either leaves or grudgingly accepts a subordinate role.

Ecology: Orange dragons are excellent swimmers, but being exclusively air-breathers, they live on land other than when hunting for food in rivers or lakes.

Orange dragons are mostly meat eaters, feeding on rain forest creatures and fish, but enjoying tropical fruits as well. Elves and human tribesmen are appreciated for the sport they provide, until finally caught and devoured. If nothing is available, giant insects or fungus may be consumed (although with little enthusiasm) thanks to the dragon's natural poison resistance and, if necessary, *neutralize poison*. For the same reason the orange dragon can drink from pools of reeking, stagnant water, although they much prefer fresh.

Ettercap prize the meat of Hatchling dragons but won't attempt to catch larger ones. Orange dragons have a natural enemy in bronze dragons, who compete with them for food and living space in tropical forests and lakeshores. In a comparison of orange and bronze dragons of equivalent age, the bronze is slightly smarter, tougher, and larger, and its lightning weapon has a longer reach. Sometimes an orange dragon attacking from ambush can negate this advantage, but the majority of "even" battles result in victory for the bronze.



Dragon, Purple (Energy)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Prairie, grasslands, and low scrub-covered hills
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or family
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night (90%)
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral Evil

NO. APPEARING:	1(2-5)
ARMOR CLASS:	-1 (base)
MOVEMENT:	9, Fly 30 (C), Burrow 3
HIT DICE:	13 (base)
THAC0:	7
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3+ special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-9/2-9/6-27
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Variable
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Variable
SIZE:	G (45' base)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17)
XI' VALUE:	Variable



PURPLE DRAGONS are deeply, sadistically evil. They delight in spreading fear far and wide, combining raids for food with outright destruction and mayhem. They are the scourge of the prairies and farmlands, all the more terrifying because they are night hunters.

At birth, a purple dragon's scales are indigo. As the dragon matures, the scales become larger, thicker, harder, and darker. Adult dragons are completely violet, growing darker until they are nearly black at Great Wyrm age.

Purple dragons speak their own tongue and a language common to all evil dragons. Fourteen percent of hatchling purple dragons have an ability to communicate with any intelligent creature. The chance to possess this ability increases five percent per age category of the dragon.

Combat: A purple dragon prefers to attack with its claw/claw/bite routine. Its claws and teeth are serrated, leaving jagged tears in flesh that take twice as long to heal. Powerful enemies are first struck by its breath weapon before being

engaged in physical combat. In general, purple dragons relish battle and go looking for it. If confronted with an unexpected situation, however, they are intelligent enough to back off and reconsider.

Breath weapon/special abilities: A purple dragon's breath weapon is pure energy, a deadly combination of the fire and lightning of its red and blue parents. By flexing certain muscles in the throat and mouth, the dragon can form its blast three different ways: as a cloud 40 feet long, 30 feet wide and 20 feet high; as a cone 75 feet long, 5 feet wide at the dragon's mouth and 25 feet wide at the base; or as a tightly-focused blade of energy, 2'6 inches wide by one foot high for its entire length, up to 100 feet.

Purple dragons use the cone form against a small number of very dangerous enemies, such as adventurers. Creatures caught within the cone must save vs. dragon breath for half damage. The cloud form is used against a large number of moderately dangerous enemies, such as a detachment of

Age	Body	Tail	AC	Br. Weapon	Spells W/P	MR	Treas.	Type	XP	Value
1	2-10	3-9	2	2d8+2	Nil	Nil	Nil		3,000	
2	10-21	9-18	1	4d8+4	Nil	Nil	Nil		4,000	
3	21-32	18-27	0	6d8+6	Nil	Nil	Nil		6,000	
4	32-51	27-41	-1	8d8+8	1	Nil	½EH,S		8,000	
5	51-70	41-55	-2	10d8 + 10	2	25%	H,S,½T		10,000	
6	70-89	55-69	-3	12d8 + 12	3	30%	H,S,½T		13,000	
7	89-103	69-83	-4	14d8 + 14	31	35%	H,S,½T		14,000	
8	103-117	83-97	-5	16d8 + 16	32 / 1	40%	H,S×2,T		15,000	
9	117-131	97-111	-6	18d8 + 18	33 / 2	45%	H,S×2,T		17,000	
10	131-141	111-120	-7	20d8 + 20	331 / 3	50%	H,S×2,T		18,000	
11	141-151	120-129	-8	22d8 + 22	332 / 32	55%	HS×2,T		19,000	
12	151-161	129-138	-9	24d8 + 24	3321 / 33	60%	HS×2,T		20,000	

archers. Creatures caught within the cloud take half damage and must save vs. dragon breath for quarter damage.

Focusing the energy to a blade produces the greatest effect against one very powerful opponent, such as another dragon. The victim must save vs. dragon breath at -4 to suffer half damage instead of full damage. Moreover, the searing hole burned straight through the target will not heal by normal means, so badly has the body around the wound been burned and shocked. *Cure disease* must be cast upon each wound before natural healing may begin. A natural roll of 20 on 1d20 by the attacking purple dragon indicates an opponent's limb has been severed, as if struck by a sword of sharpness.

The energy's sudden brilliance, in any of its shaped forms, is eye-searing, causing anything within a 120 degree arc in front of the dragon's head to be struck blind. During daylight, blindness lasts two melee rounds per age category of the dragon. In twilight or by torchlight, three rounds per age category, and if the dragon is encountered at night, four rounds per age category. The blindness is temporary. If it is urgent the victim be returned to sight immediately, such as to fight without penalty, blindness may be ended immediately by *cure blindness*.

Purple dragons cast spells and use their magical abilities at 8th level, adjusted by their combat modifier. At birth, purple dragons are immune to normal fires and minor electrical attacks such as *shocking grasp*, and suffer half-damage from magical fire or lightning. As they age, they gain the following special powers:

Young: *predict weather* 3/day.

Juvenile: *affect normal fires* 3/day.

Adult: *fire charm* 1 /day.

Mature adult: *fire shield* (vs. cold-based attacks) 1 /day.

Wyrm: *suggestion* 1 /day.

Great wyrm: *wall of force* 1/day.

Habitat/Society: Purple dragons are found in deep caves that open onto prairies, plains low foothills. Until mating time,

they are solitary creatures like most dragons. Both parents will participate equally in raising the young, but the purple male is the primary hunter, being more violent and cruel.

Purple dragons will sometimes ally with evil humans or hill-dwelling creatures, providing protection in exchange for servitude and information. Purple dragons are generally haughty, however, and rarely consider other evil creatures, even other evil dragon subspecies, worth negotiating with.

Ecology: Purple dragons prefer to live in dark underground places where the blinding effects of their breath weapon is at its height. Often they will dig their own lair if none exists naturally. Should they encounter rock too hard to dig through, their breath weapon can burn up to 10 feet of stone at a time, getting the dragon past the obstacle and into easier digging again.

Purple dragons are mostly meat eaters, feeding on herd animals, farm animals, and inhabitants of lonely settlements. They hunt at night, their dark wings blending into the night sky. If possible they will hunt during thunderstorms, which they can anticipate with *predict weather*, as they enjoy the crash of thunder and the whip of rain, which mask their approach and have already frightened or unnerved those below.

If necessary, they can consume tuberous vegetables (potatoes, onions, carrots) if no meat is available, although this makes their temper even shorter.

Purple dragons generally have no natural enemies once past the first age of life. Verbeeg and hill giants sometimes hunt Hatchlings in the foothills, and ankheg will prey on Hatchlings in the prairie. Purple parents will painfully slay any such creatures found in their lairs. Sometimes purple dragons encounter copper dragons in the foothills, and the coppers are fortunate to escape intact. On very rare occasions, purple dragons may meet gold dragons while airborne, and such is the arrogant ferocity of the purple dragon that it may challenge a gold dragon of equal size rather than attempting to flee. Usually the gold dragon will win an "even" fight like this—but not always!

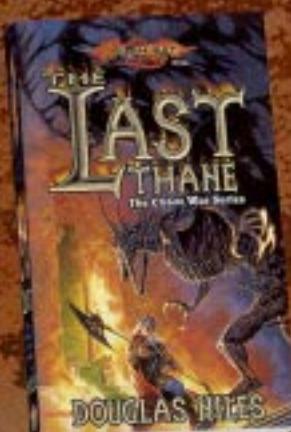


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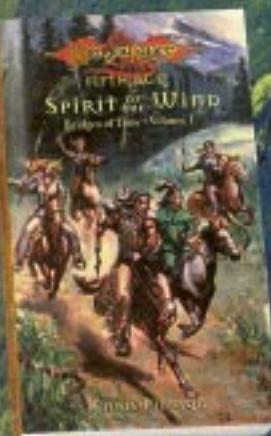
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To do their mythic
reputation justice,
dragons deserve to be
decidedly unpredictable.

MAKING THE

POWERFUL

LESS

PREDICTABLE

Building a Better Dragon

From the name alone, it's clear that dragons have always been near and dear to the AD&D game. And no wonder. Throughout myth and folklore, dragons are awe-inspiring, often terrifying, supernatural creatures. In AD&D, thanks to their physical strength, intelligence, magic-use, and breath weapons, dragons are among the most powerful foes facing player characters.

Unfortunately, they are also among the most predictable creatures. Any player with a smidgin of familiarity with the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*® tome can quote dragons chapter and verse: "It's red? That means it's evil and breathes fire! It's gonna have lotsa fire- and heat-related spell-like powers, so be ready!"

To keep dragons fresh and mysterious, DMs usually resort to creating new draconic subspecies. So, chromatic and metallic dragons were joined by gem dragons; oriental dragons; cloud, mist, and shadow dragons; brown, yellow and steel dragons, and on and on.

Here are 50 ways to put the mystery back into dragons *without* expanding the ever-growing draconic family tree.

Salient abilities

Many individual dragons exhibit special attributes above and beyond their usual innate abilities, spell-like powers, and combat skills. These salient abilities can come as a nasty shock to overconfident PCs. The following list is partially drawn from myth and literature.

1. **Caustic Blood:** With each successful melee hit, the dragon's attacker must save vs. paralyzation or be sprayed with caustic blood equal to the base damage of the weapon used (i.e., a fighter with 18/00 strength and a *long sword* +5 attacking a size-L dragon would suffer 1d12 hp damage; a back-stabbing 10th-level thief attacking the same dragon armed with a dagger would sustain 1d3 hp damage). Items such as weapons and armor must save vs. acid or be destroyed. The blood remains volatile for 1d2 hours per age category.

2. **Eyes of Illumination:** Once per round, at will, the dragon can emit beams of light from its eyes, equal to a *continual light* spell. The beams are instantaneous in duration, but they blind those who fail a save vs. spells.

by
Paul
Fraser

Illustrated by
Bob
Klashnich

3. Roar of Blasting: Once per day, the dragon can utter a roar equivalent to a *horn of blasting*.

4. Eyes of Confusion: Those who gaze into the dragon's eyes must save vs. spells or be affected as if by the wizard spell *confusion*.

5. Jaws of Sharpness: When attempting to bite an opponent, a natural attack roll of 20 allows the dragon's jaws to act as a *sword of sharpness*, severing a randomly determined extremity.

6. Claws of Wounding: The dragon's claws act as a *sword of wounding*, causing the victim to lose one hp each round after the initial attack.

7. Berserker Rage: If angered, desperate, or defending its young or mate, the dragon gains +2 to hit, inflicts maximum damage with its physical attacks, never checks morale, and continues to fight until it reaches -10 hps.

8. Scales of Scintillating Colors: At will, the dragon can cause its scales to flash as a *robe of scintillating colors*, hypnotizing opponents.

9. Fog Breath: At will, the dragon can exhale a heavy fog as per a *horn of fog*.

10. Eyes of Charming: Those who meet the dragon's gaze must save vs. spells or be affected by a *charm person* spell. The victim's save is adjusted as per the *fear* save modifier column in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome's general dragon entry

11. Chameleon Scales: At will, the dragon can blend into its surroundings as per a *ring of chameleon power* by altering the color of its scales.

12. Cursed Hoard: Those who steal from the dragon's hoard, even after its death, suffer a curse. The older the dragon, the more powerful the curse. See the priest spell *remove curse* for possible effects. Note that this spell enables the sufferer only to rid himself of what was taken from the hoard; the items themselves remain cursed.



13. Command Undead: The dragon can command undead as an evil priest equal in level to its hit dice.

14. Revolting Stench: The dragon is so foul and dirty that those within its fear radius must save vs. poison (applying the *fear* save modifier) each round or suffer nausea, reducing their attack, damage, and save rolls by -2. A foe who is bitten must save or contract a disease (as the reversed form of *cure disease*).

15. Eyes of Purity: The dragon possesses permanent *true seeing* (as the wizard spell).

16. Regeneration: The dragon regenerates as a troll. Severed limbs continue to fight and will re-attach themselves.

17. Voice of Command: Three times per day, the dragon can issue a verbal *command* (as per the priest spell).

18. Charm Animals or Monsters: Once per day, the dragon can *charm animals* (as per the wizard spell *charm person*, but affecting only non-magical animals) or

monsters as per (*charm monster*). The number of hit dice of creatures affected is equal to the dragon's hit dice.

19. Prophesize: Once per day, the dragon is capable of predicting the future of someone other than itself. The ability functions as the fourth-level shukenja spell *fate* in the AD&D *Oriental Adventures* book.

20. Claws of Magic Stealing: Three times per day, by touch, the dragon can transfer a randomly selected spell from a spellcaster's mind to its own memory. The dragon requires a successful attack roll, and the victim may save vs. spells. The ability otherwise functions as the magic item of the same name (see the *Tome of Magic*), which was said to be inspired by this draconic power.

21. Quills of Piercing: The dragon has 20+1d10 quills growing from its body, which it can propel at foes. The dragon can launch 2d4 quills per round. Each quill strikes as a *javelin of piercing*. These quills grow back after three weeks.

22. Viscous Entrapment: Once per turn, the dragon can spit a viscous gob that acts as a *net of entrapment*. Range is 10 feet per age category of the dragon. The gob is 10 feet square. Each creature within range must save vs. dragon breath to avoid entrapment.

23. Tongue Lash: The dragon has a whip-like tongue that can lash out once per round as a *rope of constriction*. Range is 10 feet per age category of the dragon. The dragon can release its victims at will. Otherwise, the tongue must be severed to escape. The tongue's AC is equal to the dragon's AC -4. The tongue's hps equal the dragon's hit dice—counted separately from the dragon's total hps.

24. Scales of Displacement: The dragon's scales act as a *cloak of displacement*. The dragon is actually five feet to 10 feet from where it appears to be.

25. Curse of the Hydra: The dragon has two or more heads. At the DM's option, the heads are either of the same species as the dragon itself, or each additional head is of a different species. Each head bites and uses the breath weapon of the appropriate species.

26. Gems of Spell Turning: The gems embedded in the dragon's hide act as a *ring of spell turning*. Check first against the dragon's magic resistance (where applicable). If that fails, the gems may turn spells cast upon the dragon. If the dragon wants to be affected by another's spells, it can suppress the turning effect at will.

27. Mental Fortitude: Beginning at the Adult age category, the dragon has the equivalent of 19 Wisdom and Intelligence for the purposes of immunity to mental attacks and illusions. (See Tables 4 and 5 in the *Player's Handbook*.) For each additional age category beyond Adult, a dragon's Wisdom and Intelligence equivalence each increases by one point, to a maximum of 25 at Great Wyrm status. Note the dragon's actual intelligence as listed in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome doesn't change.

28. Dweomer Boost: The dragon may cast one additional spell for each spell

level to which it has access. For example, an Old silver dragon may cast three first-level, three second-level, three third-level and two fourth-level wizard spells, and three first-level priest spells.

29. Prodigy: The dragon gains access to each of its innate abilities one age category sooner than usual. For example, a shadow dragon gains its *mirror image* power at Young age rather than Juvenile age, *dimension door* at Young Adult rather than Adult age, and so on.

30. Battlewurm: The dragon has the equivalent of melee weapon specialization with one of its physical attacks (i.e., claws, bite, snatch, plummet, kick, wing buffet, or tail slap). It attacks as a specialized warrior equal in level to the dragon's hit dice, gaining extra attacks per round, +1 on attacks, +2 on damage. Further specialization as outlined in the *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Combat & Tactics* book is at the DM's discretion.

31. Wild Talent: The dragon is a wild psionic talent. DMs should assign powers from Table 83 (see Chapter 9, *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers*), up to the limits permitted by the rules. Wild talents gain their abilities gradually, as outlined on Table 80: Psionic Progression. Dragons use the same chart but gain abilities by age category rather than level. Thus, by Adult age, a dragon wild talent can master its maximum allowable two psionic powers, three psionic attacks, and three psionic defenses. Dragon wild talents receive 4 PSPs each time they increase one age category. A dragon uses its hit dice to calculate its MTHAC0 and saves on Tables 77 and 78. A dragon's Wisdom score should be considered equal to its Intelligence (for instance, when making contact proficiency checks). Its Constitution score is always 25, regardless of age (such as for the purposes of determining the dragon's base MAC score and PSPs). Gem dragons, who already boast psionic abilities, cannot be wild talents.

32. Demipower: The dragon is sufficiently worshiped to have attained demipower status. It has all the demipower abilities outlined in *Faiths & Avatars*.

Non-Magical Abilities

Dragons may also boast useful, inherent non-magical abilities:

33. Tracking: The dragon can track as a ranger equal in level to its hit dice. Thus, a 10-HD dragon would receive +3 on its proficiency check (roll against its Intelligence score instead of Wisdom). Dragons do not suffer the usual -6 tracking penalty for non-rangers.

34. Stealth: In its native climate/terrain (see the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome), the dragon can move silently and hide in shadows as per a ranger equal in level to its hit dice. This ability reflects its intimate knowledge of the local terrain, agility, and skill at camouflage.

35. Sage Advice: The dragon's longevity grants it sage abilities. DMs should assign the dragon a field (or fields) of study based on its background, interests, and locale. Dragons require no library to exercise their sage skills. To answer a general question, the dragon needs 1d6 rounds to search its memory; specific questions demand 1d6 turns; and exacting questions take 3d10 hours. If an ability check is required, roll 1d20 against the dragon's Intelligence. The usual sage modifiers (Table 62, *DMG*) apply, except for the library category

36. Dwarven Senses: The dragon can detect underground constructions (slopes, stonework traps, new tunnels, etc.) as per a dwarf. The dragon's detection range is 10 feet per age category

37. Species Foe: The dragon has a species foe as per a ranger. Possibilities include giants, humans, humanoids, dwarfs, etc. The dragon gains +4 on its attack rolls and a 4 penalty on encounter reactions. To have a species foe, the dragon must be at least Very Young in age.

Breathing New Life

According to the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome, dragons may make one breath weapon attack every three rounds. With their long life spans, dragons have plenty of time to refine their most potent attack. The following abilities may only be used by Adult or older dragons:

38. Control Dimensions: The dragon can control its breath weapon's dimensions, increasing any one by up to 150%, or decreasing it by up to 50%. The breath weapon's total area or volume does not change. For instance, if a red dragon shortens its 90'-long cone of fire to 45 feet in length, the cone's width at the base doubles from 30 feet to 60 feet. It remains five feet wide at the dragon's mouth. This effect does not affect the damage inflicted by the attack.

39. Control Damage: The dragon can choose to halve or double the damage inflicted by its breath weapon attack. If reducing the damage, determine the usual damage and divide by two. If increasing the damage, multiply by two. In either case, always round up. By halving the damage, the dragon can breathe once every other round. Doubling the damage limits the dragon to one attack every six rounds. This ability does not alter the dimensions of the breath weapon attack.

40. Control Frequency: The dragon may breathe more than once per three rounds. Each time it breathes without waiting two rounds in between, it loses a number of hit points equal to the number of damage dice its breath weapon attack inflicts. For instance, an Old green dragon (whose breath weapon inflicts $16d6+8$ hp damage) would lose 16 hit points if it makes a second breath attack in the round following its first attack. If it waited a round, then made a third attack, it would suffer another 16 points of damage. The dragon must wait two rounds before it can again use its breath weapon without taking damage.

41. Summon Last Reserves: The dragon can expel a double-strength (both damage and dimensions) breath weapon attack. The dragon loses a number of hit points equal to twice the number of damage dice its breath attack inflicts. For instance, the Old green dragon discussed above would lose 32 hit points (16×2) in the round it makes the double-strength attack.

42. Substitute Breath Weapon: The dragon possesses a non-standard breath weapon, as selected by the DM. For



instance, a green dragon emits a blue dragon's lightning bolt instead of chlorine gas. The attack's dimensions and damage would match a blue dragon's of the same age.

43. Multiple Breath Weapons: The dragon possesses an extra breath weapon type, over and above its usual attack(s), as selected by the DM. For instance, a gold dragon already able to breathe a cone of fire or cloud of chlorine gas may also spurt acid as per a copper dragon. The damage done is identical to the gold dragon's original two breath weapons.

Dragons Dissected

In myth, dragons' blood and body parts possess magical properties. Dragons' blood loses its magical potency 1d4 hours after the beast is slain, regardless of attempts to preserve it. Whether or not dragonslayers can recover enough uncontaminated blood for a bath or to drink is left to the DM's discretion, since it depends on so many factors. Note that dragons with the salient ability caustic blood are not amenable to the post-mortem benefits outlined below.

44. Bathing in dragons' blood has the following permanent effects, depending on the species or alignment:

1. Acid Resistance (black, copper dragons): As the oil.
2. Cold Resistance (white, silver, cloud dragons): As a ring of warmth.
3. Fire Resistance (red, gold dragons): As the potion.
4. Health (any good dragon): As the elixir. This permanently cures the recipient of ills currently suffered but offers no future protection.
5. Lightning Resistance (blue, bronze dragons): As the priest spell *protection from lightning*.
6. Madness (any evil dragon): As the elixir.
7. Non-detection (shadow dragons): As the wizard spell.
8. Youth (any neutral dragon): As the elixir.
9. Invulnerability (any dragon): As the potion.
10. Super-Heroism (any dragon): As the potion.

45. Drinking dragons' blood has the following permanent effects, useable once

per day (+3 initiative modifier):

1. *Blink* (topaz dragons): Duration is one round per age category of the slain dragon.
2. *Improved Invisibility* (yellow dragons): Duration is one round per age category of the slain dragon.

3. *Polymorph Self* (steel dragons): Duration is one turn per age category of the slain dragon.

4. *Shout* (emerald, sapphire dragons)

5. *Spider Climb* (copper dragons):

Stone surfaces only. Lasts one round per age category of the slain dragon.

6. *Suggestion* (crystal dragons): The victim is ensorcelled for one hour per age category of the slain dragon.

7. *True Seeing* (deep dragons): As the wizard spell. Duration is one round per age category of the slain dragon.

8. *Water Breathing* (mist, black, amethyst dragons): Duration is one hour per age category of the slain dragon.

9. *Speak with Animals* (gold, brass, bronze dragons): Duration is two rounds per age category of the slain dragon.

10. *Gaseous Form* (cloud dragons): As the potion. Duration is one round per age category of the slain dragon.

46. Teeth of the Warrior: When planted, the dragon's teeth sprout armed warriors, who serve the person who sowed them. For details, see "The Magic of Dragon Teeth," by Gregg Chamberlain, in *DRAGON® Magazine* #98. DMs without access

to the article can use the statistics in the *horn of Valhalla* entry in the *DMG*. Roll 1d20 for each planted tooth, which produces one berserk fighter of the level listed on the horn's table. The fighters are aligned as per the slain dragon. To determine whether a tooth is extracted undamaged, make an item saving throw vs. crushing blow ("bone or ivory"

column) for each attempt. The teeth require 2d4 rounds to sprout.

47. Dracontias: The dragon carries a precious gem called dracontias inside its head. If the gem is removed while the dragon is still alive (by putting it to sleep, for instance), the gem allows someone who holds it and concentrates to *detect poison* as the priest spell, once per round. The gem also acts as a universal antidote if dropped in water and boiled. The victim need only drink the concoction to be cured (as a *neutralize poison* spell). The gem is capable of curing one person, once per day, in this manner.

48. Crystal Eye: The dragon's extracted eye functions as a permanent *crystal ball* (01–75% chance) or *crystal hypnosis ball* (76–00% chance). To determine whether a dragon's eye is removed intact, make an item saving throw vs. crushing blow ("glass" column) for each attempt. The eye must immediately be preserved in some manner, such as casting the spell *Nulathoe's ninemen* (see the *Pages from the Mages* accessory). To activate the scrying power, the wizard spell *magic mirror* must be cast upon the eye once. If the latter spell is not cast within 2d4 hours of the dragon's death, the eye loses its potency.

49. Horn of Treasure Finding: If the dragon's horn is removed while the creature still lives, someone who holds the horn and concentrates can locate treasure as a *potion of treasure finding*. The horn points in the correct direction for 5d4 rounds. It works in this fashion once per day. To determine whether the horn is removed intact, roll an item saving throw vs. crushing damage ("bone or ivory" column) for each attempt.

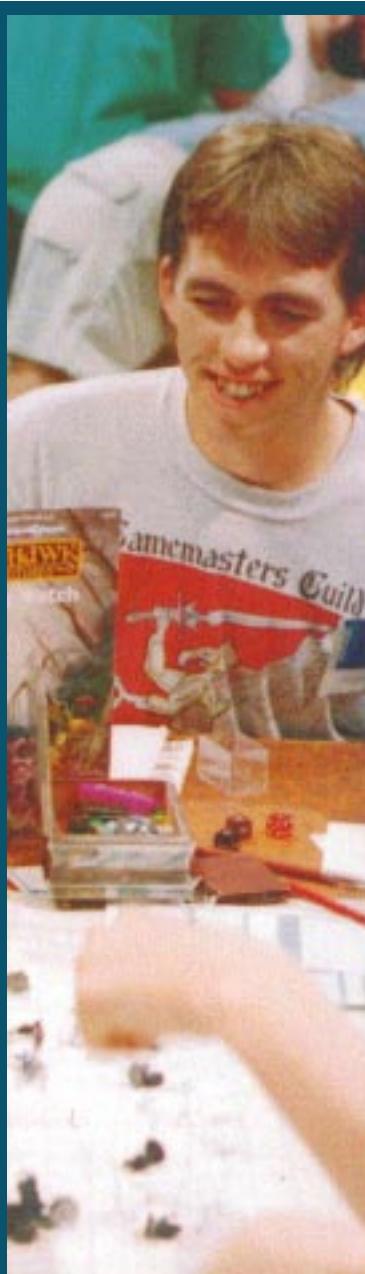
50. Heart of Transformation: Eating the dragon's heart transforms the diner into a dragon of the same species, as a permanent *polymorph other* spell. The resulting dragon's age depends on the age of the person transformed. If an infant were somehow to eat the heart, he or she would be transformed into a Hatchling dragon. Mature persons below middle age (see Table 12, *PHB*) become Adult dragons. Persons between middle and old age become Mature Adult dragons. Those between old and venerable age result in Old dragons. The venerable or older become Very Old dragons. Eating the heart cannot produce venerable, Wyrm, or Great Wyrm dragons. A heart remains potent for only 1d6 turns after the dragon dies, regardless of attempts to preserve it.

Further Reading

For DMs seeking more ways to make dragons challenging, useful articles in past issues of *DRAGON Magazine* include: "Dragons: More Than Just Couch Potatoes," by Thomas Reid (issue #206); "Give Dragons a Fighting Chance," by Ed Friedlander (issue #134); "Dragon Dweomers" (issue #218) and "Arcane Lore: Dragon Dweomers," (issue #230) by Robert S. Mullin; and "Self Defense for Dragons," by Gregory Rihn (Best of *DRAGON Magazine* Anthology, vol. III).



Paul Fraser recently moved to Alberta from the East Coast. He enjoyed springing the nasty ideas in this article on a group of experienced players who thought they knew dragons.



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ADVENTURE SCHEDULE

JULY

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RAVENLOFT®: Champions of the Mists

AUGUST

ALTERNITY®: STAR*DRIVE™ Campaign Setting
GREYHAWK®: Greyhawk: The Adventure Begins

SEPTEMBER

RAVENLOFT®: Vecna Reborn
FORGOTTEN REALMS®: The City of Ravens Bluff

Crystal Confusion

by Holly Ingraham

When the
dungeoneer
picks up a
green gem as
big as an egg,
is it the Queen
of Emeralds or
only a good
specimen
of cheap
tourmaline?

CAN THE ADVENTURERS cut their way out of the glass maze with a topaz, or should they use the cairngorm in the Scot's brooch? When they are under *geas* to bring back an alaqueca or an ophthalmius, what are they looking for? These and dozens of other devious Dungeon Master's delights are possible with a basic knowledge of gemology and some of its more exotic terminology.

It is also very handy when writing mystifying clues in verse: umina might be easier to rhyme than emerald. The immediate use for the Babylonian word for rock crystal might not be obvious, but consider handing the PC clerics a quest based on a fragment of ancient Babylonian writing. When an old map says the secret door to the lower depths is in a patch of carbonado and activated by shining a *light* spell on an inset hyacinth, players who consult dictionaries might find themselves looking for patch of grilled food and a flower.

PCs need the appraising proficiency to tell one gemstone from another. After all, the difference in value between what passes as two bits of purple glass is being able to tell the difference between tourmaline, amethyst, sapphire, and even the rare violet diamond. Gem-cutting allows

Gem Names, Colors, Hardness, and Value

a stone's worth to be raised by cutting it from the raw, faceting a tumbled crystal, or re-cutting a gem so that, while now smaller, it is flawless or has better light transmission.

Opaque stones are carved in shapes, cut in slabs, or cut cabochon (a smooth domed shape, pronounced KAB-oh-kon). Transparent crystals are often prettiest when faceted, but this is a fairly modern Western practice; they too can be "cut cab" and may be engraved with sigils, patterns, and devices. They were often tumbled with sand or diamond dust until they were polished. This effect can be seen in early Medieval reliquaries and shrines. This will be the condition of most gems, especially those of great antiquity.

Besides a glossary of gem names, the accompanying sidebars include a sorting of stones by how they might be mistaken for one another, and a guideline to values. Moh's Hardness Table is used in the field by dwarves and other rock-hounds.

The mnemonic sentence "Taloned gryphs can fly as other quilled terrors could do" is based on that taught to geology students, who mutter even stranger incantations to keep geologic ages and glaciation periods straight. Some of what magic-users grumble is probably not an actual spell but the mnemonics for the ingredients and processes.

Gem Hardness

One should not confuse hardness with steel-like durability or toughness. Hardness is resistance to abrasion, which is valued in gems so that they keep their bright polish. The hardest diamond will not shrug off being struck with a mallet. In fact, whack a fist-sized chunk of talc once with a mace and the talc might split; certainly the comers will powder off. A crystal the same size, even a diamond, will disintegrate into shards. Crypto-crystalline stones are tougher than crystals, even when they are softer. Jade, while not particularly hard, is so tough that it was used for mace and axe heads. Not all gems are equally resistant to damage. Unless protected by a shock-deflecting spell, wondrously magical gems can be knocked to crumbs in the average melee if they are worn rather than kept in padded pouches. An arrow, bolt, or sling-stone can take out a brambled gem at some distance.

The most common shock-deflecting spell, *gemguard* (see the sidebar on page 48), requires the complete destruction of another stone of the same type, size, and quality so it is used only to protect enchanted gems and amulets. Finding a non-magical “twin gem” can be a quest in itself.

Any damage caused to a stone could destroy its use as a talisman, though not necessarily as an ingredient in a spell. For example, if an agate has been enchanted so as to prevent damage to the wearer, knocking off a large piece or marring the carving past readability will likely disrupt the magic. However, if a piece of amber must be used in a *lightning bolt* spell, the shape and complexion of the gem hardly matters. Most mages use very small but high-quality jewels to meet gp-cost requirements because carrying large gems is akin to hauling a bag of rocks.

All gemstones save as “rock crystal,” but modifiers may be applied to the roll depending on the stone’s hardness. Any stone that fails its save by 4 or more is completely destroyed. A “near success” (within 1, 2, or 3 of the saving roll needed for success) indicates that the gem was merely damaged. Damaged gems lose any enchantments placed upon them, but slight damage does not render them valueless. Damage to stones should be

Table 1. Moh's Hardness Scale (1–10)

Rating	Test Rock	Mnemonic	Other Tests
1	Talc	Taloned	Can be scratched by fingernail
2	Gypsum	gryphs	Scratched by copper/bronze coin
3	Calcite	c an	Scratched by copper/bronze coin
4	Fluorite	f ly	Scratched by steel; scratches coin
5	Apatite	a s	Scratched by steel; scratches coin
6	Orthoclase	other	Scratches glass
7	Quartz	quilled	Not scratched by steel
8	Topaz	terrors	Not scratched by steel
9	Corundum	c ould	Not scratched by steel
10	Diamond	d o .	No mineral harder (in this world!)

Stones with a hardness rating of 1 are very brittle; stones with a hardness rating of 10 are resilient.

described as dings, chips, cracks, and gouges, if visible on the surface. However, sometimes damage hides as internal fractures, visible only to the magnifying loupe or the eyes of a skilled appraiser.

Broken crystals can be re-cut into smaller gems, each of which with a separately considered value. Value plummets, but what was planned for sale to a prince seeking a spectacular bride-gift at least brings something at a spellcaster’s supply store.

Stones Often Confused

If a character attempting to identify a gemstone fails his or her proficiency check, the PCs might think they have a ruby when they have a spinel, or only a tourmaline when they actually found an emerald, or only an emerald when they have a green topaz. Unscrupulous buyers won’t hesitate to take advantage of such ignorance. Additionally, when PCs sell their booty, too many gems disposed of in one place drive prices down. They might do better to sell one gem of each sort in different towns.

Gems to Gold Pieces

Table 3 groups stones by value, but these are merely guidelines, as gem values are dependent on the inflation in the individual campaign. In a fantasy world, diamonds might pebble many a stream, while jet is actually rare crystallized dragon tears. But in that case gold can be common and copper rare, which is not how most worlds are set up. It is a good standard that transparents are more

Table 2: Comparative Moh's Hardness of Precious Stones

Gemstone	HR ¹	Save ²
Serpentine	1.5	-1
A m b e r	2–2.5	-1
Chrysocolla	2–2.5	-1
Tortoiseshell	2.5	0
Pearl	2.5–3.5	0
Jet	2.5–4	0
Coral	3.5	0
Rhodochrosite	3.5–4.5	0
Rock crystal	3.5–5	0
Lapis Lazuli	5.5	0
Moonstone	5.5–6	0
Turquoise	5.5–6	0
Opal	5.5–6.5	0
Tanzanite	6	0
Chalcedony	6.5–7	0
Jade	6.5–7	0
Peridot	6.5–7	0
Garnet	6.5–7.5	+1
Kunzite	7	+1
Quartz	7	+1
Tourmaline	7–7.5	+1
Zircon	7.5	+1
Beryl	7.5–8	+1
Spinel	8	+1
Topaz	8	+1
Chrysoberyl	8.5	+2
Sapphire	9	+2
Ruby	9	+2
Diamond	10	+3

1. Hardness Rating (1–10).

2. This modifier applies to all saving throws. (Unless otherwise noted, all gems save as “rock crystal.”)

Table 3: Gems by Treasure Class

Class	CP Value	Gemstones
I	1–50	Agates, chalcedony, jet, onyx, sard, prase, tourmaline (black, clear).
II	50–100	Bloodstone, calmaruz, chrysoprase, tourmaline (green, pink, red, blue, violet), white coral, rhodochrosite.
III	100–200	Cairngorm, jade, lapis lazuli, malachite, morion, watermelon stone.
IV	200–500	Amber, citrine, moonstone, rock crystal, rose quartz, scapolite, black coral.
V	500–800	Beryl, cat's-eye, chrysoberyl, goshenite, moralla, morganite, pink moonstone, turquoise, blue or violet coral.
VI	800–1,200	Amethyst, aquamarine, garnet, kunzite, peridot, tiger's-eye, gold coral.
VII	1,200–1,7000	Hawk's-eye, iris, spinel, rosterite, zircon, red coral.
VIII	1,7000–2,500	Angel skin coral, alexandrite, tanzanite, topaz, light pearl.
IX	2,500–5,000	Diamond, opal, sapphire, deep-colored pearl (royal, rose pink, deep gold, spring green)
X	5,000–10,000	Emerald, ruby, black pearl
XI	10,000–20,000	Extremely large or magical stones, "crown jewel" type gems.
XII	20,000+	?

valuable than opaques, harder more than soft, and rare colors and visual effects more than dull monochromatics. Table 3 assumes stones of similar size—about half an inch across or five carats—and the best quality of their kind. A murky, off-color, tumbled topaz might well be a class V stone, worth less than a richly-hued, faceted amethyst.

Precious and semi-precious stones come in various sizes, usually from the size of a wheat grain up to that of a cherry; rubies and sapphires tend to run smaller in the top end. Crystals generally occur up to the size of a large navel orange or grapefruit, though cutting and polishing always reduce them in size.

Extraordinary Stones

Asterias (star gems) should be considered two classes higher than the standard stone. That is, star rubies count as class XII, rose quartz asterias as class VI. Also give a one-class jump to very rare colors like orange sapphires, pink topaz, or girasols that are not normal (all moonstones and cat's-eyes are, by definition, normally girasol). Because one must allow for gigantic star rubies, as well as the sheer range of gems, the table is expanded a few levels beyond the normal treasure table. Simply use the usual randomization, and only when the dice indicate a raising of class for a particular stone does it move into the highest ranks, which are exceedingly rare.

Quality in crystals consists of perfect transparency, lacking interior flaws and

speckles, and if colored, being deeply hued. Unwonted milkiness can be carried to the point that a stone looks crumbly and almost opaque. Fogginess is enough to knock a crystal down one class, milkiness two, opacity three.

In opaque stones, some, like picture agates or malachite, are more valuable when the patterning is strong and ornate. Others, like lapis lazuli or turquoise, should be cut to show only smooth color with no matrix lines. Yes, a lot of modern turquoise jewelry consists of big streaky chunks; it is also nowhere near as costly as older pieces with smaller but clear stones.

Building Gems in Detail

Some DMs prefer to handle treasure loosely—"You've found a chest of coins, jewelry and gems worth 50,000 gp"—while others prefer a precise tally

Tables 3 and 4 assume a middling gem-average cut, good color, a couple of tiny flaws. If the DM wishes to give a more valuable stone within that size, it can possess a rare color, deep hue, flawlessness, or an extremely good cut. Equally, it can be knocked down by larger flaws or bad cutting (which a gem-cutter can eliminate to increase value after weeks of work) or such incurables as "silickness" (vague fogginess) or a less valuable color or being too plain in something like picture agate, opal or sunstone.

These values are based on the gems as jewelry. If a certain archmage needs a set

of 15 matched watermelon tourmalines for a spell, that particular mage might pay extreme prices for what is normally an interesting but not spectacular find.

Size is given as breadth across globe, not as carats, because carat is a unit of weight, and the same size stones will vary in weight according to the type of gem—say, diamonds vs. amber—or even slightly within the same sort of gem. Also, players who are not jewelers do not handle gems enough to think of them as a weight in the hand. Rather they picture them in size against those they have seen in museums, in books, and against the glass stones in costume jewelry.

Larger stones are extremely rare and should not be left to randomized die rolls, as they are worth considerably more than their weight in gold. They should be the handful of glistening green that rewards the party for the whole trip but which is easier to carry than 20 chests of gold; or the shimmering rock that must be hauled in a bucket and kept in one piece despite battles and traps.

Remember that commoners consider themselves well-adorned with a few agate beads and are dazzled by a string of colored tourmalines. Most wear adornments of faience (pottery) or perhaps the decorative building stones—cinnabar, marble, alabaster. Only the upper classes wear the precious stones in any quantity.

Remember that, ultimately, any stone is as valuable as the DM says it is. Tell the

rules lawyer, "They're not that rare here-about," or "They're out of fashion (the height of fashion) this century (in this area), so prices are affected." Gems should remain dazzling images of richness and entrancing color in the imagination as well as being tokens of worth in the game.

The Glossary

The names given to these gemstones often arose in different areas as localisms. These were mystical, alchemical, or poetical terms devised by unprincipled merchants to confuse buyers. Lawful good appraisers and jewelers despise such shenanigans and endeavor to keep only the necessary number of standard names in use. Other gem merchants can be as crooked and misleading as they dare.

A

Aconteta: Rock crystal.

Aadamant (adamas): Medieval term for a mythical, magnetic gem as hard and tough as steel.

Adularia: A more transparent, less girasol moonstone.

Agate: This form of chalcedony of variegated colors is classified by patterns such black with white stripes and streaks (called zebra agate, useful for warding off diseases), snowflake agate (white splotches on black, ideal for enhancing weather spells), ruin agate (jagged patterns resembling tumbled walls), fortress agate (its jagged patterns resembling crenelated walls and towers against sky), landscape agate (more rounded, rolling patterns), moss agate (green patches like moss or leaves on white, suitable for spells that control plants and their growth), and eye agate (concentric layers cut across the grain to produce a bull's-eye effect, ideal for spells like *clairvoyance*). Agate takes a fine edge, making it valuable for practical or ritual knives.

Akabar (accarbaa): Black coral.

Akori: Red, blue, or violet coral.

Alaqueaca: Bloodstone.

Alatuir: Amber.

Alexandrite: This chrysoberyl's peculiar structure makes it appear green in sunlight, while under artificial light (such as flame) it looks columbine red. This confuses people who think they

Table 4: Random Stone Generation

Roll d100	Stone	Grape	Walnut	Ball Size
01-70	Opaque stone	See Table 4a	See Table 4a	See Table 4a
71-95	Transparent stone	See Table 4b	See Table 4b	See Table 4b
96-98	Amber base value	2 gp	20 gp	100 gp
99-00	Pearl base value	100 gp	500 gp	5,000 gp

Table 4a. Opaque Stones

Roll d100	Opaque stone	Grape	Walnut	Ball Size
01-15	Agate	1 cp	1 sp	4 gp
16-25	Jasper	4 cp	6 sp	10 gp
26-30	Jet	1 cp	1 sp	10 sp
31-35	Sard	4 cp	1 gp	20 gp
36-40	Serpentine	1 gp	5 gp	50 gp
41-45	Prase	1 gp	10 gp	100 gp
46-50	Onyx (black)	2 gp	100 gp	700 gp
51-55	Plasma	2 gp	20 gp	150 gp
56-60	Bloodstone	4 gp	10 gp	300 gp
61-64	Tiger's-eye	7 gp	50 gp	500 gp
65-66	Hematite	5 gp	25 gp	400 gp
67-69	Azurite	80 gp	250 gp	1,500 gp
68-72	Malachite	10 gp	300 gp	2,000 gp
73-77	Carnelian	40 gp	800 gp	5,000 gp
78-82	Lapis lazuli	50 gp	200 gp	1,500 gp
83-85	Coral	20 gp	400 gp	3,000 gp
86-88	Chrysocolla	3 sp	4 gp	225 gp
89-92	Calmazul	7 cp	7 sp	70 gp
93-96	Turquoise	40 gp	600 gp	4,000 gp
95-97	Chrysoprase	50 gp	150 gp	1,500 gp
98	Hawk's-eye	25 gp	125 gp	800 gp
99	Red tiger's-eye	20 gp	100 gp	700 gp
00	Moralla	50 gp	150 gp	1,000 gp

Table 4b. Opaque Stones

Roll d100	Transparent stone	Grape	Walnut	Ball Size
01-15	Tourmaline	2 sp	1 gp	10 gp
16-25	Quartz	10 gp	20 gp	100 gp
26-30	Garnet	4 sp	1 gp	10 gp
31-35	Moonstone	1 sp	1 gp	70 gp
36-40	Spinel	5 gp	20 gp	150 gp
41-45	Peridot	6 gp	40 gp	500 gp
46-50	Azurite	10 gp	60 gp	500 gp
51-55	Zircon	10 gp	70 gp	600 gp
56-58	Rhodochrosite	20 gp	80 gp	500 gp
59-60	Aquamarine	40 gp	700 gp	3,000 gp
61-63	Beryl, other	10 gp	100 gp	1,000 gp
64-67	Chrysoberyl	10 gp	40 gp	700 gp
68-71	Topaz	30 gp	500 gp	2,500 gp
72-75	Opal	100 gp	1,000 gp	3,500 gp
76-78	Scapolite	150 gp	1,250 gp	4,000 gp
79-81	Andalusite	10 gp	100 gp	1,000 gp
82-84	Diamond	300 gp	2,000 gp	6,000 gp
85-87	Benitoite	5 gp	20 gp	300 gp
88-89	Sapphire	500 gp	2,500 gp	7,000 gp
90	Ruby	700 gp	3,000 gp	10,000 gp
91-92	Alexandrite	20 gp	200 gp	1,500 gp
93-94	Kunzite	5 gp	150 gp	1,250 gp
95-96	Titanite	20 gp	300 gp	2,000 gp
97-98	Emerald	800 gp	3,500 gp	9,000 gp
99	Sunstone	200 gp	1,500 gp	5,000 gp
00	Tanzanite	300 gp	2,000 gp	6,000 gp

Transparent Stones That Can be Confused

Black: see the next sidebar.

Blue: aquamarine, azurite, benitoite, diamond, sapphire, scapolite, spinel tanzanite, topaz (tauridan), tourmaline.

Brown: amber, quartz (smoky topaz), sapphire (seal), spinel, topaz (cheap), tourmaline (cheapest).

Clear: diamond, goshenite, moonstone, rock crystal, sapphire, topaz, zircon.

Green: andalusite, alexandrite (by day), diamond, emerald, garnet (olivine), moonstone (rare), sapphire, spinel, titanite, topaz (peredell), tourmaline, zircon

Orange: amber, citrine, garnet, moonstone (rare) sapphire (padmaradschan), spinel (rubicelle topaz (very fine), zircon.

Pink: diamond; kunzite, morganite, rose quartz, rhodochrosite, rosterite, sapphire, scapolite, spinel, topaz.

Purple: amethyst, garnet, sapphire (almandine and amethystine), scapolite, spinel tanzanite, tourmaline (siberite).

Red: alexandrite (by artificial light), diamond, garnet, rhodochrosite (cheap), rosterite, ruby, spinel, tourmaline, zircon (hyacinth).

Yellow: chrysoberyl, citrine, diamond, sapphire, scapolite, spinel (rubicelle), titanite, topaz, zircon (jargoon).

Glittery Stones: iris, opal, sunstone

found rubies down in the dungeon by torchlight, but over breakfast have a pouch full of emeralds, apparently. The green varies from deep emerald to gray green, though grass green is considered best. Often called the "changeling stone" or "chameleon gem," it can be used in to enhance shapeshifting spells.

Almaas: Diamond or adamant.

Almandine: Purple to black garnet or also a reddish-purple sapphire or ruby-colored spinel. The almandine garnet is sometimes a four-pointed star stone, more rarely six-pointed.

Amber: Fossil resin that varies in color and transparency from opaque yellow "butter amber" to clear red-brown "honey amber." It develops a good polish and generates static electricity from friction. It may include bits of vegetation or small insects caught in the original droplets aeons ago. Amber can be substituted as the material component for lightning bolt spells. Ancient authorities note that a necklace of amber beads protects against secret poisons. Although typically found in small pieces, record large ones from prehistoric trees range up to 12 or 18 lbs. Unlike diamonds or rubies, individual pieces are not "ambers" but "pieces of amber." They can be formed under heat and pressure into larger chunks, though with great loss of quality. Such pressed amber can be padded with resins from living trees. Amber can also be distilled into a fra-

grant oil used by perfumers, so even small grains have some value.

Amberine: Yellowish-green chalcedony

Amethyst: Purple quartz. Traditional magic treats this as one of the most valuable stones, a general-purpose protective amulet, especially against drunkenness and poison.

Amethystine: A purplish-violet sapphire, sometimes called "Oriental amethyst."

Andalusite: Sometimes confused with alexandrite or dull green tourmaline, this olive green crystal has reddish tints or flashes.

Antipathes: Black coral, believed to relieve mental suffering. Later sometimes mistakenly used for jet. Use it for amulets to be worn for those suffering fits of madness, or to provide added protection vs. spells such as *confusion*.

Aquamarine: A beryl whose hue is light blue to greenish-blue. It is useful in any spells affecting water, including those that permit travel over or through water.

Arciscuro: Dark red coral.

Argenon: Opal.

Axe-stone: Jade.

Azurite: Bright azure to inky blue-black, this very common copper ore is found in decorative crypto-crystalline form, finely mottled in several shades. Less commonly it occurs as transparent, brilliantly lustrous crystals streaked

with stronger and weaker bands of the darker color. Often found in bands with malachite. The two might even be wrapped around each other in columns or balls.

B

Balascus: Deep rose-pink spinel.

Ballă: A spherical diamond of intergrown crystals, very difficult to cut into facets, but when polished without faceting makes the finest of *crystal balls* for scrying, though rarely over a couple inches across. Most often, a ballă is set in a ring or pendant.

Benitoite: A bright blue crystal more brilliant than sapphire. It may be used to enhance spells that dazzle the eye (such as *color spray*).

Bergkristall: Rock crystal or quartz.

Beryl: Beryls are found colored pink, rose, peach, yellow (the rare and valued golden beryl), green, clear, and blue. Beryls include aquamarine (blue), emerald (green), goshenite (clear), heliodore (yellow), morganite (pink to rose).

Bianco: An unusual precious white coral, dense, hard, with a surface shimmer. Often a very pale version of one of the other colors, the name comes from Italian.

Bloodstone: Most properly, bloodstone is a dark green chalcedony flecked with red, in streaks, splotches, or threads. From a large chunk one can cut a piece that looks like red streaked with green, or solid scarlet. True bloodstone is used in healing spells to stop bleeding, but it also can be used to bring thunderstorms, rain, and lightning.

Bort (bortz): Industrial grade diamond, like black diamond.

Cairngorm: A smoky topaz-colored quartz, used in inexpensive, big-stone jewelry.

Calmazul: Red or reddish-brown opaque stone with spots of light and dark blues and greens, which are flecks of azurite and malachite.

Carbonado: Black diamond.

Carbonetto: Very dark red coral.

Carbuncle: An almandite garnet, deep red to near black, cut hollow to bring out the color. If not thinned to this sort of miniature bowl, the pigment can be so heavy that it looks opaque black.

Carnelian (cornelian): Translucent brown, reddish brown or yellowish brown chalcedony. Sealing wax does not stick to it, making it popular for signets. Carnelians are used in spells that reinforce collapsing walls or roofs or dispel illusions.

Cater's eye: An opaque, dull red stone with a white streak across it, often cut from agate.

Cat's eye (cymophane): Varieties of chrysoberyl or other stones that have an interior opalescent reflection like a cat's eye, greenish with a silky luster. They are used in spells that ward off other hostile magic.

Chalcedony: Translucent quartz, usually pale blue or gray with a waxy luster when treated as a gem, sometimes white, black, or brown. The best is the color of skim milk, marked with veins or patches in pale blue, and sometimes called "white agate." Varieties of special color or variegation are agate, amberine, bloodstone, carnelian, chrysoprase, jasper, onyx, plasma, prase, and sard.

Chakhuite: Jade.

Chessylite: Azurite.

Chrysoberyl: A transparent yellow or greenish-yellow stone.

Chrysocolla: A translucent sky blue stone, though impure varieties are opaque dull green, brown, or black. Found around copper veins, it can be a material component for *hold person* and *hold monster* spells.

Chrysolite: A golden yellow peridot (though it can be found shading all the way over to olive green) that enhances spells designed to repel night-dwelling terrors—the sorts of monsters that cannot tolerate sunlight.

Chrysoprase: A translucent, light green chalcedony, at its best like a pastel green milk-glass.

Citrine: Dark quartz changed by heat to yellow or yellow-orange, usually in a furnace or a red dragon's lair.

Coral: The stony concretions of the massed exoskeletons of undersea organisms that live and grow in warm sea water. Precious coral—as opposed to the junky, rock-like white and gray stuff—is harvested from depths of 100–1,000 feet. These include black, pink, white, gold, and red corals. Occasionally a blue or violet coral may turn up in a bank of black coral. Coral can be dyed to change

Opaque Stones That Can be Confused

Black: (some of these are so dark it is hard to tell transparent from opaque, so both are included) azurite, coral, diamond, jade, jasper, hematite, melanite, obsidian*, onyx, pearl, quartz, (cairngorm and morion) sapphire, spinel, tourmaline.

Blue: azurite, coral, chrysocolla, jade, jasper, hawk's eye, lapis lazuli, neelam, pearl, turquoise.

Brown: agate, dark amber, calmazul, carnelian, jade, jasper, onyx, pearl.

Green: aventurine*, bloodstone, chrysoprase, hornblende*, jade, jasper, jaspis, fluorite*, lapis lacedaemonia*, malachite, moralla, pearl, plasma, prase, serpentine, naturally green or discolored turquoise.

Red: agate, alabaster*, bloodstone, calmazul, carnelian, cinnabar*, coral, jade, jasper, red ochre*, ruby matrix.

White: agate, alabaster*, chalcedony, jade, ochre, onyx, marble*, pearl.

Yellow: agate, alabaster*, butter amber, carnelian, jade, jasper, yellow ochre*, onyx, pearl, travertine*.

* Neither precious nor semi-precious, considered decorative or architectural stones, and so not covered in this article.

or improve the color, but heat and light make the fakes fade.

A healing stone, red coral is used to reduce inflammation and swelling. All coral supposedly provides protection against the Evil Eye and other curses.

D

Diamant: Any hard, clear crystal, including corundum sapphire, spinel, topaz, and true diamond, but not the softer quartz or rock crystal.

Diamond: The ultimate hard crystal, a form of native carbon, with a high refraction index, which gives it its famous "fire." Yellowish, lavender, and pinkish diamonds are less valuable than pure blue-white, but the strong-hued "fancies"—red, pink, green, canary, champagne, blue, violet—are rare and more valuable yet. A diamond amulet worn on the left side of the body protects the wearer from ghosts and other spirits. Black diamonds, no matter how large when found, are only of worth when ground into abrasive dust, or fractured and set in the edges of saws.

Delen (dellen): Pearl.

Digalum: Old Akkadian for any gem. Actually, it may refer to a specific one, but which of the ones we know, scholars cannot tell, so it can be used as the DM likes.

Dur: Pearl. Dur-re-Shahwar is "a pearl worthy of kings."

Du-shi-a: Rock crystal, clear quartz.

E

Electra: Amber.

Elitropia: Bloodstone.

Emerald: A rich green beryl. In ancient days, "emerald" may have meant almost any other green stone, whether a crystal like peridot, or even something opaque like malachite. Emeralds can be used as spell components for enhancing sight (*clairvoyance*) or set in jewelry to allow the wearer to discern lies from truth (*zone of truth, true seeing*).

Espinela: Spinel.

Evening emerald: Another name for peridot, which has a deeper, emerald-like color under artificial lighting such as open flame.

Eye-stone: Eye-agate; a banded stone cut to show concentric circles.

F

Falcon's eye: Another name for hawk's eye.

Ferozah (firuza): Turquoise.

G

Gagates (gaggitis, geet): Jet.

Garnet: Actually two different sorts of crystal, colored from an orange-brown shade of red through burgundy to a deep royal purple. Often made into beads, smooth or faceted. Andradite garnets are sometimes grass-green. Garnets (carbuncles especially) can be used as material components for spells that generate light, prevent bleeding or inflammation, or cause anger. Carved with the

image of a lion, a large, perfect garnet provides all-around good luck (providing a +1 bonus to all saving throws, at the DM's discretion).

Gauhar: Pearl.

Gawdone: Star sapphire.

Getchoseki: Moonstone.

Giada: Jade.

Giallo: Amber.

Girasol: Any stone with an apparent patch of floating light inside; sometimes refers to a star stone. See moonstone, pink moonstone, scapolite, and seal sapphire.

Gorgia: Coral.

Goshenite: Absolutely colorless, clear beryl.

Gug: Red jasper or carnelian.

Gwefr: Amber.

Gyu: Turquoise.

H

Hakik: Any agate, but especially the white-streaked gray agate, much valued for talismans etched with spells to protect travellers. If one is used, allow a +1 bonus to attack rolls and saving throws against wandering monsters in the wilderness, outside cities and dungeons.

Hawk's eye: A rare form of unoxidized tiger's eye colored gray to blue-gray. Used in spells to foretell danger from the air (+1 bonus to surprise rolls against aerial attacks).

Heliodore (heliodor): A yellow beryl, whose name translated to "gift of the sun." Used to enhance spells that produce magical light capable of dispersing the undead.

Heliotrope: Bloodstone.

Hematite: A metallic black, opaque stone, sometimes steel-gray. The name, meaning "blood mineral," sometimes refers to bloodstone, red ocher (an earthy, non-crystalline hematite), or a number of reddish iron ores.

Hisui: Jade.

Hongbaoshi: Ruby.

Huinzo: Lapis lazuli.

Hyacinth: A red zircon.

I

Indigo: Dark blue or blue-black sapphire.

Iris: A rare form of quartz with internal fractures that break light into spectrum flashes, often passed off as opal on those unfamiliar with real opals. "Iris" is

another word for "rainbow," so it might enhance spells with prismatic effects (such as *rainbow pattern* and *prismatic sphere*) or possibly disperse or nullify rain, snow, hail, or other storms.

J

Jacinth: Any transparent or translucent stone in the white-yellow-orange range; best applied to a yellow zircon.

Jade: Includes two minerals, jadeite and nephrite. To the ancients, they were both true jade. Jade is green of many kinds, also white, pink, black, brown, gray, mauve, blue, lavender, violet, yellow, orange, and red, not infrequently of more than one color in one piece, like a lavender bracelet-sized ring splotched with mint green and white, or white streaked with another color. "Tomb jade" is yellowish to grayish brown from being buried—usually in sepulchers, crypts, or barrows. It makes a fine edge as a tool or weapon. It can be found in chunks large enough to carve into one-piece coffins. Unlike diamonds or rubies, individual pieces are not "jades" but "pieces of jade." The magical uses are almost innumerable, depending on the color and carving.

Jaiet: Jet.

Jargoon: A colorless, pale yellow, or smoky zircon.

Jasper: An opaque quartz or chalcedony that comes in many colors, including red, green, brown, blackish brown, yellow, gray, and blue-gray or gray-blue. Varieties of jasper can be used to augment *pyrotechnics* spells.

Jaspis: Specifically green jasper.

Jauhara (jawaahar): Any precious stone.

Jet: a very hard, solid black mineral, like a gem-quality coal. It should be one of the ingredients for restoring the dead to life, or for animating or creating undead creatures.

Jingangshi: Diamond.

K

Ka-gi-na: Hematite.

Khesbet: Lapis lazuli.

Khulalum: A precious stone, either in general or a specific one that cannot be identified.

Kidney-stone: Nephrite, or jade.

Kogyoku: Jade.

Kohaku (kiro-shingo): Amber.

Kunzite: A very rare transparent pink crystal of spodumene, a phosphorescent stone that gives off weak light itself after exposure to bright light. This makes it very suitable for enchanting into a light-giving amulet. A half-inch stone sheds working light for a 10' radius; doubling the diameter of the gem doubles the radius of light.

L

Lapis lazuli (lazulite): A dense, opaque, azure rock; like turquoise, it is better if the color is unmarked and even. The best hue is a royal blue, though it varies through denim shades to a gray blue. Low-grade lapis lazuli can be flecked with brassy pyrite or streaked with black or white. A lapis lazuli amulet or talisman often aids clerics in auguries and divinations. As a material component, ground lazulite has also been known to enhance the *contact other plane* spell, reducing the caster's chance of insanity by 20%, but only when the spell is done by daylight; otherwise, see malachite.

Lemanita: Jade.

Lion's eye: A large cat's-eye.

Lunaris: Moonstone.

M

Macle: Two separate diamond crystals that have grown together into one stone. The two crystals can, on rare occasions, be different colors. The macle (pronounced MAK-el) can be used in *clone* spells to reduce the time needed for the clone to "grow" to 1d4+1 months.

Malachite: Opaque carbonate of copper, patterned with bands, streaks, and folds of incredibly rich greens, once it is cut. Meaning "stone of kings" and pronounced "MAL-a-kite," ground pure malachite enhances the effect of the *contact other plane* spell, reducing the caster's chance of insanity by 20% if the spell is done by artificial light, at night, or underground.

Manao: Agate.

Markhushum: Any precious stone; may be used for any gem desired.

Melanite: A black andradite garnet.

Meno: Agate.

Meripihka: Amber.

Moonstone: Transparent to translucent white feldspar whose pearly to opalescent luster looks like an ectoplas-

mic haze-blue shimmer just beneath the surface. Very rarely in green or orange. It is used to enhance certain Illusion/Phantasm spells.

Moralla (morallion): Semi-crystallized emerald material, like deep green turquoise, sometimes glittering from tiny crystals.

Moarganite: A rose-pink beryl. If left in the sunlight all day, morganite glows softly after dark.

Morion: Near-black smoky quartz.

Moro: Dark red or ox-blood coral.

Murasakisuisho: Amethyst, meaning "wisteria crystal."

Mya: Emerald.

Murismitis: Amber.

N

Neelam (nilam): Any blue gem.

Nephrite: Old name for jade.

Nikolo: Onyx with a black or brown base layer and a bluish-white layer on top; used for stone cameos, as opposed to shell cameos.

O

Olivine: A name applied to peridot or green garnet.

Onyx: Layered chalcedony. Dull, pale specimens may be dyed bright, unnatural hues or to imitate the valuable rare black onyx. If there is enough contrast in color of shade between layers, it is used for cameos.

Opal: A very soft silica stone easily shattered. The rainbow flashes are formed by interior discontinuities, and the colors may be hot (reds, oranges, yellows) or cool (blues, greens, and purples) in backgrounds of white, black, orange, or clear (as in jelly opals and harlequin opals). The denser the flashes, the higher the value. Opal often replaces bone or wood in fossilized objects, so opal skulls and teeth can occur naturally. Black opals are ideal spell components for *improved invisibility spells*; fire opals enhance *fireball* spells, allowing the caster to increase damage by +1 hp/die.

Ophthalmius: Opal.

Outremer: Lapis lazuli.

P

Padmaradschah: Rare light orange-yellow to orange sapphire.

Paederos: Opal.

Peacock stone: Malachite.

Cross-Naming at a Glance

This information is particularly useful to DMs who base their campaign's cultures on historical ones. The abbreviations are: Akkadian (Ak), Arabic (Arab), Chinese (Ch), French (Fr), German (Ger), Greek (Gr), Indian (In), Italian (It), Japanese (J), Latin (L), Spanish (Sp), and Scandinavian (Sca).

Agate, cater's eye, hakik (Arab), manao (Ch), meno (J); achat (Ger), achates (L), agata (Sp, It) akhates (Gr).

Amber, alatur, bernstein (Ger), electra (L), electrum (L), giallo (It), gwefr (Welsh), kiiro-shingo (J), kohaku (J), meripihka (Fin), myrismitis (Gr), rav (Sca), seastone, succinum; ambar, succino (Sp); ambra (It);ambre (Fr); anbar (Arab); suzkinit (Ger).

Amethyst, murasakiusho (J), sacondion, zijing sede (Ch); amatista (Sp), ametista (It), amethyste (Fr),

Beryl, aquamarine, emerald, heliodore.

Bloodstone, alaqueca (Sp), heliotrope.

Carnelian, carnelian, gug (Babylonian, Assyrian), sard, sarda (L), sardin, Tormali (In); corneline (Fr),

Cat's eye, curnophane, lion's eye.

Chrysoberyl, heliodore.

Coral, akabar (Arab), akori (J), antipathes, arciscuro (It), bianco (It), carbonetto (It), gorgonia, moro, sango (J), scorpion stone, penninah (Hebrew); corallo (It), corallino (It), coral (Fr), coraux (Fr), koraal (Dutch).

Diamond, adamant, adamas, almaas (Arab), diamante (Sp, It), diamant (Fr, Ger, Dutch), jingangshi (Ch), sein (Burmese).

Emerald, mya (Burmese), smaragd (Gr, Dutch, Ger), umina, emeraude (Fr), esmeralda (Sp), smeraldo (It).

Garnet, almandine, carbuncle, melanite, pyrope, olivine, vermeille, zakuroishi (J); alabandina, alamandina (L), almandin (Gr), granat (Ge), granate (Sp), granato (It), grenade (Fr).

Hawk's eye, falcon's eye.

Hematite, haematite, ka-gi-na (Babylonian, Assyrian).

Indigo, indigo stone, inky sapphire.

Jade, axe-stone, chalchihuite (Aztec), giada (It), hisui (J), kidney-stone,

kogyoku (J) lemanita, nephrite, pounamu (Maori), sastun (Mayan), tama (J) yaseuma (J), yu (Ch).

Jasper, gug (Babylonian, Assyrian).

Jet, antipathes, gagates (Gr, L), gagitis, geet (Fr), jaiet (Fr), scorpion stone.

Lapis lazuli, huinzo (Aztec), khesbet (Egyptian, Babylonian), outremer (Fr), seikinseki (J), stamatopetra (Macedonian), uknu (Assyrian), ultramarine (Fr).

Moonstone, adularia, getchoseki (J), lunaris, salis gem, selenita, silverstone, waterstone; adulaire (Fr), adular (Ger), lunaria (It), Mondstein (Ger).

Onyx, oniche (Fr, L).

Opal, argenon, ophthalmius, paederos; most European languages use opal or opale.

Pearl, dur, shinju (J), zhenshu (Ch); perla (Sp, It), perle (Fr).

Peridot, peridote, chrysolite, evening emerald, olivine.

Rock crystal, aconteta, bergkristall (Ger), du-shi-a (Babylonian, Assyrian), quartz, sastun (Mayan), suisho (J).

Ruby, hongbaoshi (Ch), vermeille; rubi (Sp), rubino (It), robijn (Dutch), rubis (Fr), rubin (Ger).

Sapphire, almandine, amethystine, gawdone, indigo stone, padmaradschah, seal sapphire, zaffiro (It), zafiro (Sp); saffier (Dutch), safia (J), safir (Swe, Fin), saphir (Fr).

Scapolite, pink moonstone.

Serpentine, za-tu-mush-gir (Babylonian, Assyrian).

Spinel, balascus, balas-ruby, espinela (Sp), rubicelle, vermeille; spinelle (Fr), spinell (Ger, Scan), spinello (It).

Topaz, kogyoku (J), peredell, tataya, tauridan; topacio (Sp), topas (Ger), topaze (Fr), topazio (It).

Turquoise, ferozah, gyu, piruzeh (Persian), tanos; turchese (It), tikisfarben (Ger), turquesa (Sp).

Zircon, hyacinth, jacinth, jargoona, vermeille, yaaqoot (Arab), zargun, zarqun; circon (Sp), zircon (It), zirkon (Ger, Sca).

Precious stones in general: digalum (Ak), farida, fareeda (Arab), gauhar (Arab), jauhara, jawaahar (Arab), khulalum (Ak), markhushum, (Ak).

New Spell: *Gemguard*

(Abjuration)

Level: 3

Range: 10 yards

Components: V,S,M

Duration: Permanent (see below)

Casting Time: 1 turn

Area of Effect: 1 gem

Saving Throw: None

The *gemguard* spell is normally cast upon enchanted gems and gems worn as jewelry. The spell protects a single gem no larger in size than the caster's fist. The spell renders the gem impervious to shatter spells and deflects all melee and missile attacks that target the gem specifically. (The spell offers no protection against attacks with a wider area of effect.) Against directed attacks, the gem is treated as AC-3. Against directed magical attacks (such as *disintegrate* spells), the gem saves as rock crystal with a +4 bonus.

The material component for the spell is a second gem of the same type, size, and value. The two gems are attuned to one another so that the sacrificial gem sustains all of the damage, while the protected one remains unscathed. The sacrificial gem requires 10 hp damage from a single attack to shatter; once the gem is destroyed, the spell ends.

The *gemguard* spell remains in effect until the sacrificial gem is destroyed. The two gems must be within 10 yards of the caster at the time the spell is invoked; thereafter, the spell remains in effect regardless of the distance separating the gems.

Pearl: Formed inside oysters and certain other mollusks, of a calcium substance called nacre [NAY-ker] laid onto an irritant that has worked its way into a fold of the oyster. No one knows what causes an oyster to give a certain color of pearl. Indeed, one oyster may simultaneously build pearls of different colors. Occasionally pearls are two-colored: blue and pink, or green and purple. Colors include white, cream, gold, pink (pale to moderate, but no red, scarlet, or crimson), silver-gray, blue (silvery to navy), green, purple, bronze-brown, and very rarely true black.

Pearls are vulnerable to acids; perfume, vinegar, wine, or gelatinous cubes strip the luster or even dissolve the pearl. The same size and color pearls can vary in worth because one has a deeper or more brilliant luster.

White pearls are associated with the moon, purity and tides; gold pearls with acquiring wealth; pink with love and affection; blue with contentment; silver with the intellect; black pearls with power and success.

Penninah: Coral.

Peredell: Light green to yellowish-green topaz.

Peridot (peridote): Typically found in dull shades of green; the best is grassy, brilliant yellow-green.

Pink moonstone: Scapolite.

Piruzeh: Turquoise.

Plasma: A slightly translucent form of chalcedony, ranging from light to dark apple green.

Pounamu (pounamu): Jade.

Pramnion: Black, clear quartz.

Prase: A dull green, opaque chalcedony much used for engravings and amulets.

Pyrope: A garnet.

Q

Quartz: Silicon dioxide crystals, known by various names according to its color, such as amethyst (purple), cairngorm (brown), citrine (yellow to orange), iris (internal rainbow fractures), morion (black-brown), pramnion (black), rose quartz (pink). Its crypto-crystalline form is called chalcedony.

R

Rav: Amber.

Rhinestone: Any faux crystal.

Rhodochrosite: rose pink stone, although darker shades to a brownish sherry red occur. An enchanted rhodochrosite amulet or talisman can enhance the effect of any charm spell, imposing a -1 penalty to the save.

Rock crystal: Transparent, colorless quartz. *Crystal balls* are usually carved from this, not made of glass. Wizards seeking to create their own *crystal balls* should be required to obtain rock crystal globes, leaving glass to the phony seers.

Rose quartz: Delicate pink quartz, sometimes a star stone.

Rosterite: A rose-red beryl.

Rubellite: Red or pink tourmaline.

Rubicelle: A yellow, yellow-orange, or orange-red spinel.

Ruby: Red corundum crystal, preferably deep "pigeon's blood" red, rarely a star stone with six points. When it does not form properly for gems, the decorative translucent or opaque mass, pink to red, is called ruby matrix. Ruby aids the memory and can be enchanted to counter the effects of *forget* spells.

S

Salis gem: Moonstone.

Sango: Coral.

Sapphire: A corundum crystal of any color but red (reserved for ruby); sometimes a star stone of six points. Sapphires aid in deciphering all sorts of signs and so can be used as material components for *read magic*, *legend lore*, and other interpretive spells.

Sard (sardin): Opaque carnelian, in the orange-red range, but sometimes any carnelian.

Sardonyx: Sard layered like onyx. Can be used for cameos if there is enough contrast.

Sastun: Jade or crystal.

Scapolite: A stone translucent to transparent, only occasionally of gem quality; the few that are are yellow, pink (sometimes girasol), blue, or violet.

Schorl: Tourmaline.

Scorpion stone: Black coral or jet.

Seal sapphire: Seal brown, silky-looking girasol or star stone.

Seastone: Amber.

Seikinseki: Lapis lazuli.

Sein: Diamond.

Selenita (selenite): Moonstone.

Serpentine: A soft stone, related to talc, the gem grade is called "noble serpentine" and is translucent, rich green. The more opaque, apple-green variety may be mistaken for jade. Other colors are yellow and brown, and any of the colors may be veined with red, so it can be confused with bloodstone if the PCs do not check hardness.

Shinju: Pearl.

Siberite: Violet tourmaline.

Silverstone: Moonstone.

Smaragd (smaragdos): A green stone like malachite.

Smoky quartz: See cairngorm.

Sphene: A transparent green stone, pronounced "sfeen."

Spinel (spinelle): A crystal form of an oxide of manganese and aluminum, with good fire; its colors include red, black, green, yellow, blue, purple, brown and pink.

Stamatopetra: Lapis lazuli.

Star: A stone in which light forms intersecting lines that move with the light (also faked by various means, but detectable by a good jeweler or a good gem-fan), which almost must be cut cabochon to show well. Usually the star is of two or three lines – four or six points, but it may be eight, ten or twelve points, depending on the crystal structure of the gem. See garnet, rose quartz, ruby, sapphire, seal sapphire.

Succinite: (Succinum): Amber.

Suisho: Rock crystal.

Sunstone: This transparent red to yellow stone reflects tiny spangles in its depths because of microscopic inclusions of hematite.

Tama: Jade.

Tanos: Green turquoise, yellowish to middle green, never too dark. Spring-green is most prized.

Tanzanite: A rare gem of zoisite, at its best transparent, intense electric blue with blazing magenta planes and flashes. The most spectacular of all blue crystals. When used in conjunction with the gate spell, a tanzanite talisman protects the wizard from the aging effects. The talisman also enhances *banishment* spells, enabling the caster to invoke the spell as if he were 2d4 levels higher.

Tataya: Topaz.

Tauridan: Blue topaz.

Tiger's eye: A form of quartz that is fibrous, as asbestos, but hard, compact and brittle. It shines in bands of honey and gold tones, with the grain. Red tiger's eye is in tones of dull red-orange to russet. Blue-gray tones give hawk's eye or falcon's eye. Tiger's-eye can be used in spells to foretell dangers coming over the ground. Red tiger's eye warns of menace approaching underfoot, like landsharks (bulettes).

Topaz: Classically a transparent sherry yellow, but other colors occur such as pale blue, pink, orange-yellow, tawny (dark sherry brown), red, or the

most common—clear, colorless topaz. Green is the rarest hue.

Tormali: Red carnelian.

Tourmaline: A common silicate crystal of green, violet, yellow, orange, red, or blue. Tourmaline can shade between colors in one crystal, from one end to the other, or from core to outside. Tourmalines can be used as replacement components for *repulsion* spells.

Turquoise: At best a uniform sky blue or, rarely, a rich spring green. Extreme sunlight and heat cause it to fade to gray or yellow. It is porous, and perspiration also mars the color. As an amulet on the bridle of an animal, it prevents stumbling; on a person, it prevents tripping or falling, providing a +2 bonus to Dexterity checks or saving throws against falling off roofs, out windows, down holes or cliffs, off bridges and ropes, and so forth. A bit of enchanted turquoise attached to the base of an arrowhead affords a +1 bonus to hit.

Uknu: Lapis lazuli.

Ultramarine: Lapis lazuli.

Umina: Emerald.

Vermeille: Any orange-red stone, as ruby, spinel, zircon, or garnet,

Watermelon stone: A freakish tourmaline whose crystal has a green "skin" around a red or pink core. Sliced and polished, it looks like a round of watermelon.

Waterstone: Moonstone.

Yaaqoot: Hyacinth.

Yaseuma: Jade.

Yu: Jade.

Zafiro: Sapphire.

Zakuroishi: Garnet.

Zamurrad: Emerald.

Zarqun (zargun): Zircon.

Za-tu-mush-gir: Green serpentine.

Zhenzhu: Pearl.

Zijingsede: Amethyst.

Zircon: A clear hard stone found in red, orange, yellow, green, and—very rarely—blue. The last might turn brown

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on exposure to sunlight but then reverts to blue when carefully heated to the proper temperature. Heat treatment can turn many yellow or brown zircons colorless or blue. Bright red zircon counteracts insomnia and might enhance the effect of sleep spells.



Holly Ingraham, a full-time author, lives in Honolulu with husband, Patrick, and feline editor, Strider, who only steps on the keys when she's writing stuff that ought to be erased.

THE DRAGON OF VSTAIVE PEAK

IF KINGS AND HEROES REPRESENT THE PRESENT OF THE LAND KNOWN AS CERILIA—the setting of the AD&D® BIRTHRIGHT® campaign—then dragons stand for its past. Even the immortal elves cannot remember a time when dragons were young or plentiful in Cerilia, and tales from other parts of Aebrynis do not indicate that these great creatures fare any better on the world's other continents. But still, a few dragons do remain. Even the youngest of them is nearly a millennia and a half old. The eldest remaining, who can say? And what has kept it hidden from the land for so long?

And what has woken it now?

The dragon of Vstaive Peak—known to local legend as "Vore Lekiniskiy," or "Master Fire Worm"—has been nothing more than an ancient tale of smoke and rumor for longer than the barbaric humans of the land have dwelt in the region. Once, he simply served as an explanation for the occasional earthquakes that rocked the mountains between the Raven's realm and the free land of Yeninskiy. But now it has been proven that "Master Fire Worm" is frighteningly real.

The Awakening

The black-clad troops of the awnshegh known as the Raven moved quickly toward the high mountain pass between Vstaive Peak and the less hills below. Their timing was perfect. A winter storm, perhaps summoned by their master's magic, drove the Vos of Yeninskiy into their homes and kept them there. The winds broke on the foothills of the mountain, strangely leaving the passes open for the quick march. The commanders drove their troops through the night, camping briefly and only in darkness, lest some brave border guard from below spot a speck of fire where none should be.

The orog and human army took what refuge it could in the deep caves of

by Ed Stark

illustrated by

Dan Burr

Vstaive Peak. Mercenaries, bought and paid for by the Raven, they cared little for the legends of haunted caverns and dragons out of the past. Even when the ground began to shake beneath them, the army only settled in to endure what could only be a short tremor before they could move on.

But they were wrong. The ground shook, and moved, and rumbled. The bravest of the officers tried to organize a retreat down to the foothills on either side, to avoid the shifting rock and the falling boulders. Most simply fled or cast themselves behind larger stones, hoping to be spared amid the avalanche. But no precaution was enough to bear what followed.

From out of the side of the mountain—not out of a cave or a hidden pass, but out of the mountain itself—a giant, clawed paw rose amid the tumult of the army. Right up under one commander's feet it rose, then smashed down, crushing her guard and throwing her screaming down the mountainside.

Higher up the mountain, a cave opened where none had been before, and a rumble that sounded more like a roar ushered forth. In terror, those nearest the mountains "mouth" fell on their faces rather than flee. A scalding breath cleansed the life from their bodies and their bodies from the mountain.

Of the handful of soldiers near enough to see the disaster yet far enough away to escape the wrath of the mountain, only a few survived to report to the Raven the destruction of their army. It is said the old awnshegh, old enough to be one of Azrai's Lost, sat down heavily in his castle and wondered at the tale. He allowed his officers to live after their failure, so awestruck was he, and the Raven has not ordered another attack on Yeninskiy yet—at least not through the passage of Vstaive Peak.

A Tale from the Past

Many legends surround the infancy and adolescence of the land known as Cerilia and the world of Aebrynis. It has, most recently, been discovered that before elves walked the continent where humans now rule, races of giants and great monsters lived. Little is known of the Age of Monsters in Cerilia, but it has been said that the dragons of the land once vied with the giants for dominance. They met to parlay, to ally, and to battle.



BURR

Since the disaster of Vstaive Peak, the Raven has searched for any tale that can lead him to understand how the borders of his land were "blessed" with the presence of an apparently ancient Cerilian dragon. While the awnshegh has made no effort to pass along any tales or histories he learns, stories do get out. The tale of Vore Lekiniskiy is growing.

No one knows how old "Master Fire Worm" might be, but it is known that no dragon has lived in these mountains since the Battle of Mount Deismaar and the coming of humans to Vosgaard. Through his magics and his spies, the Raven has learned that even before Deismaar, when dragons were occasionally seen in the skies over Cerilia, not one would fly within a hundred miles of this land. Indeed, the Flight of Dragons that arrived to the last battle between Azrai's forces and the humans he wished to dominate is known to have flown around the land that became Yeninskiy, settling near enough to the forests of Cwmb Bheinn to cause a panic among the elves there.

It was elven legend that led the Raven to his next discovery. The dragons of Cerilia have always been loners, even when they were more plentiful. Meeting occasionally to mate and only staying with their young long enough to raise them to adolescence (with the exception of Weyrzak the Thunderer, another legend told in *DRAGON® Magazine* #230), they avoid each other. For the most part. Apparently, the dragon that became known as Vore Lekiniskiy was the exception that proved the rule.

The Domination of dragons

The most recent rumor to reach the Raven's ears tells of one dragon that rose to prominence many millennia ago, after the Age of Monsters but before the rise of elvenkind. This dragon saw the decline of his kind on Cerilia and the rise of lesser races and decided to do something about it. Mustering all his power, he began to visit other dragons—in their lairs, or on their occasional hunts—and talk to them. Instead of driving him off (as is draconian custom) or fleeing him outright (which is also draconian custom when one is confronted by an obviously superior foe), these dragons listened. And so they fell and were doomed. They

fell under the sway of Vore Lekiniskiy—Master Fire Worm.

Vore Lekiniskiy possessed magical power surpassing even that of his highly magical race. He proved able to charm younger dragons, bending their wills to his own. Using them as a vanguard, he cut a swath through southern Cerilia that is still remembered in the soil of the barren deserts and blasted wastes of some of the Khinasi lands to this day.

Those dragons Vore could not master became his enemies. Most died or fled Cerilia entirely. It is said the Sea of Dragons gamed its name from dragons who, wounded, collapsed into the ocean and died, causing a foul steam to rise up from the sea for months afterward. "Romanticized legend" or not, it is certain that many dragons died fighting or fleeing Master Fire Worm's onslaught.

Unlikely Allies

During the legendary "Age of Monsters," it is said that dragons warred with giants and other huge creatures for the domination of Cerilia. It may be that sometime during the end of this age, the old gods of Cerilia were created, the elves were born, and the huge beasts and giants lost their dominance—it may not. But, whatever the case, the remaining dragons of Cerilia needed help to destroy Vore Lekiniskiy. They turned to the remaining civilized giants.

As few and far between as the dragons of Cerilia are now, the civilized giant nations left on the land were loathe to aid the dragons in their quest—until Master Fire Worm turned his breath on their kin. Using magics not seen on Cerilia since, they and the remaining dragons destroyed Vore's dragon allies and drove him back, almost to the end of the continent. But they could not destroy him, for Master Fire Worm still possessed more power than all of them combined. At the last, he used this power to save himself. Fleeing the battle, he dove into the mountains of southern Vosgaard and disappeared—magically entering one of the high mountains and merging with it so that his magic could not be detected amidst the background mebhaighl of the land. Unable to find him and seek their revenge, the remaining dragons and their giant allies eventually gave up and left.

But Vore Lekiniskiy could not return to power. Damaged and drained by his battles and his failures, Master Fire Worm had to use the last of his energy to hide from his enemies. When they left, he found he had waited too long to reemerge from his hiding place. He tried to draw himself up from the mountain but found the land wrapped around him, entwining him, and merging with his very essence. Horrified and mortally angry, Master Fire Worm found he could no longer master his own body—his roars became rumblings, his struggles earthquakes, and his magic a part of the land itself.

In the millennia since, Vore has occasionally stirred, giving rise to the legends of Vstaive Peak and its "dragon," but he has never been able to extricate himself from the mountain. Indeed, his recent attack on the Raven's troops is the most active he has been in centuries—perhaps a sign that he has gained the ability to free himself (at least partly) from his hiding place. If so, Vore Lekiniskiy could prove a dangerous addition to an already war-tom region.

Treasure Tales of Vstaive Peak

Wherever there are stories of dragons there are legends of treasure. Even a tale as dubious as the one surrounding Vore Lekiniskiy has spawned its share. The following rumors of treasure have found their way around the Cerilian courts and to the ears of adventurers:

❖ **Orbs of draconic influence.** Vore Lekiniskiy certainly earned the moniker "Master Fire Worm." It is said that his eyes each function similarly to *orbs of draconic influence*. They can shift the reaction of any Cerilian dragon by up to ten levels (on Table 59: Encounter Reactions) and no dragon can attack a character holding one of Vore Lekiniskiy's eyes unless the dragon is first attacked.

❖ **Magical tongue.** It is said that anyone who eats a piece of Vore Lekiniskiy's tongue and makes a successful saving throw vs. poison can speak with the power of *suggestion* for an entire turn. Those who fail the save suffer 3d10 hp damage.

❖ **Jewels.** While Vore Lekiniskiy's hide has been merged with Vstaive Peak for millennia, when he frees himself (even

temporarily), his skin becomes more draconian. Vore's skin is encrusted with great jewels and gems. Anyone daring enough to search an area of the mountain where Master Fire Worm has recently emerged might find large, valuable gems amid the upturned rocks and avalanche detritus. It is said that each gem possesses some sort of non-lasting magical power (much like a potion—when the gem is clutched in both hands, the power activates), but some bear curses. All are extremely valuable.

The problem with treasure hunting on Vstaive Peak is obvious: the most valuable treasure comes only from Vore Lekiniskiy's own body—and Master Fire Worm, even in his changed state, should be near impossible to harm. Fortunately, there are other ways to use Vore Lekiniskiy's power in a campaign.

Master Fire Worm in Your Campaign

Even if you are not running or playing in a *BIRTHRIGHT* campaign, a dragon as unusual as Vore Lekiniskiy can be useful. A dragon, imprisoned for millennia in a mountainside, is awakening. He is throwing off his mountain bonds and struggling to be free. All creatures of magical nature in the area (especially other dragons) will be aware of this disturbance—even if they do not know the cause.

While this will cause the most cautious of the magic-sensitive to flee the area, the bravest and most greedy will investigate. In a Cerilian campaign, this means wizards, adventurers, and magical creatures converging on the Vosgaard lands of the Raven and human-ruled Yeninskiy. In other campaigns, other magical and magic-driven creatures begin to investigate an area of the world that probably hasn't had its share of magical happenings in many centuries.

The locals will react accordingly. Even if they do not believe the legends of Master Fire Worm and the awakening of Vstaive Peak, they recognize the problems a convergence of highly magical, high-powered characters and creatures will mean to the region. Most will try to prevent adventurers and monsters from intruding, while others try to profit by their presence.

The Doom of Vore Lekiniskiy

Fyodor Drakesny, a bleded Vos, believed in his heart that the slayer of Vore Lekiniskiy would emerge as a king of kings, with the power to unite the tribes of the Heartless Waste. Drakesny is one of countless scions who knew the legend of Vore Lekiniskiy and resented the dragon's defending their mountain border from the incursions of the Raven. He despised the notion of a great lizard commanding his fate, and he envied the terror instilled by a mere mention of its name.

Drakesny heard the tale of a Vos regent who wounded Vore Lekiniskiy with a great war spear. The weapon, *Vekiyav*, was supposedly returned to the capital of Vstaive, dripping with hot blood. The regent himself perished, but the spear—knocked from his grasp—was recovered as the injured wyrm sank back into its mountain facade.

For ages, the great spear has stood in the hall of the ruling tsarevo, free to any scion who would use it to slay the Dragon of Vstaive Peak. Few dared to risk their lives, despite the spear's supposed powers. But Drakesny knew that Vore Lekiniskiy had cause to fear *Vekiyav*. He dreamt a riddle once: "He who wields *Vekiyav* and lives must be a man of blood, not a bleded man." Drakesny took this riddle to mean that he, a bleded scion who had never been defeated in battle, could defeat Vore Lekiniskiy with the spear in hand. Thus he paid tribute to the ruling tsarevo and bore *Vekiyav* to his death.

The spear returned to the tsarevo's hall with stories of Drakesny's spectacular demise. The riddle whispered to Drakesny in a dream has been heard by

The Raven will want to eliminate Vore Lekiniskiy or—better yet—enslave him. He knows the power of the Cerilian dragons and would love to add one to his arsenal. If he could obtain even one of Vore's eyes, he would become the premiere awnsheghlien on the continent. Even in a world without awnshegh or dragons of Cerilian caliber, such an artifact would make any warlord powerful.

Finally, Vore Lekiniskiy is starting to remember what freedom felt like. He has incredible magical powers and a desire for revenge against the world that con-

spires many others in Yeninskiy, but its secret is seldom understood. Any living man may wield *Vekiyav*, but no bleded scion or regent can use the spear's greater powers. Only an unbleded commoner can employ all of the spear's magical abilities.

Characters who choose to face the dragon may offer tribute to the tsarevo and take *Vekiyav* from its resting place in the tsarevo's hall. When wielded by a trained Vos warrior, the *war spear* +3 acts as a medium lance (inflicting double damage in the hands of a mounted, charging warrior). In addition, the barbs on the spear's head embed in an opponent whenever the wielder rolls maximum possible damage (whether mounted or on foot). The embedded barbs inflict an additional 1d6+1 hp damage when removed. In melee, the wielder may simply rip the spear free of his victim on his next attack (no attack roll required). Wounds caused by the spear do not heal naturally; magical healing is required to restore damage. The spear has the power to *remove paralysis* by touch and can *call lightning* thrice/week, but only in the appropriate weather conditions.

In the hands of an unbleded but skilled warrior, the spear affords full protection from normal and magical fire (including the Cerilian dragon's breath weapon attack) and inflicts double damage against dragons and their kin. It also protects the wielder against the effects of the dragon's *fear* aura—a potent item indeed in the battle against the Dragon of Vstaive Peak. To this day, no unbleded warrior has challenged the dragon with spear in hand.

spires to trap him. As he grows more and more aware, he may use the greed and curiosity of the small mammals poking around his prison to initiate his release. If he is even partially successful, it could spell doom for the lands around him.



*Ed Stark has spent the past three years writing *BIRTHRIGHT* material and is currently working on new *ALTERNITY*® and *STAR*DRIVE*™ projects. He hopes the world will slow down Real Soon Now.*

Vore Lekiniskiy, Master Fire Worm

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Vstaive Peak
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-genius (20)
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	- 7
MOVEMENT:	Special
HIT DICE:	25 (169 hp)
THAC0:	1
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 or special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d12+10/1d12+10/2d10+10 or special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon, spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Fear aura, gaze, spells, invulnerability
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	75%
SIZE:	G (exact size unknown)
MORALE:	Champion (15)
XP VALUE:	28,000

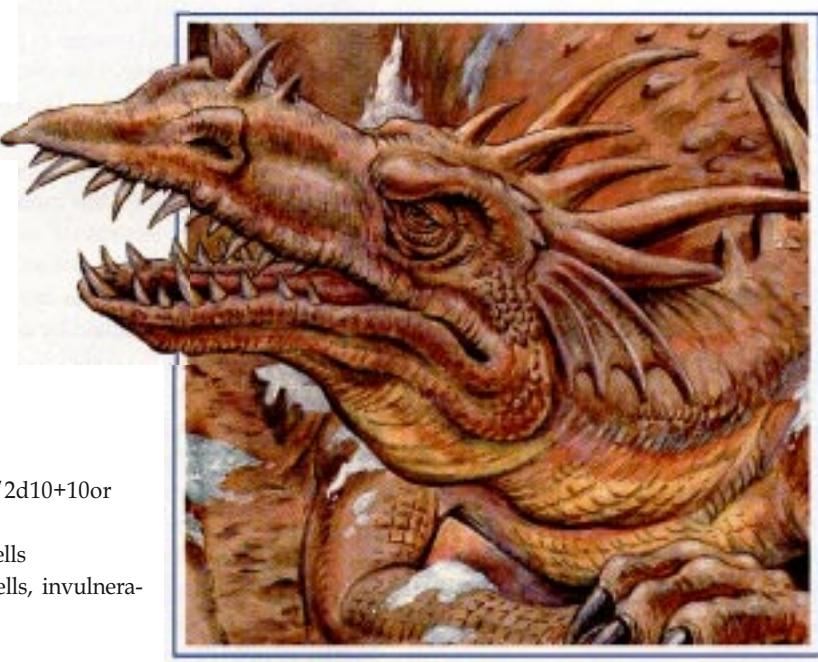
Magically merged with the mountain known as Vstaive Peak, when Vore Lekiniskiy emerges, he only does so partially. His scaled skin is dotted with dirt, rock, and gems. White bone shows through patches where flesh has not completely returned, giving him the appearance of undeath. But Vore Lekiniskiy is alive, trapped in a madness of his own making.

Vore Lekiniskiy attacks using his foreclaws and bite, or he can execute any of the special attacks described in the "Dragon" entry of the MONSTROUS MANUAL™ tome except those that require flight or quick movement—Vore Lekiniskiy is tied to the mountain.

Combat: When Vore Lekiniskiy emerges from the mountainside, his head and either one or both of his claws rip free simultaneously. He may be able to free more of his body, but it is thought he cannot bring more than half of it out at any one time. He can attack with both his claws and his bite in the same round.

Vore's breath weapon is like the erupting of a volcano. It is not just fire—but lava and molten rock as well. Because of his tie to the mountain, Vore may use his fiery breath once every three rounds, but it causes him 10 hp internal damage for every blast beyond the first. His breath is a 30' cone that extends at its widest point to 15 feet. It inflicts 25d6+25 hp damage on anything within that area, though victims may attempt to save vs. breath weapon for half. Nonmagical and magical objects must save vs. magical fire or be instantly burned to a crisp.

On the following round, anything or any creature within the path of Vore's breath weapon must make a saving throw again or be overcome by the lava that rushes down the mountainside (Vore is smart enough to never breathe uphill.) The lava inflicts



15d6+15 hp damage to anything in a 15' wide area within 100 feet of Vore's snout.

Vore cannot hunt or move from the mountain, but he can emerge anywhere on the mountain in 2d4 rounds. He can retreat the same way and at the same pace. He can attack while retreating, but he usually retracts his head first, making his claw attacks at 4 until they return to the mountain.

Vore's gaze attack forces opponents to save vs. paralyzation at 4 or be paralyzed for 1d3 turns. He uses this to trap unwary trespassers so that he may occasionally feed (he grows hungrier as he wins free of the mountain). He seldom troubles with the power to automatically use *geas*, *suggestion*, or *feebblemind* on anyone trapped in his gaze, but this may change.

When Vore erupts from the mountainside, he causes an earthquake that forces everyone on the mountain to save vs. paralyzation or be thrown to the ground. The DM may allow modifiers to the saving throw based on how close the characters are to where Vore is erupting. Any character that sees Master Fire Worm ready for battle must save vs. spell at 4 or succumb to a *fear* spell.

Vore Lekiniskiy can cast wizard spells at the 20th level of ability and has access to nearly any spell available on Cerilia. Recently, there is evidence that Vore has access to realm magic as well (see the BIRTHRIGHT Campaign Set), though this has yet to be confirmed. Fortunately, Vore seldom uses his magical energy to cast spells—he is too concerned with freeing himself from the mountain.

Ecology: Trapped in the mountainside, Vore Lekiniskiy had forgotten about such things as "hunger" and "pain" for centuries. Now, he is remembering, and the dragon of Vstaive Peak grows increasingly frustrated with his existence. Chaotic evil in every way, this frustration could turn to mass destruction at any time.

Here there be *dragons...*

... and spells, magical items and monsters, character kits, weapons and powers, and proficiencies ...

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To this day,
Mornauguth seeks
two things:
revenge on those
who transformed her
and recovery of her
true form through
the grace of Shar.

by
Ed Greenwood

Illustrated by
Storm Cook

THE MOOR DRAGON

Mornauguth

T

HIS YOUNG-ADULT GREEN DRAGON is known, to those who pass or dwell near the Misty Forest, to lair to the northeast, in an area of steep-sided, breakneck wooded ravines. She preys on the wild deer that roam the High Moor. Occasionally she splices her diet with a caravan or adventuring band or two, and once a month or so takes wing eastward, disappearing for a tenday at a time.

Though adventurers have more than once searched for the Moor Dragon's lair, they've never found any treasure.

In reality, Mornauguth is a human transformed, trapped in green dragon shape by rivals. She was once a priestess of Shar—young, pretty, and possessed of almost reckless ambition. She rose swiftly through the ranks of a temple to the Mistress of the Night located in the backlands of Amn, making many enemies along the way. Some of her rivals within the clergy wove dark spells that bound Mornauguth into dragon form—whereupon she was attacked by a real dragon into whose lair she'd been lured before transformation. She slew that wyrm, though she was sorely wounded. To this day, Mornauguth seeks two things: revenge on those who transformed her and recovery of her true form through the grace of Shar.

In hopes that the goddess will grant her human form, Mornauguth gives all the wealth she gains to the Dark Embrace temple in Amn, and she flies off at least once a month to perform some daring dark deed (usually a raid on a city's palace, jail, or state building) in the name of Shar.

On rare occasions, clergy from the Dark Embrace request Mornauguth's service as a steed or aid in an attack on a strong target (usually a Selûnite temple), and she has thus far given it willingly. How long she continues to do so without any sign of Shar's favor remains to be seen.

Morna Auguth was a brilliant but willful child. From her earliest days she fought with those in authority whom she--accurately, if not prudently—saw as dolts. She grew up as a wild, thieving runaway in the southern backlands of Amn, living on her wits, daring, agility, and (whenever caught) her beauty, until she was captured by a priest of Shar to be his personal slave.

This clergyman, Ablaer the Dark Goad, intended to cut out Morna's tongue and blind her once he'd tired of her. He put her in the kitchens of the Dark Embrace to work out her days as a drudge.

After several years of servitude, Morna duped Ablaer's superior into believing that the Dark Goad of the Embrace was organizing a coup within the temple, and she had the great satisfaction of seeing her cruel overmaster



PARALYZED AND SPELLBOUND, Morna Auguth was forced into the shape of a green dragon by means of a powerful and little-known spell, and that magic was lengthened and strengthened by the spells of no less than fourteen priestesses.

maimed and broken by temple torturers. Ablaer was a long time dying, and Morna whispered words of triumphant hatred over his helpless form for all the long days of his torment.

She found, however, that she'd merely traded one cruel master for another, when Ablaer's superior, the Coroanim Belvim Natrather, took her as his own plaything. Morna swiftly came to see that she now stood in the shadow of an additional peril: all Dark Embrace clergy considered her a treacherous informant. Every one of them took delight in wounding or mistreating her whenever they could find her alone. Morna began looking for a way out.

Her opportunity to escape presented itself within a year, when the Coroanim journeyed to a smaller, hidden Sharran temple in eastern Amn. Moondown House was a monastic community founded in the crumbling remnants of an old keep near Torbold. Its small but fervent priesthood were planning bloody night raids on the temples of all other gods in Amn, and they were training jaded, outlaw, and homeless youths into a fanatical strike force, the Slayers of Shar.

The Coroanim wanted this force to become his own personal "Bringers of the Purge." He came with the might of his rank in long service to Shar, and the mustered magic of twenty-odd senior priests of the Embrace, to persuade the Dolorim of the House to submit to the authority of the Coroanim and make Moondown House a chapterhouse of the Dark Embrace.

The folk of Moondown were outraged but dared not show it. Their eldest clergy made a desperate plan to bring down the Coroanim and his most senior priests by means of slow-acting, subtle poisons — knowing they faced almost certain discovery and painful death. Morna (sent by her master to spy on them) saw this as a golden chance for revenge, resolving to make the poisonings so frequent and widespread that the entire party from the Embrace would succumb before any confrontation could occur.

Without telling anyone, she set about her plan, letting herself be seen at work by the elder Moondown clergy. When all the folk of the Embrace lay dead, Morna presented herself to the Moondown priests, saying she'd been guided by Shar herself in what she'd done.

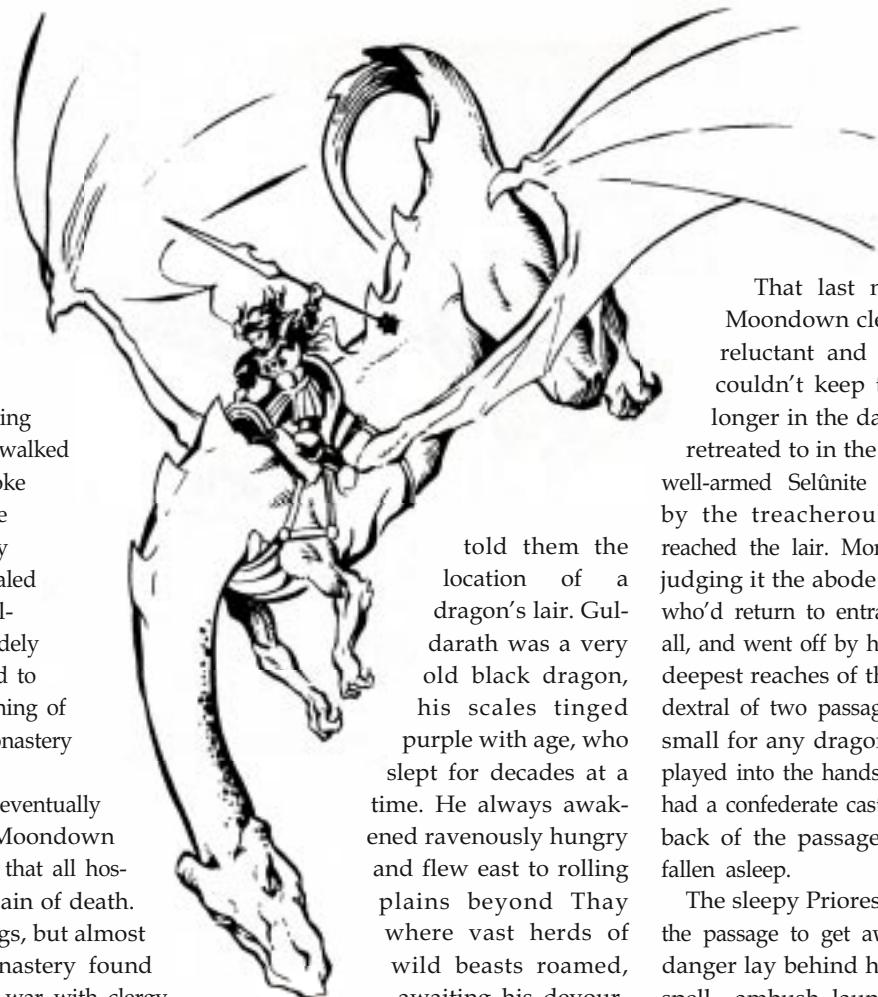
Grateful and impressed, the Moondown priests adopted Morna into their ranks, immediately testing her by giving her the task of making Morna's former colleagues into zombies under her command and directing them to carry out the dirty drudge jobs of life in a monastery. Morna accepted the dung-shoveling, floor-scrubbing, and gardening without demur. Over the seasons that followed, she practiced iron self-control, always doing and saying the right thing, rising steadily in rank and influence within the Moondown clergy.

Some years later, disease claimed two senior priests. Almost immediately thereafter, a dispute with adventurers resulted in the death of one of the most powerful priestesses of the House.

Moondown erupted into a frenzy of intrigues, confrontations, and stabbings in dark corridors. Morna was careful to keep her tongue still and her zombies close, using them to defend her from several murder attempts. Once many of the clergy had fallen, she emerged from her seclusion to challenge and slay her chief remaining rival, assuming the office of Prioress, third in rank over all the House.

Many ambitious priestesses who found themselves suddenly beneath her were furious. Morna survived no less than a dozen attempts to slay her over the year that followed. The tendency of stone blocks to fall from the walls of the ever-growing temple whenever she walked below became a wry joke among Morna and the novices, but she openly struck down two revealed conspirators in a spell-battle, and she was widely (and correctly) believed to have caused the drowning of a third rival in the monastery cesspool.

Morna's superiors eventually tired of the drain on Moondown resources and ordered that all hostilities cease—upon pain of death. There were grumblings, but almost immediately the monastery found itself locked in all-out war with clergy of Selûne who'd moved into the area. Moondown House was badly damaged, and many of its clergy fled and were forced to adopt a roving lifestyle of striking at foes and then fleeing. Upland Amn became one large battlefield (certain bored merchants in Athkatla even began to wager over who would prevail), and Morna became a feared war-leader, so successful that her Moondown rivals feared



told them the location of a dragon's lair. Guldarath was a very old black dragon, his scales tinged purple with age, who slept for decades at a time. He always awakened ravenously hungry and flew east to rolling plains beyond Thay where vast herds of wild beasts roamed, awaiting his devouring jaws. Usually he

over-ate, then flew ponderously and sleepily home again to return to long, shining, and memory-studded dreams.

When Morna's band happened to be near the lair, one of its priestesses daringly awakened the dragon at dusk by hurling spells at its very nose. Guldarath awakened, too groggy to reflect on what had awakened him, and flew off to feed.

That last news aroused the Moondown clergy, and even the reluctant and suspicious Morna couldn't keep them camped any longer in the damp hollow they'd retreated to in the face of strong and well-armed Selûnite warbands. Guided by the treacherous priestess, they reached the lair. Morna was suspicious, judging it the abode of a living dragon who'd return to entrap and doom them all, and went off by herself to hide in the deepest reaches of the dungeon, in the dextral of two passages she thought too small for any dragon to traverse. That played into the hands of the traitor, who had a confederate cast a fiery spell at the back of the passage once Morna had fallen asleep.

The sleepy Prioreess scrambled out of the passage to get away from whatever danger lay behind her—straight into a spell-ambush launched by her own clergy. Paralyzed and spellbound, Morna Auguth was forced into the shape of a green dragon by means of a powerful and little-known spell, and that magic was lengthened and strengthened by the spells of no less than fourteen priestesses.

Mornauguth still hunts those clergy today, seeking to compel each one to remove her binding before she devours them. At the time, she was powerless to prevent them from fleeing, trailing mocking laughter. She was left alone to await the return of the owner of the treasure beneath her, knowing that he could only perceive her presence as a domain challenge.

Her paralysis ended scant moments before Guldarath appeared. A battle erupted that shook the very mountain around the true wyrm and the transformed priestess. Too startled to draw back down the narrow way and let fly with spells from a distance, the ancient black dragon pounced with jaws and

A

ornauguth still hunts those clergy today, seeking to compel each one to remove her binding before she devours them.

that when the struggle ended in a Sharran victory (as all true followers of Shar knew it would), Morna Auguth would rule Moondown House.

They could find nothing strong enough to use against her—until a local

The Moondown priestess hurried back to Morna's encamped band to say she'd found a cave she'd played in as a child, one that would serve as an admirable stronghold for them—and that it was full of heaped treasure.

fangs, and magic crackled between them as they struggled wing to wing and scale to scale in the dimness.

Morna knew she was fighting for her life, not coins or a cave to hold them, and she cared not if she ruined the lair or buried the hoard. As the two dragons rolled over and over, clawing and biting, lashes of her tail brought down many dagger-like rocks onto her foe, battering him and ultimately breaking his back. Mercilessly she carved and cooked the agonized black dragon, until Guldarath died atop his own hoard. Then she turned to hunt the Moondown clergy who'd trapped her into this battle.

She found none that night, or the next day. Over the months that followed, however, she took a heavy toll of Shar-
ran faithful, driven by rage and fear of being trapped forever in dragon form.

Self-control has returned to Morna over the years. Rage still smoulders in her heart, but she's begun to use her new dragon form to greater effect. Mornauguth retains her human spellcasting ability rather than that of a green dragon; as an eighth level priestess, she commands a roster of 3, 3, 3, 2 and (because of her shape) is limited to spells with verbal and simple somatic components. She is much heartened that Shar continues to grant her magic.

The spell that entrapped her gave Morna the breath weapon and other physical capabilities of a green dragon, and over the years she's grown accustomed to her dragon body. She can even prowl stealthily now; her thirst for secrets and knowing what's happening in the land often drives her to go creeping up to campfires by night to listen in on intrigues. More than one sleepy merchant stumbling into the woods to find tent, trail, or privy has had the—sometimes final—fright of his life, upon stumbling over the snout of a glitter-eyed green dragon, waiting still, silent and terrible in the night.

From such nocturnal eavesdropping, Mornauguth often learns routes and timings of livestock drives and herd hunts—so she can help herself to such abundant food, often under the nose of a dragon whose domain she's poaching on. She's wise enough not always to

dine in one locale, which would result in drovers avoiding that area or adventuring bands being hired en masse to deal with her. She knows the backlands of Amn better than most living beings, and she has a shrewd overview of Sword Coast caravan shipping. She dislikes the sea and being spotted

arrives unannounced, or creeps near Kalnar's farm of nights, using her spells to spy on her agent—whom she trusts about as far as he could throw her, tail and all...

Mornauguth has always swung between a shrewd biding and a bold recklessness that sees her time and again

If one believes the bards, every thief or doomed dwarven treasury-guard in the North has headed for the Rockshaws as fast as possible...

while over it by one of the wyrms she's seen flying offshore. When she contemplates fighting above waves she could be dragged into and drowned in, true fear colors the Moor Dragon's thoughts. While exploring, she was once surprised by a dragon turtle that shot its neck up to bite her, almost pitching her under the waves—where she would have been truly in its clutches.

According to the sage Velsaert of Baldur's Gate, the Moor Dragon's relationships with other wyrms have been "a series of skirmishes between a reckless, ambitious interloper who cares for treasure only as a means to further her schemes, and wyrms defending hoard and domain in the traditional sense."

Though Velsaert dismisses reports of the Moor Dragon actually hiring adventurers to aid her, these reports are true: from time to time, to accomplish a daring raid on the foes of Shar, Mornauguth hires established bands of adventurers to carry out diversionary attacks or take-what-they-can raids.

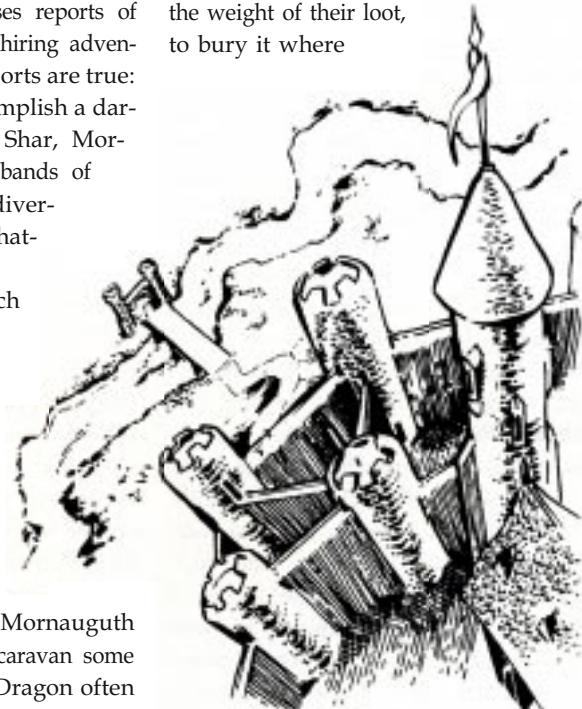
Her chief agent in such dealings is Temrojan Kalnar, an old, retired wine merchant, with no friends and fewer scruples, who dwells on a walled farm northwest of Crim-mor. The two can signal each other with *sending stones* placed by Mornauguth (who seized them from a caravan some years ago), but the Moor Dragon often

plunge instantly into action to take advantage of opportunity.

Mornauguth's Lair

The Moor Dragon lairs in the broken country of the northeastern High Moor, due east from Daggerford and southeast of Secomber, in "the Rockshaws," a trackless region of sharp stony ridges and narrow, deep gullies linking springs with small cauldron lakes and sinkholes.

The Rockshaws has acquired a colorful reputation as the home of many ghosts and much buried treasure. If one believes the bards, every thief or doomed dwarf treasury-guard in the North has headed for the Rockshaws as fast as possible under the weight of their loot, to bury it where



monsters roam and inquisitive folk with shovels are thus few. Leucrotta and galeb duhr have always inhabited the Rockshaws, but other beasts come and go.

Mornauguth hasn't bothered to seek out whatever treasures may lie in the Rockshaws, but a steady stream of wary dwarves armed with maps suggests least some hidden gold lies there.

Mornauguth dwells in extensive caverns beneath Greenleaf Vale, at the bottom of a wide, deep shaft (thought by some local gnomes to be an ancient delve rather than a natural feature). This "well" reaches the surface in the heart of

a large stand of old trees in the Rockshaws. The Vale of

Recent successes seem to give Mornauguth cause for quickening hope; Shar seems to have her eye on the dragon that worships her at last.

thick oak, walnut, maple, and chestnut trees was so named by exploring elves because they entirely fill a deep bowl valley, and to a traveler on the ground are invisible until one stands almost on the lip of one of the cliff-walls of the valley. Many incautious adventurers have fallen to their deaths (or to sudden, grievous injury) by blundering right over the edge of a Vale wall in the dark; local leucrotta have been known to deliberately chase foes towards the Vale, trying to force them into a fall on the rocks. Several small, winding trails make perilous journeys down the Vale walls, where the overgrown ruins of several long-abandoned cottages can be seen.

One old bardic ballad claims that Roadaeron, an exiled king of Westgate, in the days when that city had kings, dwelt here in hiding for almost forty years, raising his son Blaervaer to be king. The elderly Roadaeron laid down his life storming the city to put Blaervaer on the throne. The ballad claims (truthfully, according to Elminster) that Blaervaer stole away from his throne when he'd grown old (his latter days embittered by the vicious struggles among his four sons for the throne), leaving his crown behind, and fixed up one of the ruined

cottages with his own hands, to spend his last few years gardening, reading, and talking with the few elves and mages who knew of his excellent parsnip wine and longsighted conversation.

Mornauguth lies in her caverns only when she needs to take shelter from at fierce wintry weather, or when wounded. Sometimes she prays to Shar here of nights, rocketing up the shaft to soar at the stars and cry out to the goddess—but otherwise she is to be found elsewhere, spying on the doings of others or basking on high mountain ledges around Amn, plotting.

The lair itself is said to be little more than a long sleeping-mound of smooth

sand, gathered from the sandbars washed into the cavern by several springs that traverse them. The water of the springs, according to the Harper explorer Morlden "Silentboots," is sweet, cold, and drinkable. Morlden saw no guardians, treasure, nor constructions of any kind; if he'd not daringly used a spying-spell to see Mornauguth dig up her *sending stone* from the sand and then lie down for slumber, he'd not have been able to say for certain if a dragon really laired in the large cavern farthest in from the bottom of the shaft at all. He stresses that other items might well lie buried in the bed of sand, which is at least than six feet thick in all places.

Mornauguth's Domain

Mornauguth seems to ignore the very concept of draconic territory, never defending her own lair nor caring if she offends other wyrms by her roamings. Only fear of being caught over water curtails her wanderings, which are concerned with the doings of the Sharran clergy, rival priesthoods, and other human intrigues, broken by hunting trips and explorative forays far afield.

Mornauguth's domain, if one means which areas she'll defend against dra-

conic foes, would seem to be the Sharran temples of Faerûn (Amn in particular).

The Deeds of Mornauguth

The Moor Dragon's life is devoted to winning back the favor of Shar, thereby regaining her human shape. If she has her druthers, however, she'll end up with the ability to change from human to dragon and back again at will, and live armored in the unfolding fondness of the Mistress of Night as a special agent of the goddess (with special powers to match).

Several recent successes have given Mornauguth cause for quickening hope; Shar seems to have her eye on the dragon that worships her at last.

Mornauguth's Magic

The Moor Dragon commands only one notable magic:

Sending Stone

These lumps of natural, unworked stone are magically linked so that any verbal message of twelve seconds' duration or less spoken by someone touching one stone will instantly be emitted from the second stone, regardless of the distance between the stones (so long as they're on the same plane). Each stone can send two such messages (and receive two) within each 24-hour period; extra messages, or portions of messages beyond the allowed duration, are lost.

XPValue: 500 GPValue: 2,500

Mornauguth's Fate

The Moor Dragon lives dangerously—and loves it. Her boldness and quick wits have carried her through many "certain deaths." One day they won't, and she tests them often—but her chances of becoming a special Servant of Shar seem better with each passing year.

Ed Greenwood enjoys gaming most for the people he's met and the friends he's made. As he puts it, "When I'm among gamers, I'm at home, one crazy person among many—but I'm proud of that. When it comes to gamers, 'crazy' always includes 'intelligent,' and 'understanding,' and 'nice.' What other folks can honestly boast that?"

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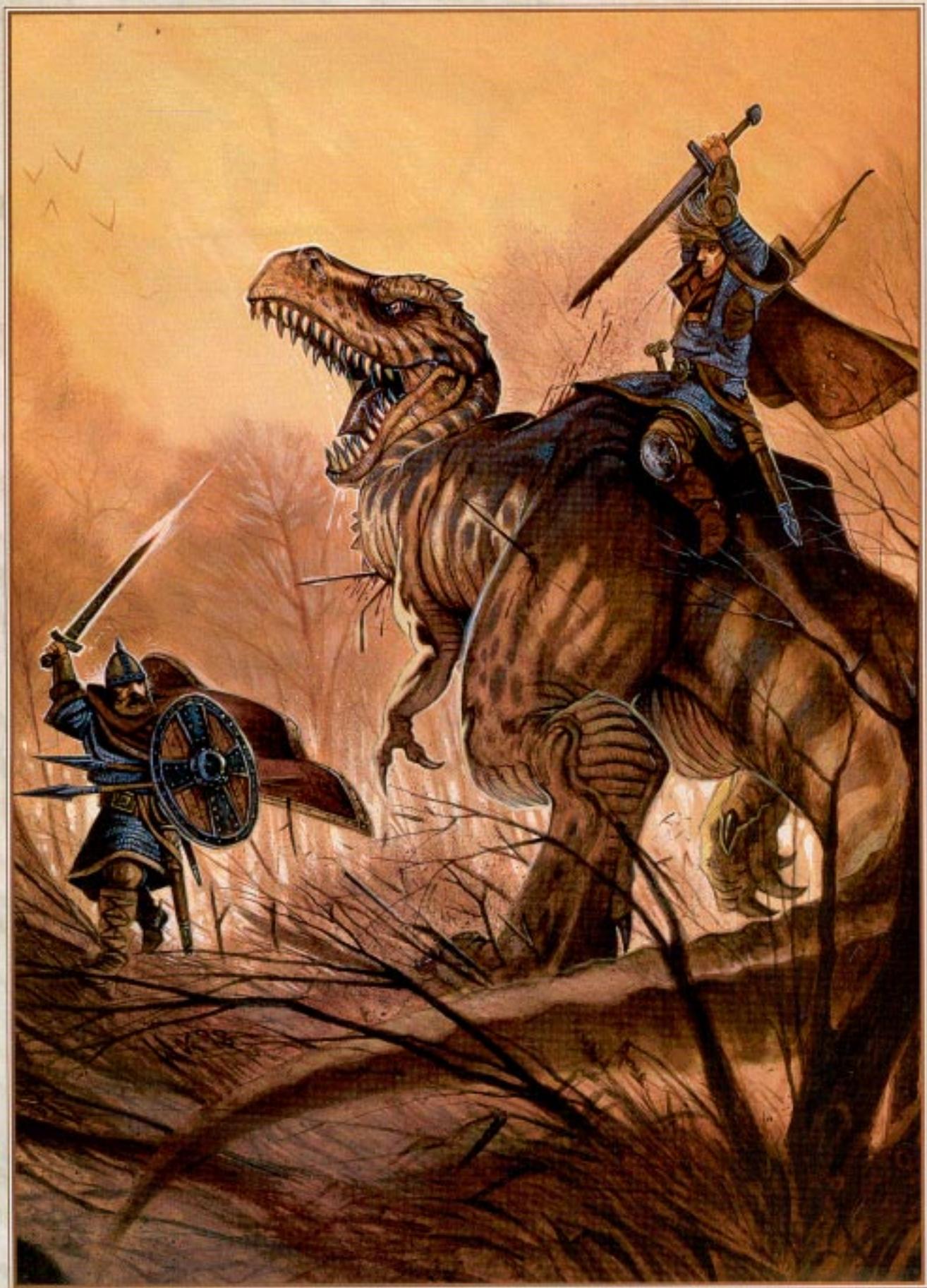
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The Quest for Steel

by Ben Bova

illustrated by
William O'Connor

A Sarmatian, you say?" Sir Bors looked me up and down, sour disbelief plain on his scarred, bearded face. "And what is your name?"

"Orion," I replied. It was the one thing I was certain of. How I came to this time and place I knew not.

"And why are you here?" asked Sir Bors.

We were standing in the dingy courtyard of a hilltop fort named Amesbury, its walls nothing more than a rickety palisade of timber staves. These Britons had tried to build their forts in the way the Roman legions had, but their engineering skills were poor. They stared at the ruins of Roman aqueducts and monuments and thought that the stonework had been done by giants or magicians.

A few dozen men milled about the bare dirt courtyard, some leading horses, a few practicing swordplay with one another. The place smelled of dung and sweat. And fear.

"I came to serve King Arthur against the Saxons," I said.

Bors' eyes widened. "King Arthur? You've made him your king, have you?"

I felt confused. "I thought—"

Bors planted both fists on his hips and pushed his scarred face so close to mine that I could smell the stale wine on his breath.

"Ambrosius is our king, Sarmatian! Young Arthur may be his nephew, but the pup's still wet behind the ears. King indeed!"

I said nothing.

Bors grumbled, "His uncle's put him in charge of Amesbury fort here and sent Merlin to watch over him, but that doesn't make him anything more than an inexperienced babe in the woods."

"I . . . I'm sorry," I stammered. "I meant to say King Ambrosius."

Bors snorted with disdain.

My mind was spinning. I remembered Artorius as a skinny, pimply-faced boy, a captive of the Danes when I served Beowulf. I had saved him then, I dimly recalled.

Somewhere in my mind I knew he was to be king of the Britons. But first he would become dux bellorum, battle leader of these island people who had been abandoned by the Roman Empire and left open to invasion by the barbarian Angles and Saxons.

I am Orion. I serve the Creators, those godlike creatures from the far future who send me through spacetime on missions of war and murder. My master is Aten, the golden one, sneering and superior. I have died many times, in many strange and distant places, but always he brings me back, revives me to send me on still another task of pain and danger.

"You are my creature, Orion," he has told me often. "My hunter. I built you, and you will do as I command."

I hate Aten and his mad dreams of controlling all of spacetime to suit his whims. There are other Creators, as well, haughty and demanding, toying with human history like children playing with dolls. Cruel gods and goddesses, all of them.

Except for Anya.

Anya of the gray eyes and supernal beauty. Anya is the only one among those Creators who care at all for their creatures. Who cares for me. I love Anya, and she

loves me. Aten knows this and, vicious with implacable jealousy, sends me far from her, to serve him and die over and over again.

"Well, you're big enough," said Sir Bors, snapping me back to the moment. "Can you fight?"

I smiled tightly. I had led Odysseos' men over the high stone wall of Troy. I had made Mongol warriors gape at my battle prowess. I had helped Beowulf kill Grendel and its mate.

"I can fight," I said.

Sir Bors was wearing only a cracked and stained leather jerkin over his tattered knee-length tunic. But he had a long Celtic broadsword belted at his hip. I was in chain mail and linen tunic, my sword strapped to my back.

Drawing his sword from its leather scabbard, Bors said, "Let me see what you can do."

"Wait!" a young voice cried from behind me. "Let me test him."

I turned and saw a handsome tall nobleman walking toward us, so young that his beard hardly darkened his chin. His eyes were light and clear, his shoulder-length hair almost blond. He was smiling broadly.

"My lord," Bors said, his tone several notches softer than it had been, "this Sarmatian—"

So this was Arthur. He had grown into a strong young man.

"He's got good shoulders, Bors," said Arthur. Then, to me, he added, "Let's see if you know how to use your sword."

Bors objected, "But my lord, you shouldn't engage yourself with a stranger. He might be an assassin, sent to kill you!"

Arthur laughed aloud. He had no fear of an assassin. He did not know that I had murdered men in other eras, at Aten's behest.

A squire, not much younger than Arthur himself, trudged up and handed the battle leader his helmet and shield with the blood-red dragon painted on it. I drew my own sword, heard its steel tongue hiss as it came out into the sunlight. My fingers tightened on its leather-wrapped hilt.

"Where is your helmet, your shield?" Arthur asked as he stood before me. His iron helmet covered his cheeks and had a nosepiece shaped like an upside-down cross.

"I won't need them," I said.

His smile turned down a little. "Pride goes before a fall, Sarmatian."

"Then I will fall," I replied.

Arthur shrugged, then put his shield up and advanced toward me, sword cocked in his right hand.

My senses went into overdrive, as they always do when I face battle. The world around me seemed to slow down, as if everything was happening in a dream. I could see Arthur's bright blue eyes blinking slowly over the rim of his shield. And Sir Bors stepping sideways to keep at my side. His sword was still in his hand, ready to strike me down if I endangered Arthur. I thought he was more worried that Arthur did not have the skill or experience to face a true fighting man, than fearful that I was an assassin.

Arthur swung at me in languid slow motion, a powerful overhand cut that would have sliced me down to the navel if I hadn't danced lightly out of harm's way. He grunted, frowned, and advanced upon me in sluggish slow motion.

I feinted once to the left, then slashed at his shield, splitting it in two with a loud cracking sound. My blade would have taken Arthur's arm off if I hadn't pulled back in time.

Arthur's eyes went wide with surprise. After only a moment's hesitation, he tossed away the broken shield and came at me again. He smashed another mighty overhand slash at me. I parried it easily and his blade shattered into several pieces with a brittle snap.

"Hold!" Bors shouted, sticking his sword between us.

I stepped back.

If Arthur had feared that I would kill him he gave no sign of it. Instead, he tossed away the broken stub of his sword and then reached out for mine.

"That's a fine piece of steel," he said admiringly as I handed the sword to him.

Without thinking of why, I answered, "I know where you can get one that's even better, my lord."



It took an hour and more of talking, but at last Arthur and I set out for the distant lake in search of the sword I promised him. Sir Bors and the other knights were dead set against the king's nephew travelling alone with a stranger from a distant land. Bors complained that the fort might be attacked by Saxon raiders at any time, and Arthur's place was where his uncle had put him. But wizened old Merlin was on my side.

"The Sarmatian brings good fortune to Arthur," the old wizard said, stroking his long gray beard as he spoke. The beard was knotted and filthy, his homespun robe even dirtier, but all the knights and squires stared at him with wide-eyed awe. They would not step closer than five paces to him; Merlin walked through the little fort's dung-dotted courtyard as if protected by a magical aura.

In truth, I saw a burning intelligence in the old man's narrowed eyes, a keen awareness that belied his wrinkled, ragged appearance. Beneath those shaggy gray brows his eyes were shrewd, sharp, penetrating. Was he one of the Creators in disguise?

To satisfy the suspicious knights, Merlin cast a spell to protect Arthur, nothing but hand-waving and muttering as far as I could see. But it seemed to satisfy Sir Bors and the others, at least enough to allow their young leader to leave the fort with me and no one else.

For two days we rode, and I got to know Arthur a little. He was burning for fame and glory. His highest hope was to one day be named dux bellorum: battle leader of his uncle's forces.

Yet, like many an untried youth, he doubted his own abilities.

"I can see it in the faces of Bors and the others," he told me as we camped for the night in a dark, dank forest. The huge, broad-boled trees grew so thickly that much of the day we had been forced to lead our horses afoot. "They

would never follow someone so young."

"They will," I said, "once you prove yourself in battle."

He shook his head mournfully. "The curse of the Britons, friend Orion, is that they will not follow anyone for long."

"They will follow you, my lord. I'm sure of it."

In the darkness of the forest night I heard him make a sound that might have been a sigh. "No, Orion. Look at us! Ambrosius calls himself high king, but who follows him? A handful, that's all. You travel for two days in any direction and you pass through two or three different kingdoms. We have kings every few miles, each of them jealous of all the others."

"No wonder the Saxons can raid and plunder as they wish."

"Yes," he said grimly. "Our people shatter like the sword I used against you. One blow and they break."

He was silent for a moment. Then, "If I could bring all the Britons together, unite all these petty kingdoms . . ."

"You could clear the land of the barbarian invaders," I finished his thought.

This time he sighed unmistakably. "It's a pretty dream, Orion. But only a dream."

The ambition was there. He had the dream. But he needed the courage to make it come true. I could sense that he was longing for the daring, the tenacity, the strength to become the true leader of all the Britons.

Again Arthur fell silent, this time for many moments. At length, he spoke up again.

"That sword of yours," he said, changing the subject because it was too painful for him to continue, "a sword such as that is a rare treasure, Orion. A man would travel to the ends of the earth to get such fine steel for himself."

Like so much else, the art of steel had been lost when the Romans departed.

"You could have taken my sword from me," I said.

He laughed softly as he lay in his blankets. "I'd have to kill you for it, I wager."

Lying on the ground a few feet from him, with the dying embers of our tiny fire between us, I replied, "Not so, my lord; I would give it to you willingly."

It was too dark to see the expression on his face. The night wind keened above us like an evil spirit, cold and harsh, setting the trees to moaning.

"No," Arthur said at last. "If I am meant to drive the Saxons out of our island, I will not do it with another man's steel. I must have my own. Merlin prophesied that I would, when I was just a lad."

He was hardly more than a lad now, yet this young man wanted to drive off the Saxons and other barbarians who had seized most of the coast of what would one day be England.



I dreamed that night, but it was not a dream.

I found myself in an emptiness, a broad featureless plain without hill or tree or even a horizon: nothing but an endless flat plain covered with a softly rolling golden mist stretching out in every direction to infinity.

Vaguely I remembered being there before, in other

lives, other eras. And, just as I expected, I saw a tiny golden glow far off in the distance, like a candle's warm beckoning light, but steady, constant, without a flicker.

I began to walk toward it. I was clad as I had been when awake, in a simple tunic and chain mail. But my sword was gone. Except for the little dagger that Odysseos had given me during our siege of Troy, I was unarmed.

Something drew me to that beacon of light. Despite myself, I began to run toward it. Faster and faster I raced, legs churning through the ground mist, arms pumping, my lungs sucking in air. After what seemed like hours I was gasping, my throat raw, my legs aching from exertion. But I could not stop. I wanted to rest, but I was unable to stop. I was drawn to the light, like an insect obeying an inbuilt command.

The tiny distant glow became a golden sphere, a miniature sun, so bright and hot that I could not look directly at it. I raised my arms to shield my eyes from its glare, yet still I ran, raced toward it as if it were an oasis in a world-covering desert, a magnet pulling me with irresistible force.

At last I could run no more. Soaked with sweat, exhausted, panting as if my lungs would burst, I collapsed onto the strangely yielding ground, still blanketed with the perfumed golden mist.

"Are you tired, Orion?" a mocking voice asked. I knew who it was: Aten, the golden one. My creator.

The blazing bright golden sphere slowly dissolved to reveal him. He stood over me, strong and handsome: thick golden mane of hair, gold flecks in his tawny eyes, perfectly proportioned body encased in a form-fitting suit of golden mail.

He sneered down at me. "What is this madness you are engaged in, Orion? Where are you leading that young pup?"

I blinked up at him. His radiance was so brilliant it made my eyes water. "I thought you wanted me to—"

Angrily, Aten snapped, "You are not supposed to think, creature! Your purpose is to do what I instruct you to do. Nothing more. And nothing less."

"But Arthur needs—"

"I will decide what Arthur needs, not you!" Aten snarled. "I want you to help him win a few battles, not take him on a foolish excursion through such dangerous territory."

I bowed my head, my eyes burning at the radiance streaming from him.

"Arthur's only purpose is to resist the Angles and Saxons well enough to force them to unite against him. Then they will drive the Britons into the western sea and take the island for themselves."

"But what will happen to Arthur?"

"He will be killed."

"No!"

Aten's voice hardened. "All men die, Orion. Only my own creatures, such as yourself, are revived to serve me again."

"But Arthur . . ."

"He could make a nuisance of himself," Aten said. "He could become too powerful. For the time being, I allow

him to live. But that time will end soon enough."

"And then?"

"Then the Angles and Saxons and other barbarian tribes will create a mighty empire, Orion. An empire that spans the globe and begins to reach out into space."

"But can't Arthur be permitted—"

"Stop pleading for him, Orion! Obey my commands. That is your destiny. Arthur's destiny is death and obscurity."

I wanted to argue with him. I wanted to tell him that I would not obey his commands, that I would help Arthur and save him.

But suddenly I was sitting on the ground at our forest camp again, soaked with sweat, breathing heavily. The first milky light of the coming dawn was just starting to filter through the tall trees. Arthur slept across the dead campfire from me, as blissfully as a man without a care in the universe.

Should I turn back to Amesbury fort? Abandon this quest for a sword for young Arthur?

His eyes snapped open, bright and as blue as the sea on a cloudless day. He was awake instantly.

"How far are we from my sword, Orion?" he asked as he sat up, all youthful eagerness.

"Not far, my lord," I replied. "We will reach the lake today."

I couldn't turn back now. I couldn't disappoint Arthur. He trusted me, and I would not betray him, not even for Aten and all his haughty demands.

Yet I should have known that Aten would not willingly allow us to reach our goal.



The forest was like a maze of giant trees, their boles as massive as the pillars of a mighty cathedral, their thick leafy canopies so high above us that they were like a dark green roof that blotted out the sun. We had to walk our horses most of the morning, picking through the sturdy trees while birds whistled far overhead and tiny furred creatures chattered at us.

The ground sloped gradually downhill. We were nearing the lake, I realized, although how I knew about the lake and its location were beyond me. Something in my mind told me that we would find the sword for Arthur there; but just how and why—I had no idea.

The forest thinned out as we led the horses, but the underbrush became thicker between the trees. I saw a clearing up ahead, strong morning sunlight slanting through it, and smelled smoke. It was rising from a tiny thatched farmhouse.

Too much smoke. The farmhouse was afire.

"Saxons!" Arthur whispered, dropping to one knee as we peered through the underbrush at the scene in the clearing. I crouched down beside him.

A dozen men in long blond braids and steel-studded leather jerkins were laughing and whooping as two of their compatriots dragged a pair of screaming struggling teenaged girls across the clearing toward them. A trio of bodies lay in their own blood before the burning farmhouse door: husband, wife, and baby.

Arthur stared, barely breathing.

"We've got to stop them," I whispered.

"Two against fourteen?"

"They'll murder those girls when they've finished with them."

Arthur wet his lips and shook his head. "Too many of them, Orion. It's useless."

Arthur was no fool. Young he may be, but he was not rash. He was loathe to charge in against hopeless odds.

"Perhaps we can at least divert their attention," I whispered hastily, "long enough for the girls to get away."

Without waiting for his reply, I pushed through the screening foliage and stepped out into the clearing keeping my sword in its scabbard upon my back. Although the Saxons' attention was centered on the struggling, pleading girls, one of them noticed me approaching and pointed toward me.

"What clan are you?" I called out in the Saxon tongue. It never occurred to me to wonder how I knew their language. Aten built such knowledge into me.

"Who are you?" demanded the biggest of the barbarians. They were armed with axes and short stabbing swords, I saw. A few steel-tipped spears lay on the ground at their feet.

The men who were holding the sobbing, shaking girls threw them to the ground and drew weapons. I smiled and kept walking slowly toward them.

"How did you get so far inland?" I asked, still approaching them at a leisurely gait.

"We got lost in those damnable woods," one of the Saxons admitted. "Do you know which way leads to the sea?"

I raised my hand and pointed toward the rising sun. "That way, I think."

Quicker than they could follow, I reached behind my head for my sword and cut the nearest man in two before he could blink an eye. As his blood fountained over me, the others roared with rage and ran toward me. I saw their charge in slow motion, languid as a dream, as my senses speeded into overdrive.

Even so, thirteen against one could end only one way. One of them threw his axe at me; I dodged it easily as it spun lazily toward my head.

The first two that came within arm's reach of me I cut down like a scythe mows wheat. The others skidded to a stop and began to encircle me.

Then I heard the furious bellow of young Arthur as he charged on horseback into the fray. Out of the corner of my eye I saw him, helmeted and crouched in the saddle behind his red dragon shield, sword upraised, glinting in the morning sun.

Arthur had cleverly maneuvered to my right, so that his charge forced the Saxons to turn away from me to face him. I drove into their midst, slashing bone and sinew, shattering the blades they tried to use to protect themselves. Arthur cut a swath through them, then turned his steed and came back at them even while his first victims were sinking to the ground.

The remaining few broke and ran, screaming for their lives. Arthur galloped after them and cut them down before they could reach the trees. All except the one who dashed in the opposite direction. I hefted his discarded axe and threw it. Its sharp edge caught him between the

shoulder blades, and he went down face-first with a final shriek of death.

And then it was over. All fourteen Saxons lay dead or dying, and the two terrified girls knelt in the midst of the bloody carnage, clutching each other in trembling fear.

Arthur sheathed his red-stained sword and lifted off his helmet, tossing his long sandy hair.

"Don't be afraid," he said softly to the girls. "No one will harm you."

They gaped up at him and the elaborate red dragon on his shield.



The girls led us to a village by the lake's edge, where they told everyone how Arthur had saved them from the Saxon raiders. I was taken to be Arthur's squire, a non-entity compared to the handsome young nobleman.

The whole village knelt at his feet and blessed him, but Arthur did not allow the villagers' adoration to affect him. When the village elders begged him to stay the night and take his pick of their women, Arthur replied gently:

"I cannot. I am on a quest that must not be delayed."

I wondered what would become of the two teenaged girls we had rescued. They were orphaned now, with no family to care for them.

But Arthur had already considered that. As he swung up onto his saddle, he pointed to them and pronounced solemnly, "Those maidens are under the protection of the High King. Send them to Cadbury fort in the spring and I will see that Ambrosius finds noble husbands for them."

The girls nearly swooned. The villagers raised a chorus of blessings. Yes, I thought, Arthur will make an excellent king—if he lives long enough.



As we rode slowly along the lake's edge that afternoon, Arthur grew somber.

"I've never seen Saxons this far inland before," he told me. "If we don't stop them soon, they will overrun all of Britain."

What could I answer? My Creator wanted the Saxons and their barbarian cousins to conquer Britain; to drive out the Britons and create an empire of their own.

"Well," I said, finding my tongue at last, "at least there are fourteen of them whose only part of this island is the ground they are buried in."

He grinned boyishly at me.

I thought that the Saxon raiders were Aten's attempt to turn me back from this quest for a sword for Arthur. Perhaps they were. My mistake was to believe that they would be Aten's only attempt to stop us.



We plodded along the lake's shore until nearly sunset, with Arthur asking every few minutes where his sword was, like an impatient boy.

There was a strange mixture of elements in him. He had been cautious about attacking the Saxon raiders,

lacking in self-confidence. But once he saw me fighting alone against them he attacked with a wild frenzy rather than see me cut down. Then he showed the villagers the nobility of a truly great monarch. And now he was as impatient as a lad yearning to open his Christmas presents.

At last we had circled the lake completely. I reined my mount to a halt and stared out across the water, turned blood-red by the setting sun.

"Well?" asked Arthur impatiently.

There was nothing I could say except, "Now we must wait, my lord."

We dismounted and tethered the horses loosely after removing the saddles and packs, so that they could graze for themselves.

"Wait for what?" Arthur asked. His impatience was beginning to show an edge of doubt.

"For the lady of the lake," I replied, without knowing the words until I heard them myself.

We ate a bit of the hard bread we had brought. No fire for cooking, although I could have eaten a rabbit raw, I was so hungry.

Surprisingly, Arthur stretched out on the ground. "I'm sleepy," he said, through a big yawn.

"Sleep then, my lord. I will stand watch."

"Just a little nap," he muttered. "Don't know . . . why I'm . . . so . . . sleepy..." His voice faded into a gentle snore.

The instant Arthur closed his eyes a soft silver glow began to surround me, as if I was bathed in moonlight. It was cool and glittering like the light of a million jewels twinkling all around me. And then, standing before me, beautiful Anya appeared.

She was in her warrior's suit of gleaming metallic silver, fitted snugly over her supple body. Her lustrous midnight dark hair tumbled past her strong shoulders. Her silver-gray eyes regarded me solemnly. I could not move, could hardly speak, she was so exquisite and I yearned for her so.

"Orion," she said softly, "you play a dangerous game here."

"All I want is to be with you," I whispered, afraid to speak louder, afraid of breaking the spell of her appearance before me. Arthur lay soundly on the ground beside me, his eyes closed in sleep or a trance.

"Aten is furious that you are defying his command. He wants you to return Arthur to Amesbury. There is to be a Saxon attack near Amesbury fort and he must be there to lead the garrison."

"To be killed, you mean," I replied.

Anya said nothing.

"Arthur needs a sword that will bring him victory," I said.

She smiled, a little sadly. "Do you really believe that a sword could make any difference?"

"It will give him the confidence he needs to fight against hopeless odds. And win."

"Aten does not want him to win," she said.

"But I do. I want—"

She silenced me with a finger upon my lips. "It's not that easy, my love. Aten controls this timeline. I can only interfere indirectly. You must do the hard work."

"What does Aten want?"

"Rome has collapsed," she answered. "He wants to build a new empire that stretches from the steppes beyond Muscovy to these British isles."

"An empire of the barbarians," I growled.

"An empire that he can control and manipulate," Anya said.

"But why? To what end?"

She shrugged. "Who knows what plans are in his mind? He looks centuries ahead, millennia."

"He's crazy. No one can control all the forces of space-time."

"He believes he can." Then she smiled again. "But he can't control you, can he?"

I felt an answering smile curve my lips. "He doesn't control you, either, does he?"

"But I have the power to work against him when I must.

I can even get some of the other Creators to help resist his demands. I'm Aten's equal, not . . ." She stopped short.

"Not a mere creature," I finished for her.

"He could kill you horribly," Anya warned. "Final death, with no revival."

I remembered being crushed in the jaws of a cave bear, back in the age of ice. I recalled being flayed alive by the fireball of an exploding starship.

"Death is nothing new to me. If we can't be together, what is life except an endless wheel of pain?"

"I'm trying, Orion. I want to be with you too, my dearest. But there are forces beyond your ken, forces that keep us apart."

"Forces manipulated by Aten," I said flatly.

She shook her head. "Forces that not even he can control, my darling."

I glanced down at the sleeping young Arthur. "And that young warlord plays a role in these forces."

"He might. I think there could be greatness in him. But Aten wants to remove him."

"Kill him, you mean."

"Yes."

"Then I want to protect him."

Anya said nothing. She merely regarded me with those somber gray eyes, eyes that held the depths of infinity in them.

"Will you help me?" I asked.

"Orion, you have no idea of the damage you do to the spacetime fabric whenever you defy Aten."

"Will you help?" I repeated.

She regarded me gravely. "I love you too much to allow Aten to destroy you."

Then you must help Arthur, too."

She sighed. "Your young friend must help himself. Neither you nor I can put courage into his heart."

"It's not courage he needs, it's . . ."

But she was gone, vanished as if she had never been there at all, leaving me standing on the shore of the lake as the sky darkened and the moon rose, silver and cool and too far away for me to dream of touching.



sword."

As he climbed to his feet I looked out across the lake, silvered now by the rising full moon. It was as calm and flat as a mirror of polished steel. In its middle was an island that hadn't been there earlier. I realized that it was not an island at all, but an artifact, a structure of metal and glass still dripping because it had risen from the lake's depths only moments earlier.

Arthur followed my gaze. "Look!" he whispered. "A boat approaches!"

"The lady of the lake," I murmured. Anya was going to help us, after all.

Wordlessly we stepped down to the sandy edge of the shore, Arthur's eyes fixed on the boat that glided noiselessly across the placid waters.

It was Anya, of course, alone in the self-propelled boat. But now she was dressed in a flowing robe and garlanded with flowers. In the moonlight she seemed to glow with an inner radiance. Her hair flowed long and smooth as a river of onyx down her back. Her face was calm, serene, utterly beautiful.

In her arms she cradled a broadsword in a jewelled scabbard. I recognized that scabbard.

The boat nudged its prow onto the sand before us and stopped. Anya rose to her feet and held the sword out in her two hands.

Arthur seemed frozen, transfixed by her appearance. His eyes were so wide I could see the white all around them, his breathing so heavy he was almost gasping.

"Take the sword," I coached him in a low whisper. "She's offering it to you."

Arthur swallowed hard, then summoned up his courage and stepped into the gently lapping wavelets to the side of the boat. His boots sank into the soft sand.

"Wield this sword for right and justice," Anya intoned, handing it to Arthur's trembling hands.

"I will, my lady," he said breathlessly. "Just as you command."

"Do so, and the others will follow you."

"I will, my lady," he repeated.

Without another word Anya sat on the boat's only bench once more and the vessel backed off the sand, made a stately, silent turn and glided back to the "island" in the middle of the lake. We watched, Arthur dumbfounded and trembling, as the boat disappeared into an opening in the structure and then the entire mass slowly sank beneath the surface of the water.

It was not until the "island" was completely gone that Arthur blinked and shook himself, like a man coming out of a trance.

Then he pulled the sword out of its jewelled scabbard. I recognized the word *Excalibur* incised on its fine steel blade. It was the sword I had taken from Grendel's cave, the night Beowulf and I killed the monster's mate. Anya had held it all these years, protected it from Aten's knowledge, held it for the moment when Arthur needed it.

Arthur swished the blade through the night air, his grin bright enough to rival the full moon.

Then we heard the roar of the dragon.



Arthur awoke, sat up, and rubbed his eyes. "I had a dream," he said, his voice soft and puzzled. "About my

It was a dinosaur, of course; a giant raptor fetched by Aten from its own time and translated across millions of years to kill Arthur.

It came crashing out of the woods, roaring like a steam locomotive, stepping nimbly on its two hind legs. Three times my own height, the teeth that lined its massive jaw were the size of butchers knives, sharp and serrated. The claws on its hind feet were the length of my forearm, curved like scimitars. Its forelegs were smaller, almost weak-looking compared to the hind, but they too bore slashing claws.

I pulled my sword out as the monster's beady little eyes focused on us. Arthur turned and ran.

But only as far as our impromptu camp. The horses were bucking and neighing with terror. He slashed their tethers with one stroke of Excalibur, and they bolted away, galloping toward safety. Arthur picked up his shield and came back to stand at my side.

"We'll have a better chance if we can approach it from two sides," he said. His voice was calm and flat, as if he were discussing tactics over a map in the safety of his castle.

"We should do what the horses did," I said.

"Run?"

"As fast as we can," I replied fervently.

"No, Orion. If we don't kill this dragon it will ravage the countryside. It will kill the villagers and their livestock. We must protect them."

Two puny men armed only with swords against a twenty-ton killing machine.

But I nodded and edged off toward the water. Arthur sidled in the other direction, his eyes on the "dragon," his new sword held high in his right hand.

The dinosaur looked from him to me, swivelling its ponderous head slowly. It stepped toward me, hesitant, its tiny brain perhaps puzzled by the maneuvers of intelligent prey.

I dared not go so far out into the water that I could not move swiftly. I yelled at the dinosaur and waved my sword in the air, trying to hold its attention while Arthur moved stealthily behind it. It leaned down in my direction, as if to see me more clearly I felt its breath, hot enough to make me almost think it could actually breathe fire.

I waited until those monstrous teeth were gaping just above me, then thrust my sword into the beast, into the base of its jaw, with all the power I could muster from both my arms.

The dinosaur howled and reared, lifting me completely off my feet. My sword was lodged in its jaw and I clung to the hilt with both hands, my legs dangling uselessly in midair.

Arthur dashed in and slashed at the beast's belly. Even in the pale moonlight I could see his blade reddening.

The dinosaur bellowed and shook his head so viciously that I was dislodged and flung to the ground, my sword still wedged in its jaw. Stunned, I saw through a red haze of pain the dinosaur turn on Arthur, raking his shield with the powerful claws of one hind foot. Arthur tumbled onto his back and the beast bent over him, jaws gaping wide.

But Arthur still clutched Excalibur and slashed at the dinosaur's snout as he scrambled backward, trying to rise

to his feet. The dinosaur yowled and tried to pin Arthur to the ground with one foot, but Arthur scrabbled out of the way once, twice...

I pulled myself to my feet and, avoiding the beast's heavy swinging tail, leaped upon its back. Like a monkey clambering up a tree I scaled along the dinosaur's spine, climbing toward its massive bony skull.

It must have felt me on its back, for it stopped trying to crush Arthur and reared up to its full height, nearly throwing me off. But I wrapped my legs around its neck and swiftly drew Odysseos's dagger. Plunging it into the back of its neck at the base of the thick skull, I hacksawed madly, searching for the spinal column.

Below me I saw Arthur, on his feet now, plunging Excalibur into the beast's exposed belly again and again, working madly, frenziedly, spattered with the dinosaur's dark blood again and again.

My blade found the spinal cord at last and cut it. The monster collapsed, nearly crushing Arthur as it fell.

I slid off its back and tumbled to the grassy ground, exhausted, gasping.

Arthur stood blinking at the dead carcass for a few moments, then raised both arms over his head and screamed an exultant victory cry at the distant moon. It was an eerie sight: the young warrior bathed in the beast's blood, holding his sword and shield aloft and shrieking like a banshee. Beside him the dead "dragon" lay, a mountain of scaly flesh, teeth and claws.

"Did you see me, Orion?" he called triumphantly as he hurried over to where I lay. "Did you see me kill it?"

Slowly I pulled myself up to a sitting position. The dagger was still in my hand, but Arthur paid no notice to such a puny weapon.

He brandished Excalibur in the night air. "I must have struck its heart," he said, bubbling with excitement. "With this steel I can conquer anything!"

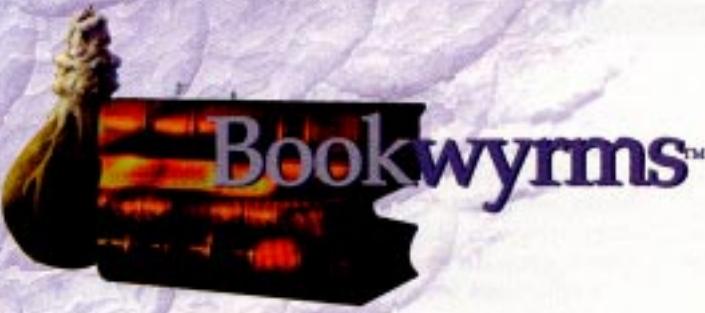
I smiled inwardly. Arthur had found his steel; not merely a sword, but the inner steel that would one day make him king of the Britons. If I could keep him alive that long.

I could sense Aten scowling angrily at me. He wanted Arthur removed from this timeline, and he would do all he could to work his will. And punish me for defying him.

All I really wanted was to spend the eternities with Anya. But for now, I was at Arthur's side, ready to battle men and gods to protect him.



Dr. Ben Bova is the author of over 90 books, both fiction and non-fiction. He first linked his history-traveling hero Orion to the story of Excalibur in "Legendary Heroes", in DRAGON Magazine #236. His most recent novel is Moonwar, sequel to Moonrise. Among Dr. Bova's hobbies are flying, fencing, chess, swimming, and music.



By Linda Archer

The Masterharper of Pern

Anne McCaffrey

Del Rey

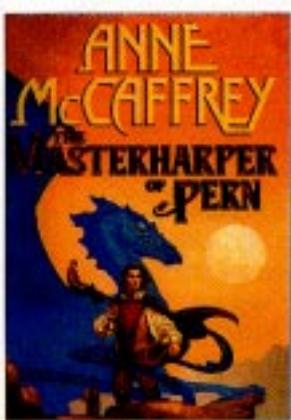
\$25.00 (HC)

While Anne McCaffrey has written a vast number of fantasy novels that show her versatility as a writer, she is by far most well known for her Pern novels. It had gotten to the point, though, where the themes were becoming rather old, and the quality of the novels wasn't up to par. *The Masterharper of Pern*, however, is about the most fascinating character McCaffrey has created—Masterharper Robinton.

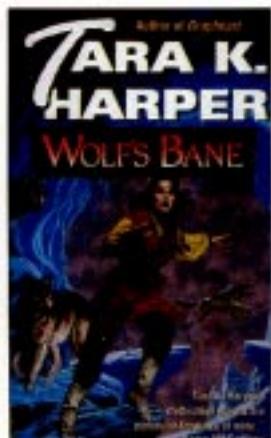
McCaffrey begins the book, logically enough, with Robinton's birth, establishing the characters of his parents (Petiron and Merelan) thoroughly from the outset. In fact, it answers one of the questions from the previous books right away: why Robinton's relationship with his father is so poor.

The gradual development of Robinton's character throughout the novel is intriguing. Given his obvious advantages (musical genius, talented partners, the adoration of almost everyone at the Harper Hall), it would have been easy for his character to become insufferable. McCaffrey avoids that trap by making Robinton go through trials of varying severity to hone the humorous, sardonic character that readers are so familiar with in the other books.

This novel ends where *Dragonflight* begins—with the Ruathan search that unearthed Lessa and F'lar's duel with Fax. In fact, the ending of this book creates one of several contradictions with the other Pern novels. In *Masterharper*, Robinton is at Ruatha Hold, albeit in disguise, during this event. He is recognized by C'gan and F'nor. In *Dragonflight*, Robinton doesn't appear until much later. Another contradiction comes with Robinton's marriage. McCaffrey and Nye, in *A Dragonlover's Guide to Pern*, stated that Robinton never married. All in all, these contradictions are negligible because the book remains thoroughly enjoyable. McCaffrey chose absolutely the right character for this latest Pern novel.



This novel ends where *Dragonflight* begins . . .



Wolf's Bane becomes far more interesting when tragedy strikes Dion's family.

Wolf's Bane

Tara K. Harper

Del Rey

\$5.99 (PB)

Tara Harper's novel begins slowly, establishing the characters, particularly Dion the wolfwalker, and the situations necessary for the plot. Once the story actually begins, the pace picks up, and *Wolf's Bane* becomes interesting when tragedy strikes Dion's family.

The novel includes an annoying naming convention. What's in an "e"? Evidently a lot for Harper, since she points out frequently that "Dione" is the formal version of the wolfwalker's name, while merely removing the "e" turns it into a nickname. No other character in the book has this type of naming.

Another problem is the presence of some inconsistencies, primarily in Dion's character. She is an extremely strong, independent character at the beginning, but once the first tragedy strikes, she quickly changes into a whining, self-absorbed fool. Despite regular encouragement from other characters, who tell Dion that her remaining son needs her, Dion continually wraps herself in self-pity, rejecting all offers of help. At this point, Dion does nothing more than bemoan her situation for six chapters.

At this point it might be easy to give up on the book, but when the second tragedy strikes, Dion begins to regain her former strength. Here the book becomes more focused, as Dion is finally held to the agreement she made with the wolves years ago, forcing a confrontation with the mysterious Aiueven. The Aiueven way of speaking is strange, yet Harper is consistent here in both the thought processes and speech patterns one might expect from an avian society. The abrupt conclusion of this intense segment of the novel is very disappointing.

Wolf's Bane would have been a much better novel had it begun shortly before Dion's first tragedy, eliminating the opening material and expanding the latter half. A more detailed transition between the conclusion and the epilogue would also have helped. Having Dion actually achieve her goal would have made for a more satisfactory conclusion. As it stands, the ending is ambiguous and leaves the reader unsatisfied, wondering about the ultimate point of the story.

The Dragonstone

Dennis L. McKiernan

Roc

\$6.99 (PB)

Another title for this book could have been "How Stupid Are These People?" This book is obviously a prequel, as explained in the epilogue for those who haven't read McKiernan's other novels. In *The Dragonstone*, McKiernan follows David Eddings' quest-riddle formula as established in *The Belgariad*. The difference between this use of the format and Eddings' is that McKiernan's characters have such poor interpretive skills. They try to answer a riddle that reveals who must accompany them on their quest by mistaking actual animals for the riddle's animal allusions (i.e., "the mad monarch's rutting peacock"). These imbeciles actually try to steal a peacock when it's clear that the riddle refers to a person in that monarch's court. They even argue with the one character who leaps to the obvious and correct conclusion.

Actually, McKiernan's characters are different in that you keep reading the novel just to see what form of stupidity they indulge themselves in next. They never recognize obvious signs. They don't even notice when one of their party has been subverted by the wizard who held him captive, even though he continues to repeat the same phrase over and over again. They also end up with one extra member of their party, despite the riddle's warning to "take only these, no more and no less," because they can't make up their minds who out of two candidates actually fits the riddle.

Once the questing party actually approaches the dragon on their mission of recovery, things start looking up. It's about time, because prior to this point, McKiernan indulges in some sloppy romantic pairings of the members of the questing party (except the extra), which seems like something from a sappy romantic comedy, totally out of place in this quest novel. When the romance nonsense is cleared up, the conclusion of the book becomes rather interesting. Unfortunately, this ending is the only quality piece of writing in the entire novel.

Wizard of the Winds

Allan Cole

Del Rey

\$6.99 (PB)

Wizard of the Winds, originally published in the United Kingdom under the title *While the Gods Slept*, appears at first to be a single book, having a complete storyline. The last third of the book makes it clear that this is really the first volume in

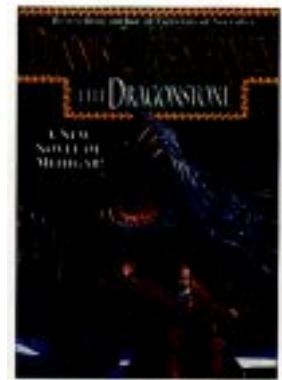
a quest series. In fact, the second book is already in print.

Cole has woven an engaging storyline from his characters. *Wizard of the Winds* centers on two main characters, Safar Timura and Iraj Protarus, following their lives from adolescence to adulthood. Iraj is a conqueror with a mission and destiny, driven by his view of the world's future. Specifically, Iraj believes that the world will be an immensely better place when it is united under one strong ruler—himself, naturally. This destiny doesn't truly take shape, however, until Iraj meets Safar once more. Along the way, Safar has encountered most of the supporting cast, who are often more interesting than the protagonists. The most fascinating of these secondary characters is Kalasariz.

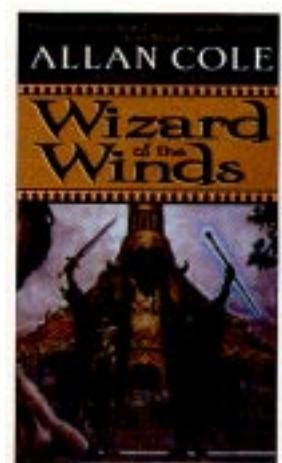
Kalasariz appears during Safar's years at university. He is the spymaster for that particular part of the world, and he is very good at his job. This first appearance isn't what is interesting about his character, though. Here he is two-dimensional. It is when Kalasariz appears later, in the presence of the demon Crown Prince, that Cole truly gets his character going. The only problem is wondering why anyone, particularly Protarus, would believe this guy.

While the novel is fairly good, there is a distinct problem with the Eastern overtones woven throughout. Those Eastern (overtly Arabic) attitudes are exceedingly annoying. Specifically, the position of the female characters in the story is appalling. Women are treated as objects, put on this world solely for the pleasure of men. There are innumerable scenes of extremely casual sexual encounters where the women are nothing more than toys. When they aren't being used sexually, they are expected to be little more than slaves and answer the male characters' every whim. The only male character in the novel who does not share this sexist attitude is Safar, who places women at least on the level of being human. Cole sets Safar apart in this respect from the beginning. Early in the novel, Iraj says, "Besides, even free women have no more of a soul than, say, a camel or a horse. They were put here by the gods for our pleasure and to birth more of us." Safar's angry reaction to such attitudes sets him apart from the other male characters. Cole sustains Safar's view throughout the novel.

Ultimately, given the diverse characters and intricate plotting, the sequel to *Wizard of the Winds* should prove enjoyable reading.



...you keep reading the novel just to see what form of stupidity they indulge themselves in next



...the position of the female character in the story is appalling

The Prestige

Christopher Priest

Tor

\$14.95 (TPB)

At first glance, this book doesn't look terribly fascinating, despite the mention on the cover that it won the World Fantasy Award. The cover is designed in three shades of beige with black borders—not your usual fantasy novel cover. The old cliche about not judging a book by its cover definitely holds true in this case. It is impossible to put the book down until the end. Priest's novel is incredible.

The story centers on two young magicians who, early in their careers, develop an ongoing feud that overshadows their lives and haunts their descendants through three subsequent generations. The cause of their dispute is vague at first, but when Angier takes over the narrative, it becomes clear that Borden inadvertently caused Angier's wife to miscarry their first child.

Whether Borden ever really knows of this reason is questionable, yet he continues the feud with as much vigor as does Angier.

Anyone who has the slightest interest in magic will be fascinated by Priest's detailed accounts of magic performances in the latter part of the nineteenth century, especially the information regarding stage illusions.

The characters of Rupert Angier and Alfred Borden are well defined, drawing the reader into a web of deceit, intrigue, and calculation. It is clear throughout the book that there is something fundamentally wrong, something slightly off, in the story that is told from Angier and Borden's different viewpoints. Both principals' stories seem plausible enough, told in retrospect from journals, but there is an obsessive tone that simply becomes confusing when the story is taken over by Angier's great-granddaughter and Borden's great-grandson. Priest keeps the reader off balance this way, creating a desire to get to the end of the novel so that the true essence of the story is revealed.

Priest's mastery of his writing is never so evident as in the totally amazing conclusion. It is just as convoluted as the rest of the plot. Anyone who does not read this book is doing himself a grave injustice. *The Prestige* is the best and most mysterious fantasy novel to appear in quite a while.



Raised by halfling yak traders, Linda Archer took time off from yak herding to earn a PhD in English literature from the University of Toledo. During the yak off-season, she lives in the Seattle area with her daughter, her husband, and an evil cat who hates her.

Recommended for Roleplayers

As avid gamers, readers, and filmgoers, we of the magazine staff often come across a book, game, or video of special interest to other gamers. Here's one you might like:

Shards of a Broken Crown

Raymond Feist

Avon/EOS

\$24.00 (HC)

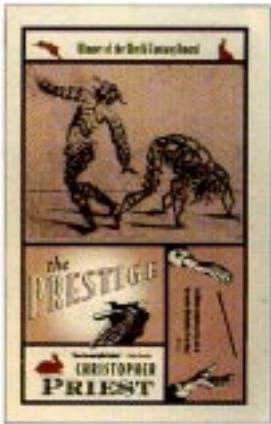
Fans of Raymond Feist's Midkemia will love *Shards of a Broken Crown*, the concluding volume of the Serpentwar Saga. Feist brings familiar faces of Midkemia back as the greatest war the world has ever seen comes to an end. Feist has managed to create an enduring and original fantasy world. Continuing in the tradition of his Riftwar Saga, *Shards of a Broken Crown* tells the story of both beings of tremendous power and lovable, mundane heroes who join forces to stop an unspeakable evil.

The majority of the novel follows Dash and Jimmy Jameson, sons of the Duke of Krondor, as they act first as spies, then as messengers, and finally as leaders in the struggle to retake their kingdom's rightful territory, conquered by General Fadawah. The brothers must deal with Patrick, the hot-headed Prince of the Western Realm, while they assist in the war effort. Ultimately the two discover a plot by the Empire of Kesh to seize control of the city of Krondor, the center of the Western Realm, and must race to save the city from the Keshian invasion.

As the brothers struggle to save Krondor, the bulk of the kingdom's armies, under the command of Erik von Darkmoor, fight battle after battle against the remnants of the Emerald Queen's armies. As Erik and his troops fight farther northward, they encounter the same corrupt sorcery that powered the Emerald Queen's attempt at conquest. The greater powers of the world, including the magician Pug, join in the struggle against this evil. The final battle is one of magic, not military might, as Pug and his companions learn this latest threat is but another incarnation of the ancient foe they have been battling their whole lives.

Despite the pleasures of returning to Feist's Midkemia, *Shards of a Broken Crown* seems anticlimactic in comparison with the more dramatic conclusion of the previous volume, *Rage of the Demon King*. Anyone whose roleplaying campaign takes inspiration from Midkemia will find plenty of rich material in this novel—especially in the epilogue, which provides an excellent device for future adventures.

—JESSE DECKER



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is incredible.

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DRAGON DWEOMERS III

Draconic Priest Spells

Those who underestimate the power of spells granted by draconic deities are in for a nasty surprise.

by
Robert S. Mullin

illustrated by
Stephen Schwartz



WHEN THE SPECIES IS CONSIDERED AS A WHOLE, the magical strength of dragonkind lies with wizardry. Some dragons, however, can cast priest spells upon reaching the higher age categories. This is especially true of the gem dragons, whose prowess with priestly magic usually equals or exceeds their wizardly ability. The amethyst dragon, for instance, can eventually cast sixth-level priest spells, while the remaining gem dragons have at least fourth-level potential. Gold and silver great wyrm can cast fourth-level priest spells as well. Toss the faerie dragon into the mix, and you have a species with the potential to use seventh-level priest spells. Given these factors, it seems strange that draconic priest magic has not been covered before.

Note that the priest spells detailed here are tied to draconic deities much in the same manner that priests' specialty spells are tied to their particular deities or faiths. Generally speaking, this means that only those dragons who worship the dragon deity to which a given spell is tied may use the spell in question. In the case of scrolls containing draconic priest spells, the formulae are safeguarded to ensure that only casters of the appropriate faith can use them. Such safeguards are noted in each spell's description.

Finally, when compared to standard priest spells, the following dweomers seem too powerful for the ascribed spell levels. Indeed, it can be argued that these spells should be two, perhaps three

levels higher. However, given that most dragons cannot use priest spells until they reach the higher age categories, the relative spell power is sufficiently counterbalanced. After all, dragon wizard spells work this way (i.e., non-dragon variants, when viable, are two or three levels higher), so dragon priest spells operate in a similar fashion.

As suggested by the accompanying footnotes, these spells are related to the draconic deities introduced in the *Council of Wyrms* setting and the FORGOTTEN REALMS® accessory, *The Draconomicon*. Thus, the spells might be more appropriate for use in those settings, unless one regards those deities as universal to all settings where dragons exist.

Aura of Null

(Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic, protection

Level: 1

Range: 0

Components: V,M

Duration: 1 round/level

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: 1/2

When this spell is cast, the dragon is surrounded in an aura of bone-chilling cold energy that extends away from the dragon to a distance equal to its *aura of Null*. Creatures who enter the area must save vs. death magic or suffer a -4 penalty to AC, saving throws, and attack rolls due to the chilling effect. Even if a victim immediately leaves the area, or the spell expires, the penalties persist for an additional 2d4 rounds. Those who successfully save reduce the penalties to -2 and lessen the post-exposure effects to 1d4 additional rounds. These conditions are not cumulative, so a victim need make only one saving throw vs. a given *aura of Null* – i.e., a victim is free to enter, leave, and re-enter the area of effect as often as desired without requiring additional saving throws. However, the effects are cumulative if the victim enters one *aura of Null*, departs, and then enters a second *aura of Null* before the effects of the first exposure have worn off.

This spell produces a negative-energy chilling effect, so immunity to standard cold attack forms (e.g., *cone of cold*, *ice storm*, *Otiluke's freezing sphere*, etc.) provides no defense against it. Undead and other negative-energy creatures, as well as the casting dragon or another dragon with an active *aura of Null*, are immune to the effects of the spell. The *negative plane protection* priest spell also provides protection against an *aura of Null*.

Aura of Null persists for the full duration unless removed by a *limited wish* or greater effect; *dispel magic* does not suffice.

The material component for this spell is the dragon's holy symbol, which is not consumed by the spell.

This spell is granted only to those

1. Null, the dragon god of death and the dead, is described in *The Draconomicon*, page 27.



dragons who worship Null.¹ Spell scrolls are safeguarded so that, if used by any other creature, the caster (only) suffers the full effects of the spell at maximum potential (i.e., the spell's full duration (one round per level of the caster) plus eight rounds after the spell expires), and no saving throw is allowed.

Hydraform

(Alteration)

Sphere: Combat, creation

Level: 1

Range: 0

Components: V,M

Duration: 1 round/age category

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

This spell enables a dragon to "grow" additional heads (and necks) so as to take on the likeness of a hydra (or Tiamat, as it were), though the new heads are always identical in appearance to that of the dragon's real head (i.e., red dragons create red dragon heads, blue dragons create blue heads, etc.). However, the exact number of additional heads the dragon can grow is tied to its age category, as follows:

When a dragon is able to cast first-level priest spells, *hydraform* produces one head in addition to the dragon's real head. For every age category thereafter, the spell produces one additional head. For example, a red dragon is able to cast first-level priest spells at Venerable age. As such, *hydraform* produces one additional head at Venerable age, two at Wyrm age, and three at Great Wyrm age, for a total of four heads.

In any case, each additional head is under the complete control of the dragon's real head, but only the true head can cast spells or use a breath weapon. The additional heads can make bite attacks, however, even if the dragon's real head is so engaged, but not claw attacks unless made in lieu of spell casting or a breath attack.

Furthermore, each additional head has a number of hit points equal to 20% of the dragon's usual total (fractions dropped), but these are merely phantom hit points and have no bearing on the dragon's true hit point total. In fact, attacks directed at one of the additional heads cause no real damage to the dragon and won't even disrupt the dragon's spellcasting. However, when a

new head is reduced to zero hit points, it immediately vanishes from the dragon's body. Otherwise, the heads remain until the spell expires; *dispel magic* does not remove them.

A dragon may have no more than one *hydraform* spell in effect at any time. Subsequent castings of the spell simply negate and replace earlier castings.

The material component for this spell is the dragon's holy symbol. It is not consumed in the casting.

This spell is granted only to those dragons who worship Tiamat, the Chromatic Dragon.² For obvious anatomical reasons, this spell is useless to non-dragon spellcasters. However, spell scrolls are safeguarded so that, if used by an unauthorized caster (including a non-dragon who manages to achieve a draconic form via a *shapechange* spell or similar power), the additional heads

2. Tiamat, the Chromatic Dragon, is described in too many sources to mention here, but for the sake of this article, readers should refer to *The Draconomicon*, page 58, and *Council of Wyrms*, book two, page 48.

(DMs should extrapolate the number of heads according to the comparable age category of the caster) immediately attack the caster and continue to do so until either they or the caster is destroyed (which ends the spell), the duration expires, or, in the case of a non-dragon who has assumed a draconic form, the caster shifts to a nondraconic form (which also ends the *hydraform*).

Hoard Attunement

(Divination)

Sphere: Divination, guardian

Level: 2

Range: Touch

Components: V, M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 1 turn

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

Dragons are well known for the intimate knowledge they have of their hoards. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that a dragon's hoard is very nearly an exten-

sion of the dragon itself. This spell enables the casting dragon to enhance that bond considerably.

For the spell to function, the dragon must be in contact with its hoard at the time of casting. Once the spell is cast, the dragon knows the exact value of the collective hoard, as well as the value of specific items (or a collection of similar items, such as a particular coin type) within the hoard. For example, a dragon whose hoard is valued at 50,000 gp knows how much of that amount consists of coins (type and number), how much consists of gems (type, number, and value), and so forth.

In addition, *hoard attunement* enables the dragon to notice whether any items in the hoard have been disturbed or stolen, even if but a single copper piece is missing. If the dragon is in physical contact with the hoard when it is disturbed, the dragon is immediately aware of the disturbance (even if sleeping, in which case, the dragon always awakes fully alert). If treasure is missing from the hoard, the dragon instinctively detects the distance and direction of the absent treasure with unerring precision, so long as the treasure is within one mile of the dragon per age category. For example, a Great Wyrm can track down missing treasure while it remains within 12 miles. Once the treasure leaves this range, the dragon's only choice is to continue moving in the direction in which the missing treasure was last detected and hope it comes back in range. *Hoard attunement* lasts for one month, so long as the dragon remains within the "tracking" range given above. If the dragon is separated by a greater distance for a number of days equal to its age category, the spell immediately ends. Therefore, a dragon who spends too much time attempting to track down a few missing coins could very well lose its attunement with its hoard, in addition to the missing items.

New treasure added to an attuned hoard does not receive the benefits until it has been part of the hoard for a number of days equal to the dragon's age cat-

3. Astilabor, the dragon goddess of acquisitiveness, and Task, the dragon god of greed, are described in *The Draconomicon*, pages 25 and 27–28, respectively.

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egory. Once this time has passed, the new treasure is regarded as if it had been there when the spell was cast.

Hoard attunement is unaffected by *dispel magic* and similar spells. To remove it, a full *wish*, *Mordenkainen's disjunction*, or similar magic is required.

The material component for this spell is the dragon's hoard and holy symbol, neither of which are consumed or otherwise harmed in the casting.

This spell is granted only to those dragons who worship either Astialbor or Task.³ Spell scrolls are safeguarded so that, if used by any other creature, the caster is afflicted with insatiable greed. This greed is so powerful, in fact, that the scroll-user regards all valuables he encounters (even those of only minor worth) as his own and reacts in a hostile manner toward anyone who would keep such valuables from him. This condition can be removed only by a remove curse spell cast at the 12th level of ability.

Purge of Garyx

(Evocation)

Sphere: Combat, elemental (fire)

Level: 3

Range: 0

Components: V, M

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 3

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: Special

When this spell is cast, an aura of intense magical heat and fire extends away from the casting dragon to a distance equal to its *fear* aura. Although the dragon is not affected by the energy, everything else in the area of effect is.

Creatures caught within the *purge* suffer 1d8+1 hp damage per age category of the casting dragon. Thus, a *purge of Garyx* cast by a Great Wyrm inflicts 12d8+12 hp damage. Victims may save vs. spells to reduce the damage by half.

Objects within the area of effect, including walls, ceilings, and floors, must save vs. spell at 4 or be utterly destroyed. If the save succeeds, such objects are unharmed.

Note, however, that the effectiveness



of this spell is reduced accordingly when used against creatures and objects that possess immunity or resistance to fire and heat. Also note that the *purge* is not an explosive wave of energy like that of a *fireball* or *meteor swarm*; rather, it is merely a sudden presence of extreme magical heat and fire.

The material component for this spell is the dragon's holy symbol, which is not consumed.

This spell is granted only to those

dragons who worship Garyx.⁴ Spell scrolls are safeguarded so that, if used by any other creature, the caster must save against the *purge* as well.

Faluzure's Curse

(Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic

Level: 4

Range: 0

Components: V, M

Duration: 1 turn/level

4. Garyx, the dragon god of fire-using dragons, is described in *The Draconomicon*, pages 25–26.

5. Faluzure, the dragon god of death and decay, is detailed in *Council of Wyrms*, book two, page 48.

6. Kereska, the dragon goddess of magic, is detailed in *The Draconomicon*, pages 26&27.

Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

When this nefarious spell is cast, the dragon is surrounded by a layer of necromantic energy. This aura is completely invisible and cannot be detected by any means save for magic specifically designed to detect necromantic energies; a simple *detect magic* does not suffice.

While the spell lasts, any creature slam by the dragon via tooth and claw (or other body weapon, such as a tail or wing), rises as a zombie lord 24 hours later. These creatures are under the control of the dragon, and their loyalty cannot be swayed by any means, though they can be turned as usual. However, the number of zombie lords that can be animated via this spell cannot exceed the dragon's hit dice. Additional undead simply do not rise. This assumes, of course, that the dragon doesn't eat a slam victim prior to animation; consumed bodies are exempt from the effect.

Obviously, this spell is useless against the undead, but creatures without corporeal bodies, other-planar creatures that can be categorized as "immortal" (e.g., fiends, elementals, etc.), and creatures native (or strongly linked) to the Negative Energy plane are immune to the spell as well. Similarly, any creature with a natural or magically-induced immunity to necromantic magic, or one that simply cannot be raised as an undead creature, is not susceptible to this spell.

The material component for this spell is the dragon's holy symbol. The symbol is not consumed by the spell.

This spell is granted only to those dragons who worship Faluzure.⁵ Spell scrolls are safeguarded so that, if used by any other creature, the undead produced by the magic immediately attack the caster and persist until either they or the caster is slain. Should the caster be slain during such a battle, the necromantic energies that sustain the undead creatures ends, allowing their spirits to depart to the appropriate outer plane.

Kereska's Favor

(Alteration) Reversible
Sphere: Thought

Level: 4
Range: 0
Components: V, M
Duration: Special Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

when cast, this spell enables the dragon to select draconic wizard spells in place of priest spells of equal level. There is no limit to the number of wizard spells that can be memorized via this spell, so long as the dragon's normal allotment of priest-spell slots is not exceeded.

The reverse of this spell, which shares the same name, enables the dragon to use its wizard spell slots to memorize draconic priest spells of equal level. Again, there is no limit to the number of spells that can be memorize with this spell, as long as it does not exceed the dragon's normal allotment.

The material component for this spell is the dragon's holy symbol, which is not consumed in the spell's casting.

Obviously, this spell's level puts it beyond the use of most dragons, so it is often sought in scroll form. However, since the spell is granted only to those dragons who worship Kereska,⁶ spell scrolls with either version of *Kereska's favor* are safeguarded so that, if cast by any other creature, the selected spells affect the caster instead of the target. If the spell in question would benefit the caster, it operates in a reversed (i.e., harmful) fashion—for example, a first-level wizard spell replaced with a cure *light wounds* affects the caster as a cause *light wounds*.

Aura of Kereska

(Alteration, Evocation)
Sphere: Thought
Level: 5
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn +1 round/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

When cast, this spell outlines the dragon with a sparkling layer of magical power. While the spell lasts, the dragon may cast any spell (both priest and wizard varieties) of fourth-level or below it has in

memory without the spell vanishing from its mind, as the aura generates the energy necessary to power the spell (much like the stored energy of a *rod of absorption*). Furthermore, *aura of Kereska* enables the dragon to cast spells by act of will alone, without the need of components or even initiative adjustments due to casting time. Saving throws allowed by these spells still apply, however.

Aura of Kereska remains in effect for the full duration of the spell unless removed with a full *wish*, a *rod of cancellation*, or the like. However, it is temporarily negated if the dragon passes into a dead magic zone, an *anti-magic shell*, or similar effect, remaining so until the dragon leaves such an area. Lesser spells and effects are useless against it.

One of the few dragon spells that requires all three components, this spell calls for the "sacrifice" of a magical item (or items) with a total XP value of at least 2,000 (usually an item the dragon does not like or cannot use, such as a suit of armor or a weapon of dragon slaying, though not always). The device is completely drained of magic in the casting, as its energy is used to power the spell. Note that the magical item must be held by the dragon for the somatic portion of the spell, so the dragon cannot use another creature's magical item without first wresting it away. The dragon's holy symbol is required as well, but it is not consumed in the casting.

This spell is available only to those dragons who worship Kereska. Spell scrolls containing *aura of Kereska* are safeguarded so that, if cast by any other creature, the spell wipes clean all spells from the caster's mind, instead of draining the magical item. Lost spells can be regained as usual, however.



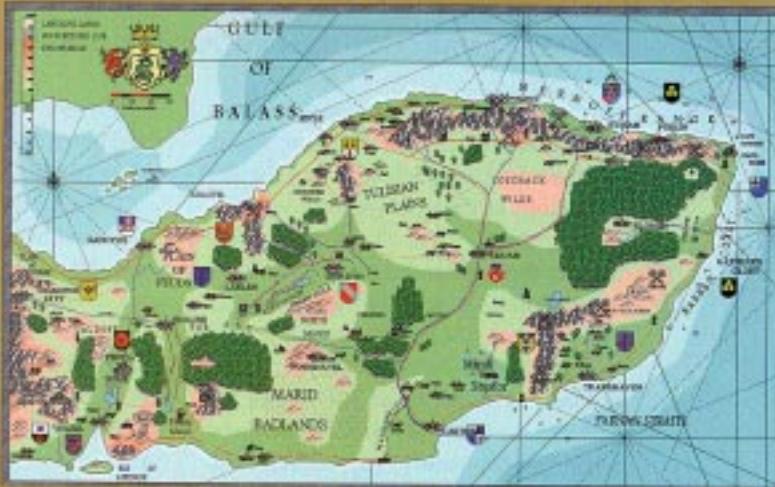
Robert S. Mullin writes, "I always get a kick out of writing 'Dragon Dweomers,' for I never grow tired of seeing the sinister gleam they bring to a DM's eyes—or the wide-eyed terror they bring to players."

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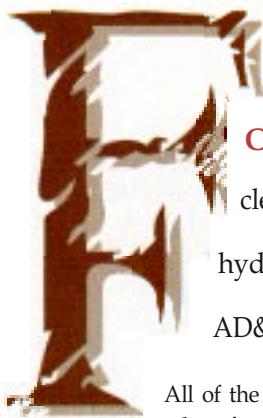
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Dragon-Kin

Although
gargouills do not
actually use the
wealth they glean
from flooded towns
and sunken ships
ships, they like
to keep it—
and the ships
themselves...

by
Gregory W. Detwiler

illustrated by
Terry Dykstra



OLKLORE IS FILLED with accounts of creatures that are clearly either dragons or close relatives. Some of these, such as the hydra, tarrasque, and wyvern, have already been covered by the AD&D® game. Some that have not appear on the following pages.

All of the creatures that follow have been taken from actual legends of our world. They are just as much a part of regular mythology as the hydra and the wyvern, making them more "legitimate" than most of the regular dragons listed in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® supplements.

In Greek mythology, Cetus was the sea dragon the god Poseidon sent to ravage the land of Ethiopia, and to whom the princess Andromeda was to be sacrificed when Perseus came along just in time to slay it. Unfortunately, the creature apparently had time to sire young first, as more of these creatures have been appearing ever since. The reason we know the cetus is immune to petrification is that, when Perseus came to Andromeda's rescue, he was returning from slaying Medusa, whose severed head still had the power to petrify with its gaze. Since Perseus had to use his sword to slay Cetus, it stands to reason that the powers of Medusa were useless against this monster.

The original dragonet was reported on Mount Pilatus in the Alps, near the Swiss town of Wilser, which it constantly harassed until a condemned man, one Winckelriedt, fought it to the death in exchange for a pardon. Winckelriedt slew the beast, but as he raised his sword aloft in triumph, the blood staining the blade flowed down and touched his naked flesh, killing him instantly.

Although tales of the peluda come from France, this monster was originally said to be an inhabitant of the Middle East/Mesopotamia during early biblical times, and which survived the Great Flood by drifting about after being refused entry on Noah's Ark. It's a known fact that porcupines can float across bodies of water using their hollow, air-filled quills, so it's not unreasonable to have the peluda do the same.

It should be remembered that the first peluda was said to have originated in the arid and semi-arid regions of the Middle East. Although all peludas reported since have dwelled in the temperate zone, a DM can surprise players by hitting them with the original species when they go adventuring in the deserts of, say, Zakhara. In that case, their color would probably be a sandy yellow, enabling the creature to maintain its camouflage advantage.

In this world, the sIRRUSH is depicted in a bas-relief on the Ishtar Gate of ancient Babylon, and this provides almost all the information we have on the creature.

Greg Detwiler is not himself a brother to dragons, just a frequent contributor.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any temperate or tropical land
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	E
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	15, Fly 25 (B)
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	14 or 1-4/1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Constriction, poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	None
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (12' long)
MORALE:	Unsteady (7)
XP VALUE:	975

The amphitere is a long, winged serpent thicker than a boa constrictor. Its scales are heavy and noticeable, while its eyes are surprisingly large, and all the more noticeable due to the wattle rings around them. The wings, on the other hand, are quite small in proportion to the rest of the creature, suggesting that it relies on an innate magical power to become airborne. It has two tongues, one a normal forked snake tongue, the other ending in a poisonous tip like the head of an arrow. Some amphiteres also have an arrowhead-shaped stinger at the end of the tail. The amphitere's color varies around the world, generally resembling that of the local snakes. The wings are either membranous or feathered.

Combat: The amphitere can attack with either a bite or a thrust of the pointed tongue. Both attacks inflict 1-4 hp damage. In addition, victims struck with the venomous tongue must save vs. poison (Type E). Those amphiteres who have a tail spike can lash out for another 1-6 hp damage; both mouth and tail attacks can be used simultaneously. Finally, the amphitere can attack as an ordinary constrictor snake, inflicting 1-3 hp damage per round. Note that the amphitere cannot bite while constricting. The flying snake has only to make a successful attack to coil around the victim initially; afterward, each attack is an automatic hit until the victim is freed. Aside from simply killing the amphitere, a victim may unwind the creature's coils with a successful Open Doors roll at a -1 penalty.

Habitat/Society: Amphiteres are solitary coming together briefly in the mating season. The female raises the young alone, driving them out of the lair when they are old enough to take care of themselves (in about 6 weeks). Thus, any young amphiteres the PCs find in a lair are unable to help their mother defend against intruders.



Ecology: Amphiteres are predators, though cowardly ones, typically picking off lone wayfarers, sentries, and stray animals from a herd. Children are their favored human prey, as adults are simply too big to be swallowed whole. Despite their poison, amphiteres have natural enemies in plenty who are willing to make an initial strike in an attempt to kill the amphitere before it can fight back. Griffins, hippogriffs, and giant birds of prey are frequent foes, and if an amphitere nest is built too low to the ground, wild pigs will raid it.

Although generally rare, amphiteres may undergo a periodic population explosion during a good season when prey is plentiful. When game is scarce, the weaker youngsters tend to starve to death, with what food there is going solely to the stronger hatchlings. When there is food for everyone, the population doubles, meaning starvation in the future unless something is done. The solution is usually a mass migration, in which many of the creatures fly off en masse to new territories, after which they scatter far and wide, resuming their solitary lifestyle. Although amphiteres are unwelcome neighbors, attacking a massed swarm (which can contain up to 200 individuals) is an extraordinarily bad idea for anyone not plentifully equipped with heavy-damage versions of spells such as *fireball*. Still, because it is quicker to tackle them all together than to hunt down each individual once they scatter, few local rulers can resist the temptation.

If an amphitere is captured young, it may be trained as a guard beast or pet, and the young typically sell for 500 gp each. Because of its cowardice, however, it is best placed in ambush positions around the owner's property, rather than being kept out in the open like a guard dog. They tend to lurk among building rafters and upper stories when kept indoors.

Cetus, Lesser

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subtropical/tropical seas
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (6)
TREASURE:	H,S,T
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	1
MOVEMENT:	3, Swim 18
HIT DICE:	13
THAC0:	7
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4-24
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Swallow whole
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to petrification
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	G (60' long)
MORALE:	Champion (16)
XI' VALUE:	8,000

A cetus resembles a thick-bodied serpent with a head that resembles a cross between a serpent's and a hound's. Protruding from this head, however, are a pair of 10' ivory tusks. Its body is ringed in dark red and blue-green stripes, and it has both a blood-red crest on its head and a pair of vestigial fins up front of the same color. Its scales are so tightly packed as to resemble full plate armor.

Combat: The cetus has two attack forms, both of which inflict 4-24 hp damage to the target: a thrusting attack with the tusks or a lash of the powerful tail. So large and clumsy is this monster that only one of these attacks can be made at a time; it cannot thrust and lash out at once, even with a foe at either end of it. It may also swallow creatures of up to Size L whole on an attack roll of 18 or better, provided the attack roll is sufficient to hit. The initial swallowing attack causes no damage, but each round afterward, the victim suffers 1-6 hp damage from the creature's digestive fluids. Since it takes up to 10 rounds to cut open a dead cetus, the victim's chances of rescue are slim at best. The lesser cetus is also given a special defense besides its armor: it is immune to petrification-based attacks.

Habitat/Society: These creatures live alone, save for brief moments in the mating season. Even females abandon their eggs after laying them, burying them 50' deep in the sand in the most desolate and uninhabited wastes for added protection. A cetus lays 1-4 eggs at a time, and these take 6 months to hatch.

Ecology: Like a regular dragon, the cetus can eat anything to survive, even rock, and thus does not have a balanced place in the ecology of the ocean. Its only enemies are dragon turtles and other aquatic dragons, the largest giant sharks and whales,



the occasional kraken, and adventurers bold enough to hunt it. Giant sea turtles, giant crocodiles, and the various forms of aquatic dragon life dig up cetus eggs on the beach whenever they can.

The cetus seems like a destructive force of nature when suitable nesting places for the eggs and young grow scarce. In general, this happens when expanding human, demihuman, or humanoid populations cover the local beaches with settlements, making solitary egg-laying missions impossible. The successful mass hunting of eggs by local authorities or bands of adventurers can also bring about this dilemma; the eggs are just too difficult to find. Whenever the inability to find secure nesting sites places the race's future in jeopardy, ceti from all over the world instinctively congregate on the inhabited area farthest removed from the major centers of civilization. Once there, they use their considerable powers to see to it that the area in question is no longer an inhabited area. Whenever possible, the targeted area will be an island; failing that, it will be a peninsula, preferably one connected to the mainland by a narrow neck of land that can easily be blocked. The monsters attack from all sides at once, using weight of numbers to surround the target and nullify the disadvantage of their slow speed.

A cetus' tusks are worth 4,000 gp each. This high value is due not merely to their size but also to their magical nature. Cetus tusks may be used to fashion any magical item made of ivory, such as the ivory cube used in making a *cube of force*, a *cube of frost resistance*, or the Ivory Goats version of *figurines of wondrous power*. The creature's hide may also be used to create a suit of armor equivalent to magical full or field plate armor +1.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate or arctic mountains and hills
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (10)
TREASURE:	E
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	12, Fly 20 (B)
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6/1-4/1-4 or 2-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Fiery breath, rake with rear claws for 1-4/1-4
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Poison blood, resistant to fire
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (12' long)
MORALE:	Champion (15)
XP VALUE:	1,400

The dragonet looks like a small dragon built for agility rather than power. It appears in varying shades of blue.

Combat: The dragonet attacks with a bite/claw/claw routine causing 1-6/1-4/1-4 hp damage. Alternatively, it can attack with its tail to cause 2-8 hp constriction damage. If it climbs on top of a fallen foe (on an attack roll of 12+), it can also inflict 1-4 hp clawing damage with each of its hind feet. Finally, it has a cone-shaped breath weapon of fire, one foot wide at the base, extending to a maximum width of 10 feet at a range of 20 feet. This tongue of flame inflicts 1-12 hp damage, or half if a saving throw vs. breath weapon is made. In return, the dragonet suffers only half damage from all fire-based attacks, or none at all if it makes its own saving throw.

The dragonet's bite is not venomous, but it has poison in its blood. Each time a PC actually inflicts damage on the dragonet in melee combat, the PC must save vs poison (Class N). The PCs saves at +2 if wearing full armor, including gauntlets and a great helm, the latter counting only if the visor is down.

Habitat/Society: Dragonets are solitary most of the time, but a mated pair live together in the same den during the breeding season to defend the young during the 4 months (late spring and summer) it takes them to reach maturity. Dragonets have 14 young at a time, and these are driven out as soon as they reach full maturity. Dragonets are born with 1 HD and gain an additional HD each month until they mature at 5 HD.

Ecology: When their larger brethren are absent, dragonets are often top predators in the ecology of hilly or mountainous regions in the arctic and temperate regions of the world.



Dragonet blood is often used as an ingredient for the ink used in writing a scroll with the priest spell *poison* (the reverse of *neutralize poison*), while a leg bone might fashion the handle of a *dagger of venom*. More conventional alchemists use the blood in various cures for poison; the idea is to give the victim a tiny taste of the venom, one which he can resist, and then enhance this resistance with the other ingredients. (A healing or herbalism proficiency is required to work this feat.) Dragonet eggs and young are worth 1,000 gp each, as these creatures make excellent guard beasts if trained while still young.

Those who plan to purchase guardian monsters should know that the dragonet is often employed in a scam used by wizards on those who are generally ignorant of the effects of spells. When the con artist mage presents his intended mark with a dragonet, he doesn't say it's a dragonet. Instead, he offers a long spiel about how he recently discovered a way to extend the effects of the spell *polymorph other* indefinitely, though it is still subject to the dweomer-breaking effects of *dispel magic*, offering the "blue dragon" to the customer as the result. There'll be a lot of talk about economy, about how this formerly-massive creature will now eat no more than an ordinary creature of its size. But, whenever an enemy penetrates the owner's last line of defense, all the owner must do is cast *dispel magic* on the beast, or touch it with a *rod of cancellation* or the beam from a *wand of negation*, and he will get a full-sized blue dragon of at least adult rank to tackle the invaders. Of course, this trick will only work once, so the owner should only employ it as a last resort (which keeps the fraud from being exposed for a good long time). If the swindler is so powerful that he's thinking of attacking and looting his customer's stronghold sometime in the future, he might willingly sell him a guard dragonet via this scam in the interest of keeping him from buying a far more powerful beast elsewhere.

Gargouille

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate or tropical saltwater or freshwater
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (7)
TREASURE:	B,R,S,T,U
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	3, Swim 20
HIT DICE:	
THAC0:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3-30 or 2-20
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon, swallow whole
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to water-based attacks
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	G (70' long)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	10,000

The gargouille is a sea dragon resembling a prehistoric mosasaur (such as the Tylosaurus of Cretaceous seas). It is one of the most terrible of all aquatic monsters. Although it can travel slowly on land, it is still a terror to coastal communities.

Combat: The gargouille has one of two attack forms in melee combat: a tail slap that causes 2–20 hp damage or a bite with its huge jaws that inflicts 3–30 hp damage. It can also swallow whole any creature of Size L or smaller on an attack roll of 19+. Each round after being swallowed, a victim suffers 1–6 hp digestive damage from the monster's stomach acid.

What makes the gargouille so famous is that it is a water-breathing dragon. Specifically, the gargouille can magically generate water inside its body and spout a cone-shaped water attack 10 feet wide at the base and 50 feet wide at the end of the 100' stream. This water causes 5–50 hp damage (victims who save vs. breath weapon suffer only half) and knocks creatures of Size H and smaller off their feet unless they make another successful save vs. breath weapon (with a -2 penalty). A single round's application of this water weapon is enough to capsize small craft such as rafts, canoes, and small sailing vessels and galleys such as the cog. Two rounds of uninterrupted jetting, and even a full-sized galleon sinks. Two rounds of this breath weapon on land effectively floods an acre of ground into uselessness. Afterward, of course, the gargouille feasts the bodies of all the people and animals that have been drowned. It is also immune to all water-based attacks.

Habitat/Society: Gargouilles are solitary animals, much like conventional dragons. In part, this is because not even those areas most teeming with life can support the appetites of two or more of these enormous beasts. After a brief mating



encounter, male and female separate, the female laying her eggs inside an underwater cave or on some distant shore. She leaves the eggs after burying them, but she buries them so well that most PC parties have absolutely no chance of finding them. (The mining proficiency is needed to find where the excavation was made and then covered up.) These eggs take four months to hatch, and the young are able to take care of themselves immediately after birth. Although gargouilles do not actually use the wealth they glean from flooded towns and sunken ships, they like to keep it—and the ships themselves—as trophies to remind all living things (including each other) of their hunting prowess.

Ecology: The gargouille is a voracious monster that will eat any living thing, attacking dragon turtles, whales, and even giant whales if no other prey is available. Even the huge kraken know better than to challenge a gargouille in its own territory. Gargouilles live only in those marine and coastal areas teeming with fish and other prey. When they cannot find them, they must migrate in search of food, abandoning their lairs. This voracity is the key to their fearless nature.

On rare occasions, gargouilles band together to create large-scale floods by combining their breath weapon attacks. It is still uncertain whether they do so to improve their hunting or for some other reason.

After a gargouille is slain, anyone who cuts it open discovers a sac the size of an elephant's stomach, filled with magical water. Filling a jug or bowl with this water can be an important part of the process of creating magical items such as an *alchemy jug*, a *beaker of plentiful potions*, a *decanter of endless water*, or a *bowl commanding water elementals*, while using this water as an ingredient enhances one's chances of success when creating any type of magical potion (base chance is increased to 80%).

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate mountains
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8)
TREASURE:	C
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	3, Fly 30 (E)
HIT DICE:	20
THAC0:	5
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-20/2-20 or 3-30
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon, swallow whole, surprise
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to air-based attacks
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	15%
SIZE:	G (80' long + wingspan)
MORALE:	Fanatic (18)
XP VALUE:	23,000

The hai riyo is also known as a dragon bird. This inhabitant of Kara-Tur appears to be a massive bird, even larger than a roc, but with the bewhiskered head of an oriental dragon. Its metallic-seeming feathers look almost like scales of copper and are harder than normal feathers, hence its Armor Class of 3. It lives in the eastern lands of Wa and Kozakura.

Combat: A hai riyo typically attacks via one of two methods: a pair of claw attacks that cause 2–20 hp damage each, or a bite from the huge dragon jaws that inflict 3–30 hp damage. The hai riyo can also swallow its prey whole on an attack roll of 18+, after which the victim suffers 1d6 hp damage from digestive juices in the creature's stomach. Only creatures of Size L or smaller can be swallowed in this fashion.

Like dragons, the hai riyo has a breath weapon: a cone-shaped cloud of scalding steam 20 feet wide at the base and extending to a maximum width of 100 feet at the end, 200 feet away. Anyone caught in this cloud suffers 10d10 hp damage. The hai riyo can breathe this cloud three times per day.

Despite its size, the hai riyo is an excellent flier, if not very maneuverable. Cruising on patrol at heights of up to 5,000 feet, its splendid vision enables it to pick out targets on the ground. Dropping silently down, the dragon bird achieves complete surprise in most cases; there is a +4 penalty to the victim's surprise roll. Because of its a near-elemental affinity for air, the hai riyo is completely immune to all air-based attacks, including *gust of wind* spells and the *divine wind* attack of a tun mi lung (typhoon dragon). This is in addition to this magical creature's 15% general magic resistance.

Habitat/Society: Dragon birds are solitary creatures, coming together only to guard their nests and young in the breeding



season. Because of their heavy food requirements, hai riyos never nest closer to each other than 50 miles, and this only in those regions richest in prey. There is a 20% chance of finding 1d4 eggs in a hai riyo nest, each of which may be sold for 6,000 gp to merchants and other dealers in exotic items. The parents, however, fight to the death to protect their eggs and young, with a +2 bonus to both their morale rating and attack roll. (Hai riyo young take 6 months to reach maturity, the young finally leaving the nest in mid-autumn.) Such treasure as is likely to catch the hai riyo's eye, mainly fine carpeting and similar large items, are scattered haphazardly about the nest.

Ecology: A single hai riyo can strip all but the largest territories clean of game, and the creatures attack the largest animals and monsters they can find, including young gargantua. Unfortunately, they attack gatherings of humans or demihumans and herds of livestock with equal rapacity. Indeed, the hai riyo can fairly be said to be the equivalent of an aerial gargantua, both in size and menace. As such, it takes the services of a monster of equivalent size or an entire army of humans or demihumans to fight one. Of course, finding winged monsters of this size, or armies that can fly to get at the thing, is rather difficult.

The feathers of a hai riyo can be used in metallic versions of the *wings* and *broom of flying*, as well as *Quaal's feather tokens*. In addition, because the feathers are so much like metal scales, they can be used for the production of enchanted suits of scale mail. Finally, their blood is a suitable ingredient for ink used in penning scrolls of spells like *gust of wind* and *divine wind*.

Despite their intimidating size, hai riyos are frequently harassed by hu hsien, or fox spirits, who steal treasure and attack the young whenever possible. This has led to all-out war between the two species, and a dragon bird will, if given the choice, attack hu hsien in preference to any other prey.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate swamp or woodland
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (7)
TREASURE:	H
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil

NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	18
THAC0:	5
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-10 or 2-16
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon, quills, surprise
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Quills, resistance to fire
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	G (90' long)
MORALE:	Fearless (19)
XP VALUE:	15,000

The peluda, or "shaggy beast," is a dragonlike creature with a long neck and tail, no wings, four feet like those of a giant snapping turtle, and a back covered with bright orange quills. The base of these quills is pine green. A peluda's body is turtle-shaped but without a shell, and the quills and coarse fur give the torso a shaggy appearance.

Combat: The peluda can attack with a bite that causes 1d10 hp damage or a slap of its powerful tail, which inflicts 2d8 hp damage. It also has a cone-shaped flaming breath weapon 300 feet long, 10 feet wide at the base, broadening to 60 feet at the end, which causes 8d6 hp damage or half that if the victim saves vs. breath weapon. The peluda suffers only half-damage from all fire-based attacks, or none if the creature makes its saving throw.

The peluda's spines are both offensive and defensive. They cause 2-20 hp damage to any creature that comes in contact with them; in addition, they are highly poisonous (Type F poison). The quills create such a dense thicket on the monster's torso that they also stop all arrows and other missiles fired at the body (75% of all missile attacks, unless attackers deliberately make called shots elsewhere). Finally, the peluda can fire these quills in the manner of a giant porcupine. The range of these fired quills is 300 feet; the quills themselves are over 10 feet long. Thus, even in melee combat, the peluda can jab with its quills any opponent that comes within 10 feet of it, save for those attacking directly to the front or directly behind it.

The peluda can cause its orange quills to change color to the same green as its fur, enabling it to camouflage itself among the trees of forest and swamp, ambushing any creatures who come within range (-3 penalty to the surprise roll).

Habitat/Society: Peludas pair up briefly in the spring mating season, as they are solitary creatures. Even the females aban-



don their eggs after burying them along a river bank. They do this so well, however, that a successful mining proficiency check is required to discover the hidden excavation. Because the peluda requires so much flesh as food, a couple coming together for a more permanent arrangement would soon strip the neighborhood bare of animal and monstrous life. Young peludas hatch after a month of incubation and are able to take care of themselves immediately after hatching.

Ecology: The peluda is the top carnivore of the swampy and forest environments it calls home, save when true dragons of at least adult age are around. Young dragons are eaten as readily as any other prey, but only when their parents are not about. The reverse is true as well, of course, with dragons eating young peludas whenever they can. Unless the local dragons are forest-dwellers such as the green dragons are, however, they won't get many opportunities, for the peluda is quite well-equipped for hiding in the woods, and when the dragon is flying, this creature also has the forest canopy as additional cover. Indeed, as long as the peluda sticks to the woods and doesn't venture into the local hills, deserts, or whatever, a nearby dragon living in those types of terrain may be entirely unaware of the creature's presence.

Alchemists use peluda venom in the making of poisons, while wizards use it in the production of items such as the *danger of venom*. In addition to this, their fur can be woven and enchanted to make a *robe of blending*, while a quill (no more than a single quill from any one peluda may be enchanted by a mage) can be turned into a single magical javelin of some sort. A *cloak of poisonousness* can be created by treating a peluda-fur cloak with some of the creature's own venom. In the unlikely event adventurers can find a peluda nest, each of the 1d4 eggs inside may be sold to exotic-item merchants for up to 20,000 gp, while hatchlings are worth twice as much.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subtropical or tropical desert or hills
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary/pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil

NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	5+1
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-10/1-4/1-4 or 1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to poison, kick in retreat
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (6' at shoulder, 10' long)
MORALE:	Champion (15)
XP VALUE:	1,400

The sirrush is a creature with a catlike, scaled torso; forelegs like those of a scaled lion; hind legs like those of a giant bird or lizard; a long, prehensile tail; and a snakelike head at the end of a long neck. Adorning that head is a pair of curled horns, like ram's horns but mounted backward. A short neck-crest or dewlap adorns the neck just below the head. The entire animal is of a sandy yellow hue.

Combat: In fighting with its own kind, the sirrush relies solely on head-butting with its curled horns in a test of strength. Such attacks usually take place in competition for a mate. Should it use this form of attack on other animals, this attack inflicts 14 hp damage. For self-defense and predation, however, the sirrush employs a claw/claw/bite routine that causes 1-4/1-4/1-10 hp damage. Its fangs are also venomous (Type E poison).

Should retreat become necessary, the sirrush may also kick out with its wickedly-clawed hind feet in the manner of a leucrotta, inflicting 1-10 hp damage from each taloned foot. It is immune to all poisons.

Habitat/Society: Usually, the sirrush is solitary, hunting small game and lone human or demihuman wayfarers as well as the strayed, aged, crippled, or young members of herds of game animals or domestic stock. When easy prey grows scarce, however, two mated pairs form a small pack in the interests of bringing down larger prey, or an entire party of travelers. One mated pair takes care of their young for the four months (spring and early summer) it takes them to reach maturity, each parent accepting equal responsibility for feeding and defending the 1-5 (1d4+1) eggs and young that constitute a typical sirrush clutch. When defending their young, sirrush parents gain a +1 attack bonus, and their morale rises to Fanatic (17).



Ecology: The sirrush is just another large predator, albeit one somewhat more intelligent than most, having no more effect on its environment than a pack of dire wolves or a pride of lions would.

When military forces or strong parties of adventurers are not available to deal with a sirrush, or a pack of them, the locals and any caravans that regularly travel through their territory have no choice but to deal with them. In practical terms, this means leaving behind one or more animals as sacrifices. The number of victims laid out at a time depends entirely upon how many sirrushes are in the area. Naturally, if their prey runs away, the sacrifice is for nothing, and the monsters resume their raids. Therefore, the sacrifices are typically bound, hobbled, or crippled in some manner. The victims are not slain outright, however, as sirrush prefer live prey.

Humans have several uses for this monster. As with most venomous beasts, its poison is much sought after by wizards and alchemists alike. It has a leathery hide like bull's hide beneath the layer of scales, and this hide may be used in the manufacture of a *cloak of poisonousness*, while the scales themselves, if the animal is carefully skinned, may be formed into a suit of scale mail quite suitable for enchantment. There are even reports that a *staff of the serpent*—though only the "adder" version—may be created by steeping a quarterstaff in the sirrush's blood.

Because of its limited ability to hunt in packs, the sirrush is sometimes trained as a guard and hunting beast. Up to four of these creatures may be welded into a single pack, assuming that they are all trained together. Lamiae have been known to work with them from time to time, just as they do with leucrottas. A young sirrush or sirrush egg is worth 800 gp.



In the News

Are you stuck
while trying
to come up with
AD&D® game
adventures for
your campaign?

by
Rob Daviau



GOOD, USABLE GAME ADVENTURES come to your home every day—dozens of them. They come from the newspaper, the TV, magazines, and other forms of news. All it takes is a moment of work, a few simple guidelines, and a newspaper, and you can come up with next week's gaming session.

You might think that contemporary news stories are far removed from a good AD&D adventure, but people are people. The details change, but most stories are timeless enough to use anywhere. All you must do is find a good story, take out most of the details, put in your own details, and you have your next three gaming sessions.

Step 1: Choose a Story

The first step is to find a news story that can make a good AD&D adventure (or start of an adventure). The newspaper usually works best for this task, since it is portable and there are a great number and variety of articles from which to choose. News magazines offer fewer articles with more depth, which doesn't necessarily work as well, since you'll be removing much of the detail anyway. Broadcast media such as radio (especially NPR) and television are good if you can remember the stories later, but they don't offer the ability to refer back to the piece.

What kind of news story is best to make into an adventure? More than you'd think. Don't eliminate an article because it deals with the Internet or the

stock market. As you'll see, the essentials of the article might make a good adventure after all. However, routine sports articles, reviews of any sort, OpEd pieces, and most arts, cooking, and home articles are ill-suited to your purposes. You really want *news* articles.

The following sections use examples from real newspaper stories. All of these were taken from the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*.

Example 1: *A lawyer in New York who had long criticized law-firm fraud in the industry pled guilty to overcharging the U.S. government for \$1.3 million. Some peers are gloating over his misfortunes. Some people feel he did it because he was frustrated that other, larger firms were able to charge more than his firm could.*

Example 2: Nucor, a steelmaker in the U.S., announced that it was dropping its prices for rolled steel by 7%. Other steelmakers, although not matching prices as of yet, are worried that Nucor will take away some of their customers.

Example 3: The economy in the U.S. is so good that the shipping industry is having trouble keeping up with deliveries. Ports, trains, cars, planes are all facing gridlock. People are especially worried about getting everything on the shelves for the Christmas season.

Example 4: A Somali militia freed five foreign aid workers who had been kidnapped the week before. All were fine.

Step 2: Generalize the Story

Now that you have a story, you must translate it into your AD&D world, which is not as difficult as it sounds. The first step is to strip the story down to its most basic form—a few sentences that describe the story concisely. Luckily, most news articles still follow the format of having the first paragraph set up the rest of the story.

Start by making specific things into the generic: President Clinton becomes “political leader,” “local Wal-Mart” becomes “powerful trader” or “large marketplace.” Reduce the action of the story to its simplest form. Some things won’t change at all (a new tax is a new tax), some will change little (“a new skyscraper” becomes “a new building”) and some change significantly (“an increase in Internet technology” becomes “discovery of a new magical method”).

Keeping the same examples as above, here’s how the above stories can be boiled down:

Example 1: An important figure who usually criticized his industry for wrongdoings was caught doing the very thing he criticized. He has enemies who are happy at this news. He was frustrated because he didn’t get enough respect.

Example 2: A large manufacturer of raw goods dropped its prices. Competitors are worried about losing customers and money to this rising power.

News to AD&D Conversations

Real World	AD&D World
Political figures	Royalty, nobility, guild leaders, powerful wizards, high priests, local politicians
Religious figures	Priests, acolytes, shamans, paladins, avatars, extraplanar beings
Corporations	Guilds, mills, powerful merchants, wizards, royalty, clans
Organized crime	Thieves’ guilds, evil outerplanar beings
Technology	Spells, magical items
Airplanes	Flying steeds, magic carpets, airships
Entertainers	Famous NPCs, famous PCs, bards, minor nobility, gladiators
Sports	Traveling carnivals, gladiatorial contests, mock battles, guild games

Example 3: So many people are ordering goods that they can’t be shipped in time. Ports, trains, and planes are all behind as an important buying season approaches.

Example 4: A group of non-professional fighters rescued a group of humanitarians who had been kidnapped in a war zone.

Step 3: Translate the Story

Use the sidebar above for a few common news topics and their AD&D game equivalents, as the following examples demonstrate:

Example 1: The “important figure” in this example could be anyone—a wizard, high priest, guildmaster, rich merchant.

Let’s make him a wizard of a duke’s court. He was very critical of other wizards’ using their power for selfish reasons instead of for the good of all. But he has secretly been using his powers to seduce women, beguile merchants, and even influence court reactions. Several other wizards in the area suspect this and are looking to find some dirt on him.

Example 2: A large manufacturer of raw goods could be almost anything, but iron fits well enough in this idea to keep it. A large manufacturer of iron ore would probably be local dwarven mountain-city. This group of dwarves somehow gained access to a new vein of iron ore, allowing them to drop their prices and put more of their ore on the market. Other dwarven ore providers are worried about this.

Example 3: This one almost writes itself. A county finds itself prosperous and can’t order goods fast enough. Let’s say that one

county just won a war (a good way to become prosperous), and there aren’t enough ships around to transport goods (many were sunk in the war). Prices are threatening to rise, and merchants are looking for any solution to get goods to sale—especially with an important trade fair coming in a few months.

Example 4: This is an AD&D adventure in the making. The militia could remain a militia, or it could become the adventuring party. The humanitarians who had been kidnapped would probably be a religious order. Members of a religious order could have wandered in to an enemy county to heal the peasants there. They have been kidnapped by a local warlord.

Step 4: Add the PCs

Now that you have your short AD&D stories, you must put the characters into the action. Sometimes it is interesting for the characters to watch the story or hear about it secondhand, but more often they will be a part of the action. Look at your story description and determine whether the PCs can be the subject of the story or its object. If that doesn’t work, perhaps someone in the story can contact the PCs to make them part of it. If it’s a mysterious situation, the PCs can investigate. If it’s a dangerous situation, they can act as guards. The PCs can see the whole story or come in after most of the action has happened. The idea is to make the PCs want to be involved in the story, then give them the ability to become involved.

Example 1: There are many ways to put the PCs into this adventure. The wizard could be an old ally of theirs (or an old foe). If the scan-

dal hasn't broken yet, the PCs could be hired by rival wizards to find evidence on their enemy. Or the scandal could have broken and the wizard fled. The PCs would be hired to find him and bring him back alive for trial. Perhaps the wizard has embezzled gold from the local nobility and hidden it somewhere, and the PCs have to find the loot.

Example 2: The PCs could end up on either side of this situation or just watch it happen. If the PCs approach the dwarven mountain that found the ore, they could be guards for the caravan. If they are hired by the other

warlord could be the leader, or he could be working for someone else. He might be using these priests to use for healing or for ransom, or he might plan to brainwash them for use as his own spies.

back dead, the Duke gives them some gold for their efforts, but not all the treasure. This adventure would probably take two or three sessions.

Step 5: Add the AD&D Details

Now that you have the general story ideas worked out and have figured out a way to get the PCs involved, all that remains is adding detail to the adventures to get them ready to play. Your article should now be a solid AD&D outline that just needs a half hour of work, prob-

Example 2: There are two clans of dwarves in this adventure: the Yttrites and the Ghalans, with one PC coming from or being friendly with the Ghalans. For years the Ghalans have had an uneasy peace with a copper dragon who lived in their lands, near a nice vein of iron ore. They gave the dragon yearly tribute, and he left them alone. Part of the deal was that the dwarves would have access to the ore after the dragon's death, or if it moved. Unbeknownst to the Ghalans, the Yttrite clan paid a group of powerful adventurers to kill the dragon. This group instead trapped it deep within its lair. Now the Yttrites have been mining the ore that belongs to the Ghalans. The PCs become involved when they return from another adventure and discover that the price of Yttrite-made items are lower than those made by the Ghalans, a fact that's hurting the Ghalans. A member of the Ghalan clan contacts the PCs to learn how they acquired all this new iron so that the Ghalans can respond. The PCs must follow some Yttrites in town and ferret out that they have a "new vein of ore." Following the Yttrites back into the mountains, the PCs discover the dragon's lair, avoiding (or quietly disposing of) Yttrite guards and their associates, some urds that the dwarves have hired. Once reaching the lair, the PCs must figure out what happened, use a map from the Ghalans to find an alternate entrance into the lair, then descend into the lair to free the dragon, who will have his revenge. If successful, the PCs gain the thanks of a dragon, the thanks of their clan, some gold, and a whole bunch of dwarven Yttrite enemies. This adventure would probably take four or five sessions.

dwarves, they could be sent to spy on the dwarves and find out where their new ore is coming from or to steal some of the ore for themselves. If the PCs are less than savory, they might be hired as enforcers to make sure that no blacksmiths are thinking of changing suppliers. Or the PCs might not be involved at all but notice that the price of metal goods has gone down slightly, giving them a good opportunity to buy new weapons and armor.

Example 3: There are many things that could happen if demand is outpacing supply. For one, the price of certain goods will go up drastically or not be available at all. The need for merchants, bodyguards, sailors, trailblazers, pathfinders, and guides rises sharply. In this situation, PCs with their ears to the ground and a desire to make some money should be able to find plenty of ways to become involved. They can start their own merchant shipping company or hire on with another. They can guide caravans through tricky mountain passes or lease out their ship for trade. And as the trade fair grows closer, the merchants grow more desperate and the PCs can make more gold.

Example 4: It makes the most sense for the PCs to be the "militia" in this story. They are hired by one county (their own) to rescue a group of pacifist priests who have wandered into a war zone and been kidnapped. A local

ably with some manuals and graph paper. Defining the goal, hook, villain, treasure, and targets along the way are the final steps. Here's one way the examples could become full adventures (they could have been taken any number of ways):

Example 1: The duke's wizard, Garan, fled the court after Duke Micah learned of his improprieties. Duke Micah is worried about the other wizards in the duchy finding out before he gets Garan back, so he is looking for a group of discreet adventurers to go quietly to Garan's Tower in the woods to find him. The goal is for the PCs to find, capture, and return the renegade wizard to the duke's court. In return, the duke allows the group to keep whatever they want from Garan's possessions (one item each). Garan is a wizard about three or four levels above that of the party, and he has decided to hide in his tower while he makes plans to flee. There will be a few bands of humanoids, probably ogres, in the area around his tower. Once there, the PCs find that his tower has an assortment of charmed creatures as guardians and a few wizardly traps to disarm. At the end, Garan fights the PCs with spells to avoid being taken. The real challenge for the PCs is to take him alive. If they do, they probably receive one or two magical items and some nice treasures from Garan's tower. If they bring him

Example 3: The PCs return from the wilds one day to find a major trading town in turmoil. Almost every merchant, guild and trading venture is clamoring for powerful allies to "make easy money." There is a shortage of boats and hired muscle (both were lost in the war) to go across the mountains (or sail around them) before winter to return with all sorts of items for sale. Now that the war is

Defining the goal, hook, villain, treasure, and targets along the way are the final steps,

over, the crops can be harvested and people have surplus money again. The PCs must sort out many different offers from different merchants (some that are legitimate and others that are frauds) and decide whom to help. Due to the shortage of adventurers, the PCs can set their terms with the merchants for rewards. The PCs must also decide whether to take a mountain journey or a sea journey.

Another option would be for the group to form their own trading deal, where they put up their own gold in return for higher profits (but higher risk). No matter which offer they take, the PCs face a series of bandits, humanoids, rival merchants, bad weather, and deceptive merchants. Once they acquire the items, they must retrace their steps, possibly changing routes to avoid the enemies they faced before. The main obstacle at this point is time, as the seas become too rough, and the passes snow over if the PCs are much delayed. Completing this mission results in big profits, provided the goods return in time and in good condition. This adventure would probably take eight to ten sessions.

Example 4: The PCs (who might or might not be involved with the war) are contacted by a local temple (possibly one to which a PC belongs). This temple has a holy quest for the PCs, a simple rescue mission. Five priests of the order disobeyed temple orders and went into the war zone to heal peasants and refugees. Now they are missing.

While there, the priests were captured by the warlord of the area, who secretly works for a greater mummy. This mummy, newly arisen, is consolidating his power in the area. He has taken the priests to his crypts until he can decide what to do with them (either charm them, keeping their minds, or turn them into lesser mummies under his power). The PCs must sneak into enemy territory, trace the priests' path to learn they were kid-

cue the priests. They must return with the hostages and information about the greater mummy. This is a mid-level adventure that would probably take four to six sessions.

You're Done!

And there you have it. Quick, easy adventure ideas by the dozen every day. Some will be short adventures, while others can serve as starting points for long, multi-session adventures. They won't actually write themselves or provide detailed campaigns, but news stories can be the launching point for many adventures.

So pick up a copy of today's paper, grab a pencil, release your imagination, and see what adventures can be found on your front doorstep. Before you know it, your PCs could be fighting an altered version of Bill Gates, embroiled in the latest scandal in Congress, or—if everything goes wrong—trying to take pictures of Socks the Cat for a local tabloid.

Remember ...

Step 1: Choose a Story

Step 2: Generalize the Story

Step 3: Translate the Story

Step 4: Add the PCs

Step 5: Add Details

napped, learn that the warlord is not the true power, find the crypts (by following a map they find at the warlord encampment), sneak into the crypts, win past the undead, and res-

Rob Daviau is an advertising writer who lives in Boston. Any good ads you've seen might be his. Any bad ones belong to someone else. He has sometimes been called "a lazy man."



By Aaron Williams

The Ecology of A Spell Contest

by
Thomas S. Roberts

It's always fun to participate in contests, and by way of following up, your judges have decided to talk a bit about the process. What did we look for? What eliminated certain entries? What ultimately made a winner? As prologue, having judged a similar contest about three years ago, the greatest change we noticed in the current contest was the improved quality of the entries (the Priest competition in particular drew exceptional entries). Well done, everyone!

In the article that follows, we'll talk briefly about the screening process. We won't use any contest submission as an example of a failed entry, so if you sent in an entry that didn't win, don't go looking for your spell here!

The Madness in Our Method

We set up a series of screens to cut the number of entries down to six wizard and six priest spells (enough for the whole group to pick through in a meeting of reasonable length). Two stalwarts formed the initial screen, attacking the several hundred entries that came our way. The official count, for those interested, tallied 110 priest spells and 285 wizard spells.

The top spells were then screened by a group of four to create a semi-final list. The semi-finalists were submitted for blind review by the AD&D® Core group, and the winners were chosen. We then ran a final confirmation check on the winners. When the smoke cleared, Eric Morton had taken first place in the Priest Spell Contest with *statuary*, and Chris

Montgomery had taken both first and second place in the Wizard Spell Contest with *wind mine* (1st) and *hornet flare* (2nd).

Congratulations to both of you! The first-, second-, and third-place winning entries are reproduced at the end of the article. (Some texts have undergone minor organization and formatting changes.)

Killing Screens

Our first kill screen was to eliminate entries that didn't follow the rules. Oops! We should have had some more rules, like requiring entries to be typed (yes, we got some softly written in cursive script in pencil) and specifying standard pages of 8½" × 11" paper (we got 3" × 5" cards, half- and quarter-sheets of paper, and so on). We did eliminate about two dozen spells that were too long. If we recognized spells from other sources, we killed the entry also.

Our second kill screen was to eliminate non-serious efforts, satire, and blatant anachronisms. Most people avoided these, and the satiric spells were turned over to *DRAGON MAGAZINE* staff for their April 1999 issue slush pile.

Our third kill screen was for the obviously overpowered or underdescribed spells. For example, a first-level wizard spell that allows a +4 bonus to a creature's Armor Class and saving throws goes into this category, as does a first-level priest spell that allows a *magic missile* -style attack superior to that of a wizard. Like-

**The results are in, and here
are the best entries in the
first *DRAGON*® Magazine
contest of 1998.**

Table 1: Wizard Spell Power Benchmarks

L 1 <i>Magic Missile</i>	L 2 <i>Web</i>	L 3 <i>Fireball</i>	L 4 <i>Curse</i>	L 5 <i>Cloudkill</i>	L 6 <i>Death Spell</i>	L 7 <i>Power Stun</i>	L 8 <i>Word Charm</i>	L 9 <i>Mordenkainen Disjunction</i>
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wise, a spell built around controlling monsters that requires them to make ability checks for Wisdom and Charisma also fails this screen. The “overpowered” category includes spells that negate major game system controls, like negating all aging effects or spell components. For the record, the spells we used as benchmarks for general wizard “crush power” are listed in Table 1.

Our fourth kill screen was for cross-class and anti-class spells. For example, a spell that gives a wizard better than a fighter’s THAC0 or gives a priest all thiefly abilities would fail this screen.

Danger Flags

Spells that give absolute results: No saving throw, instant kill, doubling damage, etc. were generally negative factors, depending on the spell level.

Also negative were minor holes in spell explanations that would generally be fixed by in-house editors: failure to specify type of saving throw, dropped rules, “real world” magic trappings (formulas, pentagrams, human body part components, etc.). These all tended to push an entry to the back of the pack, as did use of magic for mundane function, such as “using magic to flush toilets.” Magic should be marvelous by its very nature, not just a quick way to fix the plumbing.

Magic that accelerates game world technology gets a very serious look. Things like instant infallible navigation, or spells that effectively create the printing press or gunpowder, are poor bets unless carefully and creatively handled.

Derivative magic that fills in or extends in a minor way existing magic is a dicey submission to this type of contest. An example of this would be the *pass without trace, 10' radius* spell done for the *POLYHEDRON® Newszine* a number of years ago. Its rationale was to make the druid more of a team player, but in this type of contest, it would probably lose to a more fundamentally original spell.

“Enhanced” or “Improved” in the name automatically raises these flags.

The “ultimate spell” is a very chancy way to set up an entry, because you’re trying to fit in with established benchmarks such that the entry is commensurate but not grossly excessive in terms of game balance. Minor miscalls really stand out. It can be done, and this contest had some good efforts, but doing this well is very tricky.

One test we took a very hard line on was how well a contestant’s estimation of a spell’s level matched ours. This point was occasionally used as a tie-breaker between otherwise equally deserving entries. (A secondary consideration is how the spell would fit in to the overall structure of the combined spell lists. For example, first-level priest cure spells tend drive out other spells of their level, especially at 1st level. Wizards tend to have their best attack spells on the odd levels and best miscellaneous spells on the even levels).

Almost Home

These screens left a respectable stack of pretty well crafted spells, and a few wildly creative but less polished entries. At this point, the screening became increasingly difficult. A group of a dozen spells was chosen for each contest. Then each list narrowed to a final field of six. These were submitted to the core AD&D designers and editors, who awarded the final group prizes. The winning spells, and a few honorable mentions, were edited for publication here.

Final Thoughts

Surprising the judge with a spell that is at once evocative and of obvious use once it is pointed out is always a good thing. (The second-level wizard spell *glitterdust*, introduced in the 2nd Edition *PLAYER'S HANDBOOK*, falls into this category).

Making the judge laugh with a mental picture of the spell in action is also worth bonus points.

For wizard spells especially, making subtly clever references, possibly multi-level ones, with spell components is an asset, though it’s certainly not required for success if an entry is strong enough in other ways, and won’t save a flawed entry. (Example: the fourth-level wizard spell *confusion* requires three nut shells; the symbolism is “driving your opponents nuts” as well as giving a nod to the old carnival “shell game”). By the way, an entry is worse off for this if the components are sophomoric, anachronistic, inappropriate, or just plain vulgar.

Originality is important enough to list twice here. Sometimes it’s really tough to decide between a well-written, competently crafted spell and a slightly less well written spell that has a definite edge in the creativity department. We should have such problems all the time.

In closing, we would note that at the end of in any contest of this type, any of the top one or two dozen spells would be a worthy addition to any game (and we’ll try to present a few more of these down the road). The tents are now officially folded, the decision of the judges is final, we’re going on a well-deserved vacation where there are no spells!

Winning Priest Spells

FIRST PRIZE WINNER

Eric Morton

The gothic cathedral was more than a place of worship; it was also a work of art. Each was covered with hundreds of sculptures, the most famous of which, the gargoyles, belong to a type of ornamentation referred to as grotesques. These ugly statues were intended to scare away evil spirits.

Statuary

(Abjuration, Enchantment/Charm)
(Sphere: Wards)

Level: 7

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 day

Range: 10 yds.
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: 1 building
Saving Throw: None

By means of the *statuary* spell, the priest can enchant the grotesques (statues such as gargoyles) of any place of worship to form a potent ward against unwanted entry

Grotesque: AC 3; MV 9; Jump 15; HD 4; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+2/1d6+2; MR 20%; SA Counts as +3 weapon, no attack or damage bonus; SD Can see invisible creatures; immune to Enchantment/Charm and death magic; Int 0 (Non-) XP 650

Statuary animates a single, man-sized grotesque per casting, provided the statue decorates a temple or shrine devoted to the caster's deity. The spell can be cast more than once on a given building, as long as the number of grotesques already guarding the building does not exceed the number of priests residing there.

Once animated, the grotesque can move about freely inside the building and within 30 feet of it. If removed from this area, the grotesque becomes dormant until returned. Animated grotesques attack anyone not specifically named by the priest upon the casting of the *statuary* spell; individuals can be added to or removed from this list, though the spell must be cast over the grotesque each time this is done. To allow unnamed worshipers access, the priest can order the grotesque dormant at any time, for any duration. At the end of this time, the grotesque returns to its normal behavior. It cannot be made active before the duration expires.

SECOND PRIZE WINNER

William C. Pottenger

Battle Focus
(Enchantment/Charm)
Level: 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5
Range: 30 yds.
Duration: 1 rd. /level
Area of Effect: 14 creatures or images
Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell allows the caster to designate 1 to 4 creatures, or illusionary images of creatures, to become the focus of enemy attention. To attack any other individual the victim must make a successful saving throw vs. spell, as if the intended target were protected by the first-level *sanctuary* spell.

Attacks by non-focus individuals attract the attention of those they directly engage. Non-focus individuals can cast spells without voiding the focus if the spell cannot be directly traced to them. *Burning hands*, *lightning bolt*, and similar spells point directly back to the caster.

Intelligent creatures aware of the power of spellcasting may be granted a second save if obtrusive, nondirectional effects take place. As noted, this spell can be cast on summoned or illusionary creatures. (Of course, focusing attention on illusions might cause them to be revealed even sooner.)

In addition to the priest's holy symbol, the material components are one gold coin and one brass duplicate.

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Karen Anderson

Swords to Ploughshares (Alteration)

Level: 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 4 rounds
Range: Touch
Duration: 4 rds. + 1 rd./level
Area of Effect: Items touched
Saving Throw: None

This useful spell allows the priest to permanently transform ordinary nonmagical weapons into common household items. The spell duration determines how many items can be changed. Once the spell is cast, the priest's hand is outlined with a faint, shimmering field of pale blue. For the duration of the spell, anything he touches is immediately transformed. The better the original

Elistraee's Prayer Missile Effects

Alignment	Damage
Any Good	None
Any Neutral	1d3/missile
Any Evil	1d4+1/missile
Undead/Extraplanar	1d4+2/missile

item, the better the transformed item; for example, a flawed dagger becomes a shoddily crafted crowbar, and so on. The change cannot be dispelled. Only a spell that actually transforms an object can return it to its original form.

The material component is the caster's holy symbol.

Equally useful is the reverse, *ploughshares into swords*, which allows the alteration of normal household equipment into weapons of war. This is particularly useful in small towns where defense comes from a militia of farmers and laborers, and no weaponsmith is readily available. The effect is similar, except the shimmering field is a pale red. The size and quality of the original item greatly affects the transformation. For example, crowbars become daggers, shovels become swords, rakes become spears, and hoes become pole arms of the caster's choosing. Other items, such as smithy hammers, woodsmen's axes, and kitchen knives take on the weight and edge of the appropriate weapons.

(We recommend allowing the conversion of one item per round.)

HONORABLE MENTION

Jeremy Clements

Elistraee's Prayer Missiles

(Evocation)
Level: 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5
Range: 30 yds. + 5 yds./level
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: One or more creatures in a 10' cube
Saving Throw: None
The missiles created by this spell are always silvery-bright, resembling the missiles created by the goddess's avatar. The caster can create one missile for every three levels of experience. The maximum number of missiles created is four at 12th level. (Additional missiles

Information
Hits automatically; heals 1 point/missile
Attack roll to hit
Hits automatically
Hits automatically

Spells the SAGA® Way

As anyone who's played both AD&D and SAGA will tell you, the magic systems are just about as different as they can be. However, when it comes to creating (and judging the merits of) new spells, the games have more similarities than differences.

Being the new-game-rules-on-the-block, the SAGA contests didn't receive nearly as many entries as the AD&D categories, but we certainly held our own. When entries closed, we had 19

entries in the SAGA Sorcery Spell Contest, and 10 in the SAGA Mysticism Spell Contest.

The entire DRAGONLANCE Team pulled together to judge the entries,

sequestering ourselves in a conference room, refusing so much as a cool-and-bubbly-beverage break until the job was done. On the plus side, we had a much smaller group of spells to sort through. However, the freeform nature of the SAGA spellcasting system—for which our contestants showed a uniformly excellent understanding—made it impossible for us to eliminate any entries due to "muffing up the rules." We actually had to judge each spell on its own merits and then directly compare these vastly disparate entries—not an easy job, let me tell you. In doing this, we kept three guidelines in mind:

Originality

The first measure we applied to all the entries was how innovative and original the contestant was. It must have been a terrible temptation to more-or-less borrow from existing AD&D or other FRPG spells. However, this was a spell design contest, not a "spell translation" one, so we placed a high value on creativity and originality. We paid particular attention to those spells—and there were a few—that did things with the magic system that even we had never imagined.

Krynnishness

Okay, this may not be the proper word, but we next set our minds toward judging how well the entries captured the flavor of Krynn (the world of the

DRAGONLANCE Saga). Unlike AD&D, the SAGA game rules are used only for the DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE game (at least, at the time of the contest they were). The ideals, morals, and precepts of Krynn have always been among the most important guidelines used when making editorial and design decisions for the game, so we naturally applied them to this contest. Any spell that was deemed to be out of place in the repertoire of a Krynnish spellcaster was set aside, leaving our finalists.

Style

The entries that made it this far became the focus of the most stringent (and admittedly subjective) test of all—how cool they were. We literally looked at the various spells and saw which ones made us say, "Wow! That's cool! I'll have to try that next time I play!" This was easily the most divisive part of the process, as the DRAGONLANCE Team is made up of very different personalities, all of whom have distinct ideas of what exactly constitutes a "cool" spell. However, after much arguing, cajoling, and gesticulating, we settled on the winners to be presented below.

We were quite pleased by the quality of entries (even though they made our decision making process much more difficult), and were sorry that we could not share all of these very interesting and innovative spells with you. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Spell Design Contests. Keep the magic alive!

Winning SAGA Sorcery Spell

Brandon McKee

Caltrop

Invocation	1 min
Range	Near Missile
Duration	15 min
Area	Large Room
Effect	5 Points
Difficulty/cost:	15

This Geomancy spell causes stone spikes of two or three inches in length to sprout from the ground, covering the area of a large room. Anyone about to enter the area must succeed at an average Perception check to notice the

spikes; the difficulty may be increased depending on the difference in the terrain and lighting. A hero daring to cross must attempt a daunting Agility action for every ten feet of ground he crosses. If this action fails he suffers five wounds (only a full suit of plate armor protects against the damage). Anyone in the area when the spell is cast may attempt an average Perception action to notice, then an average Agility action to avoid the spikes.

SAGA Sorcery Runners Up

Tim Haney

Matt Lynch

Winning SAGA Mysticism Spell

Matt Lynch

Now, Show Me Where it Hurts

Sensitivity	1 Minute
Range	Melee
Duration	15 min
Area	Individual
Effect	Irritating
Difficulty/Cost:	11 (may be resisted)

This name, a jest by one of its famous users, the draconian was originally known as the "Aura of Pain," a name that was misleading (and therefore quickly discarded). When this spell is cast, it surrounds the areas on an individual that need the most immediate medical attention with auras of varying color: red for most necessary, orange for soon-to-be-necessary attention, and so on. Originally, Mirage used this spell to find out where he could cause more injury, though most healers use it to determine where to begin their work. A mishap with this spell is not a good thing; it reverses the color spectrum, which means the victim could expire from a serious injury while the confused mystic was bandaging a relatively minor wound.

SAGA Mysticism Runners Up

Tim Haney

Kris Carlson

are gained at levels 6, 9, and 12.) The missiles created by this spell are affected by any magic that normally affects *magic missiles*, including spell turning (although *prayer missiles* will always heal the caster).

The damage they inflict is based on the target creature's alignment. *Prayer missiles* can affect ju-ju zombies and any undead that cannot normally be harmed by *magic missiles*. They do not affect objects, only creatures. Healing from these missiles repairs damage only (see table below for effects) and does not grant bonus hit points.

This spell was created by a spelljamming drow elf princess of Eliastree for use against undead, specifically ju-ju zombies. The spell is unique to Eliastree's priestesses and they do not share it with other religions. In the Realms, only Mystra and Azuth grant similar spells, and these are just a priest's version of the wizard spell *magic missile*.

Winning Wizard Spells

FIRST PRIZE WINNER

Chris Montgomery

Wind Mine

(Alteration)

(Air)

Level: 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 rd.

Range: 15 yds./level

Duration: Until triggered

Area of Effect: 30' radius

Saving Throw: Special

Using this spell, the caster creates a small (1' diameter) sphere of compressed, enchanted air. This sphere cannot be moved or touched—if either occurs, the mine explodes, hurling hurricane-force winds through the area of effect.

When casting this spell, the wizard points to a location in his line of sight. There is a faint suction effect in that area as the sphere pops into existence. The sphere appears to be made of glass, with a roiling core of gray and silver patterns. It hangs motionless where it is created until detonated. If not detonated within one year, it explodes at that time.

An exploding *wind mine* hurls everything violently away from its center, throwing creatures up to Large size clear

of its 30' blast radius. Huge creatures receive a saving throw vs. breath weapon to remain in place; Gargantuan-sized creatures are not significantly affected. Creatures thrown clear of the radius and striking a sturdy object (such as a wall) suffer 1d8 hp damage per 10 feet thrown.

The winds unleashed by this spell have a distinct boundary, extending only 30 feet from the mine. Creatures outside this boundary feel only a slight breeze from the detonation of the spell. Creatures hurled out of the area do not stop at the boundary—how much farther they go is determined largely by circumstances and the DM. The winds of this spell are capable of breaking the wings of flying creatures caught in the explosion.

The material components are a glass marble, a feather, and a grain of sand.

SECOND PRIZE WINNER

Chris Montgomery

Hornet Flare

(Alteration)

(Fire)

Level: 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 3

Range: 10 yds. + 10 yds./level

Duration: 1 rd. + 1 rd./level

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, the caster transforms a single, non-magical fire into a swarm of hornetlike flying sparks, which burn flesh and ignite flammable substances with which they come into contact.

The fire must be of suitable size and within range. The fire is extinguished, and a certain number of fire hornets rise out of the dying flame, depending on the size of the fire and the level of the caster (see table).

Hornet Flare Table

Size of Fire	Base # Hornets
Torch	1d4
Small Campfire	2d4+1
Large Campfire	2d8
Bonfire	3d8+4

Each level of the caster modifies the base number of hornets by +1. For example, if a 5th-level mage casts hornet flare on a large campfire, he creates 2d8 + 5 fire hornets. This spell can extinguish a fire of up to bonfire size, creating a maximum base number of 3d8 + 4 hornets. The DM decides the base number of hornets if the size of the fire is unclear.

The caster controls the hornets mentally, moving them as he wishes (MV 9. MC: B). He can direct them to touch living targets (requiring an attack roll) or to set combustible materials on fire. The hornets attack with the caster's THAC0, deal 1 hp damage, and are extinguished upon damaging an opponent. The duration is the amount of time the hornets can stay aloft; at the end of this time they revert to cold splinters of charred wood.

The material component is a small vial of tree sap.

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Stan Williams

Rhemus's Exhaustive Dweomerdrain

Level: 5

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 rd.

Range: 0

Duration: 1 rd./level

Area of Effect: 1 wand

Saving Throw: Special

With this spell, magical energy stored in a wand can be drained by the wizard to cast a spell he has memorized. When the spell is cast, the wand must be held by the caster and the command word woven into the incantation. The caster can then use the energy of the wand to power the spell without using material components or losing memory of the spell.

The *dweomerdrain* can be used to cast spells of up to 5th level, and two charges are permanently expended from the wand for each spell level of the spell cast. Each time the wand is used in this fashion, the caster must make an unmodified saving throw vs. spell or lose control of the *dweomerdrain*. If this occurs, the wand is totally drained and turns to dust, the casting fails, and the spell is wiped from the wizard's mind. A successful saving throw means the wizard controlled the *dweomerdrain*, and the spell functions normally.

The casting time for spells is not reduced by the *dweomerdrain*. Charges drained are permanently lost and cannot be recharged by any means. After the initial casting, the wand can be used normally. Also, the caster can choose which spells to cast through *dweomerdrain* and which to cast normally.

The caster's wand serves as a focus for this spell.

HONORABLE MENTION

Robert Garrett

Multiplicity

(Alteration)

Level: 8

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 rd.

Range: 0

Duration: 5 rds. + 5 rds./level

Area of Effect: The caster

Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the wizard to create many tiny replicas of himself, by breaking himself down to his individual hit points. Each multiple is an exact copy of

the caster (actually a piece of him). Each multiple has 1 hit point and is exactly the mass of the wizard divided by his hit point total. The permanent magical items of the caster remain functional for each multiple, including those with a limited number of uses per day. Nonpermanent items (potions, scrolls, charged items, and so on) do not function for multiples for the duration of the spell.

Each multiple has all the abilities and spells of the caster, and can use them as the caster chooses. The collective multiples can cast only one spell per round, and a cast spell is erased from the minds of all multiples. Only one multiple acts as a caster spell, the rest can take other actions.

A wizard divided by *multiplicity* can be killed easily by certain spells that slay small creatures (each multiple is considered a creature with 1 hit point for this purpose). Furthermore, if half the multiples are killed before the spell ends, the wizard loses one point from an ability score (rolled randomly). Multiples separated from the other multiples by being

taken to a different plane die within a turn and count as hit points lost by the caster, unless all remaining multiples successfully follow.

The spell has a maximum duration of five rounds, plus five rounds per caster level. The caster can also end the spell by taking a full round of concentration to pull himself together. Any multiple can be used to focus the caster's reintegration, except a multiple separated from the rest by being taken across a planar barrier. A successful *dispel magic* cast on a multiple forces the affected wizard to reintegrate the next round (but he can choose any multiple not separated by a planar barrier). While changing, the caster is considered to be a unitary individual.

The material component is a crystal statue of the caster (at least 1,000 gp value), which is shattered as the incantation is completed."

This spell is presented in a slightly expanded form from the original entry.

The advertisement features a large, ornate title banner at the top that reads "Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®" and "FORGOTTEN REALMS®". Below the banner is a black and white photograph of a hooded figure, possibly a wizard or cleric, holding a large, ornate sword. The figure is set against a dark, atmospheric background. The text "Play-By-Mail" and "Game" are visible near the bottom of the banner. The overall design is reminiscent of a medieval or fantasy setting.

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Convention Calendar

June

Milwaukee Summer Revel

June 5–7 WI
The Inn Towne Hotel, 710 Old World Third Street, Milwaukee. Guests: Gary Gygax, Janet Pack, Tom Wham. Events: LIVING CITY and LIVING JUNGLE, AD&D®, Call of Cthulhu*, BOOT HILL™, Paranoia*, board games, miniature events, war games, nonstop Dawn Patrol*, TCGs, and the always exciting Wham-A-Thon. Other events: Seminars, dealers' area, and game demos. Registration: \$20. Contact: Bruce Rabe, Summer Revel, P.O. Box 779, New Munster, WI 53102.

Roundtable

June 6 PA
Maennerchor Club, Lebanon, PA. Events: LIVING CITY, AD&D and other RPGs, and board games. Registration: \$5 until the day of the convention, \$7.50 at the door. Contact: Scott Gettle, 405 N. 10th Street #1, Lebanon, PA 17046-4627. Email: canaris@bellatlantic.net.

S.A.G.A. '98

June 6–8 +
University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Events: Skadowkin*, World of Darkness*, and Raven's Nest* free forms, Magic, Wyvern*, and all major RPGs, cards, and miniatures. Registration: roleplaying \$5 per session, miniatures \$30. Contact: S.A.G.A., 18 Dunlop Street, Roselands, NSW 2196, Australia. Email: Ravensnest@norgan.net.au.

July

Origins '98

July 2–5 OH
The Greater Columbus Convention Center and the Hyatt, Columbus, OH. Expected Guests: Jeremy Bulloch, David Prowse, Mira Furlan, and John Byrne. Events: Over 1,500 gaming events of all kinds, including the National Magic championship, Battletech* TCG World Championship. Registration: \$40 prereg by 6/19/98. Contact: Andon Unlimited, P.O. Box 13500, Columbus, OH 43213. Email: andon@aol.com. Web: <http://www.andonunlimited.com>.

QuinCon XII

July 10–12 IL
The Civic Center Hotel, Quincy, IL. Guests: Steven Burgaurer and Lester Smith. Events: painting contest, TCG, boardgames, miniatures, and roleplaying. Registration: \$12 prereg. Contact: QuinCon XIII, 2429 Cedar St., Quincy, IL 62301. Email: mikey17@bcl.net.

Hudson Valley Con 2

July 24–26 NY
Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center, Fishkill, NY. Events: RPGA events, Magic tournaments, roleplaying, miniatures, board games, dealer's room. Registration: \$25 before 7/3/98, \$30 afterward. Contact: Hudson Valley Con, 125 Dolson Ave., Suite 131, Middletown, NY 10940. Web: <http://www.members.aol.com/SpenHartl/con/Mainl'age.html>.

Concussion 3

July 10–12 NE
Holiday Inn Northwest, Omaha, NE. Guests: Margaret Weis, S.M. Stirling, Laurell Hamilton, Don Perrin, Timothy Zahn, Jeff Easley. Events: casino night, SF dating game, LARP, panels, video rooms, art show, Klingons in Black, and more. Contact: Concussion 3, P.O. Box 85762, Lincoln, NE 68501-5762.

Skirmishes '98

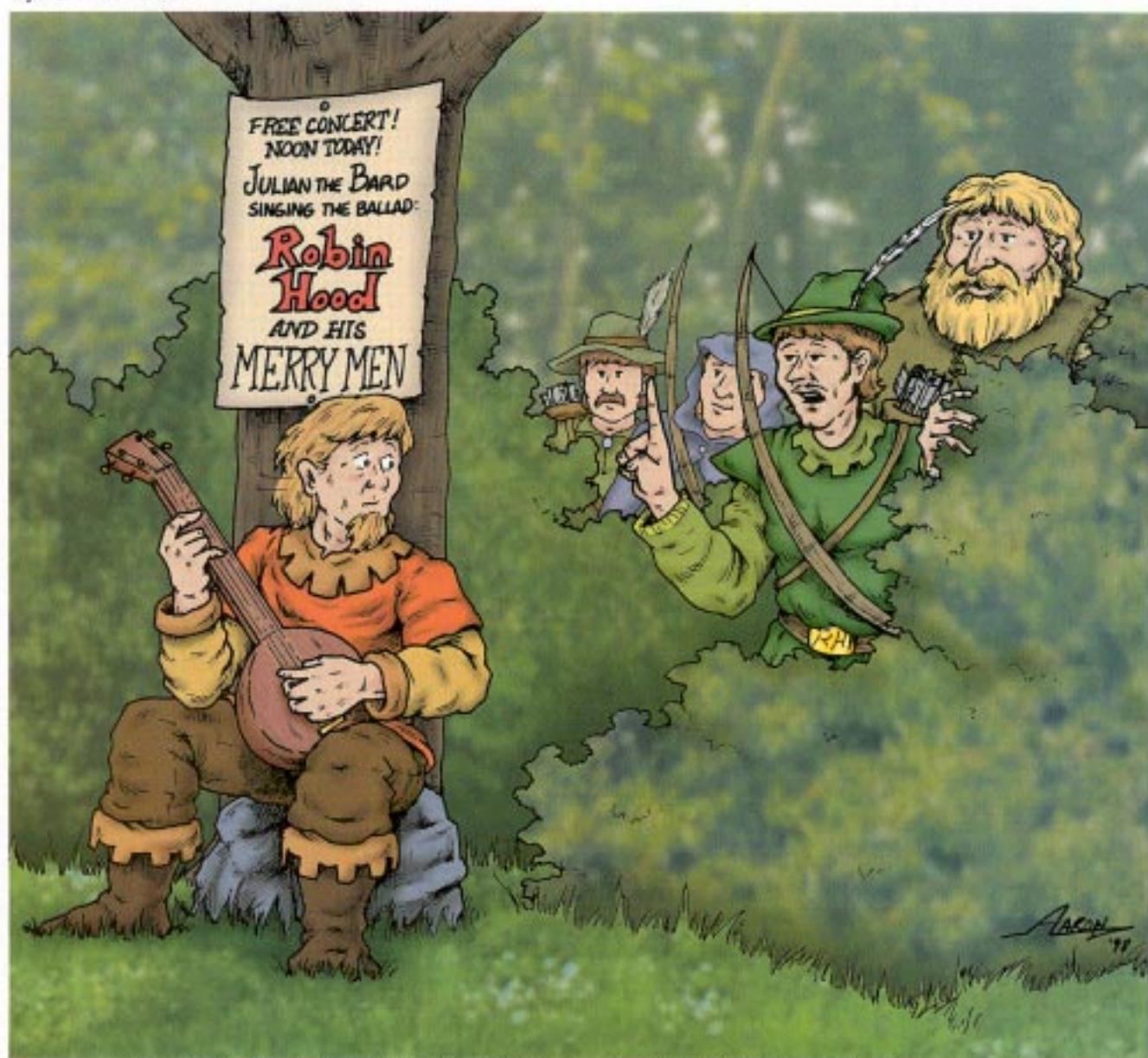
July 10–12 MO
Holiday Inn South, Kansas City, MO. Special Event: "Masquerade Live."

Dragon Mirth

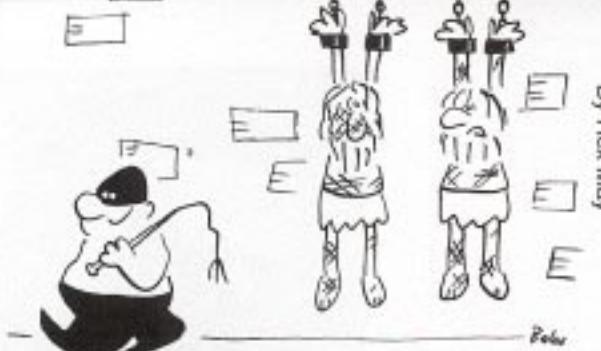


By Joe Pilsbury

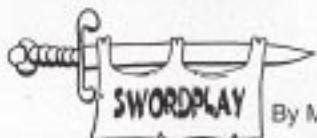
By Aaron Williams



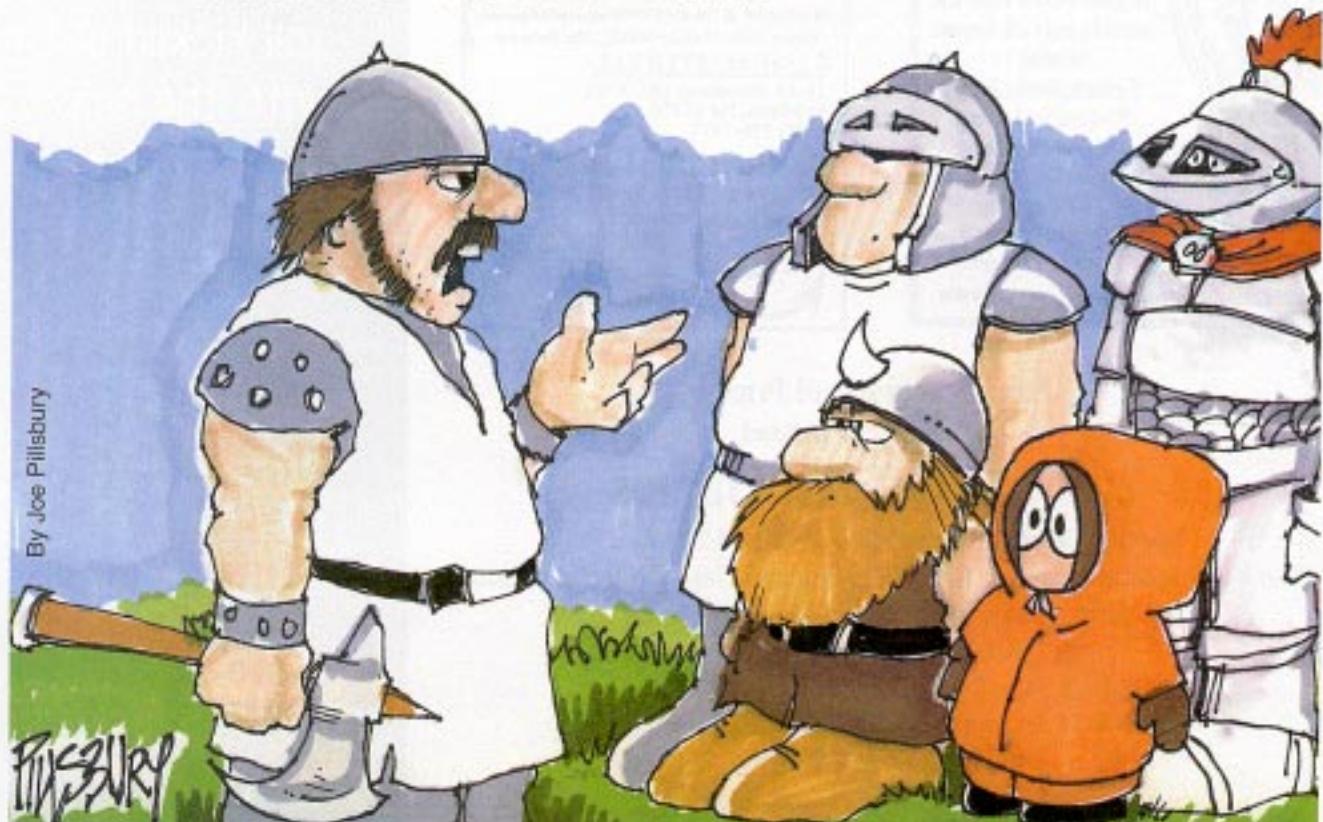
"Excuse me, Julian, but it's 'Married Men'. Why else do you think we hide out in a forest?"



"If you think he's bad, just wait 'til they send in the social workers."



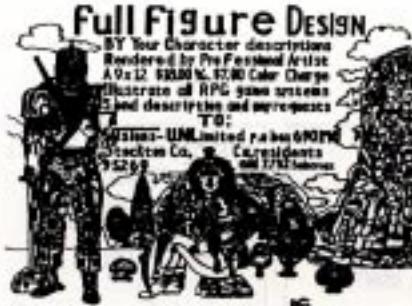
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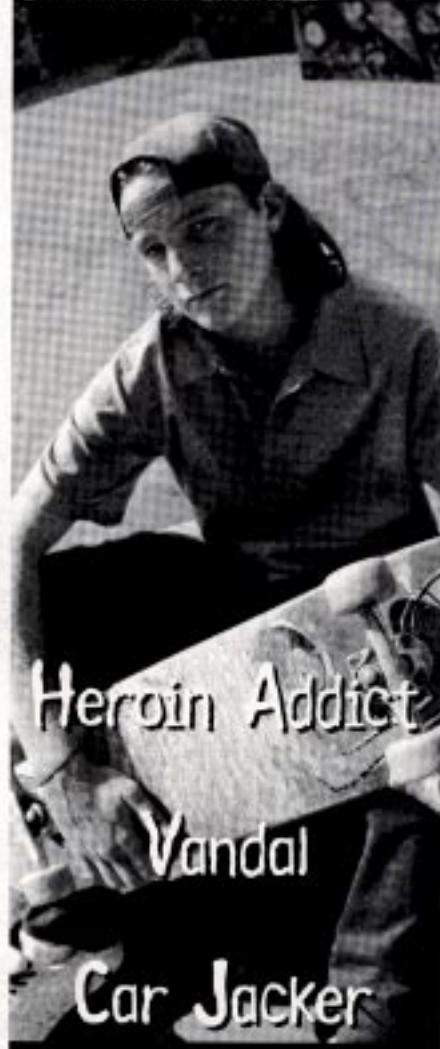
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Magazine



Attention Marvelites! Update an unsung hero or forgotten villain for the *all-new MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game.*

TEXAS TWISTER. RINGER. SEÑOR MUERTE. THE ORB. Think of every Marvel hero or villain—every one-shot wonder—who's ever paused for a soliloquy, only to fade into Comic Book Limbo.

Here's your chance to bring 'em back alive!

Pick any forgotten Marvel villain or hero we haven't seen in a while. Redesign that character for the '90s, giving your hero or villain a new story, a new look, and new enemies. What were they doing all that time out of the spotlight? You tell us! The only rule: You can't change what has gone before. No hoaxes, no alternate Earths, no dream sequences.

Entries should be typed and under 500 words. All Entries must be received by August 14, 1998. All judges' decisions are final. If you submit a drawing, do it on white, unlined paper so we can reproduce the winners here. The first-place winner will receive a copy of every product in the 1998 TSR MARVEL SUPER HEROES product line. Three runners-up will each receive a copy of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game!



"Marvel Super Heroes/Villains" Contest Rules

1. Entry: To enter, send your completed Entry form including your name, address, phone number, the contest to which your submission applies, and your proposed hero/villain update ("Entry") to TSR, Inc. ("TSR") DRAGON Magazine Marvel Super Heroes/Villains Update Contest, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707. No purchase required. You may submit as many Entries as you wish, but only one Entry per submission. There is no advantage to submitting the same Entry more than once. Entries may not exceed 500 words in length. If you are under 18, you must have your parent's permission to enter. Entries must be received before midnight (Pacific Time), August 14, 1998. Winners will be selected by a team of TSR judges based on the Entry's consistency with the feel of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game, originality, appropriateness to the game, and applicability to the game system. All decisions are final. The probability of winning is based exclusively on the quality of the Entries received. All prizes will be awarded.

2. Prizes: The first-place winner of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES hero or villain update shall receive a copy of each product in the 1998 TSR MARVEL SUPER HEROES product line: the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game (approximate value \$24.95), the X-Men™ Roster (approximate value \$17.95), X-Men: Who Goes There? (approximate value \$8.95), A Guide to Marvel Earth (approximate value \$15.95), Avengers™ Roster (approximate value \$17.95), and Avengers: Masters of Evil (approximate value \$8.95). Three runners-up will each receive a copy of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game (approximate value \$24.95).

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"Marvel Super Heroes/Villains Update" Contest

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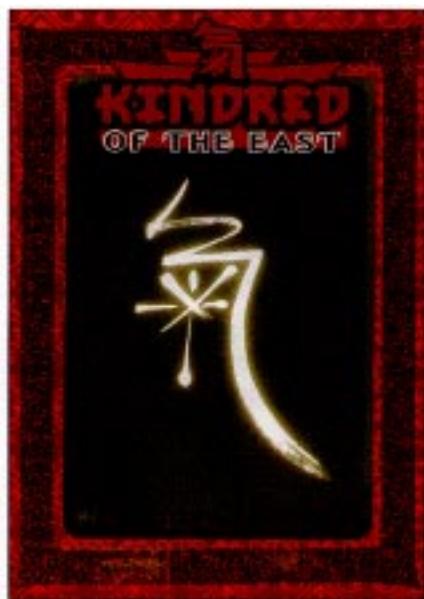
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Roleplaying Reviews

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Kindred of the East

Vampire: the Masquerade*

game supplement

One 221-page
hardcover book

White Wolf Game Studio \$25.00

Design: Robert Hatch, with additional design by Phil Brucato, Jackie Cassada, Mark Cenczyk, and Nicky Rea

Editing: Ed Hall

Illustrations: Andrew Bates, Tim Bradstreet, Matt Clark, Mike Danza, Guy Davis, Tony DiTerlizzi, John Estes, Jason Felix, Darren Frydendall, Michael Gaydos, Doug Alexander Gregory, Rebecca Guay, Tony Harris, Leif Jones, Karl Kerchel, Eric Lacombe, Vince Locke, George Pratt, Robby Poore, Steve Prescott, Andrew Ritchie, Matt Roach, Andrew Robinson, Alex Sheikman, Ray Snyder, Ron Spencer, Jill Thompson,

Melissa Uran, John Van Fleet, and Karl Waller

Book Design: Lawrence Snelly and Robby Poore

Kindred of the East is a major sourcebook for the World of Darkness. For years, the vampires of Asia have been ignored. *Vampire* itself was solidly focused in the west and bound in Christian myth. If vampires are the progeny of Caine, what does that mean for the millions of Buddhists, Confucians, and Hindus out there? How do they view vampires? And what part do they play in myth and history?

When I heard about this book, I must admit that I was dubious. Asian culture has rarely been treated well in RPGs, and most designers seem unable to tell the difference between China and Japan, nevermind Korea and Thailand. In first approaching *Kindred of the East*, I feared it might amount to Masquerade stereotypes in an episode of *Kung Fu: the Legend Continues*, or an arty attempt to do vampires *a la* Kurosawa. In fact, the vampires of Asia have nothing at all to do with the western cousins.

Kindred of the East is actually a bit of a misnomer, since these vampires are not kindred at all. Instead of a boring rehash of the Western vampires, Rob Hatch has given us something fresh and original, maintaining a feeling of authenticity throughout. It is an impressive accomplishment.

Vampires in *Kindred of the East* are wholly unrelated to those in the West and do not share the Curse of Caine. Eastern vampires are known as Kuei-jin, or the Hungry Dead. For them there is no Embrace. They are not random victims who can place the blame of their state on their sires. Kuei-jin have to come to grips with the fact that their condition

Ratings



Not Recommended



Might Be Useful



Fair



Good



Excellent



The Best

is wholly of their own making. Although they are cursed, they still have a place under Heaven.

The setting of *Kindred of the East* has a coherent and thoughtful cosmology. The divine figure is known as the August Personage of Jade, who oversees the Great Cycle, which is divided into twelve ages. In the Second Age he created the original Kuei-jin, then known as the Wan Xian or 10,000 Immortals, to protect humanity from the depredations of the evil Yama Kings and their demonic minions. The Wan Xian were recruited from the best of humanity. They were neither mortals nor gods, but shared aspects of both. They served the August Personage and lived off of the chi of the world. Their ranks included many of the great heroes of old.

In the Third Age, however, the Wan Xian discovered that they could feed on the chi of living beings. At first they stole the chi only of their enemies, but soon they could not help themselves from feeding, and they lost their noble purpose. The August Personage of Jade responded by stripping them of their positions and scattering them across the Middle Kingdom. They were forced to reinhabit their dead mortal bodies and could only gain sustenance by taking chi

from others. After he had dealt with his rebellious servants, the August Personage turn his face from the world. Now it is the Fifth Age, and the Yama Kings are running wild.

Kindred of the East . . . escapes the tired clichés of the Masquerade with grace and vision . . .

Kuei-jin are still reborn into the world. Formerly, the most virtuous humans were chosen, but now only those whose spirits are weighed down with evil deeds can attain the Second Breath and become Kuei-jin. Most of them are killed quickly, and never become more than monsters. A lucky few survive longer and are found by their kind. It is from their ranks the player characters come.

PCs are new Kuei-jin who must learn the rules of their kind and their place in society. And unlike vampires in the Masquerade, there is a real society here. PCs are part of a wu, a blood family of undead, and likely they belong to a tour as well. Even though they are undead, Kuei-jin place great importance on family and place. Characters here are not renegade loners but part of a culture. The vampiric courts all have their politics, and there are still the Yama Kings to deal with.

Interestingly, the Kuei-jin have developed a system to help them live their second life. Each Kuei-jin must pick a Dharma, a philosophical path that presumably leads to enlightenment. There are five Dharmas, and each charts a different path. There is also a whole slew of new disciplines, which are similar but not identical to those in the Masquerade.

This book easily could have been a stand-alone game. In a way, it is unfortunate that it isn't a stand-alone, since it might appeal to people unfamiliar with the World of Darkness. But since that format would have pushed this already hefty volume above 300 pages, I can see why White Wolf did not go that route. However, *Kindred of the East* does define its paradigm and provides all the rules for it. This includes a modified version of the character creation rules, new merits, flaws, and rites, and rules for traversing the Cathayan version of the Umbra.

Evaluation: *Kindred of the East* is the best book I've ever seen for the World of

Darkness. It escapes the tired clichés of the Masquerade with grace and vision, providing an entirely new way to play a vampire. If it has a flaw, it is that it has a steep learning curve. New players have

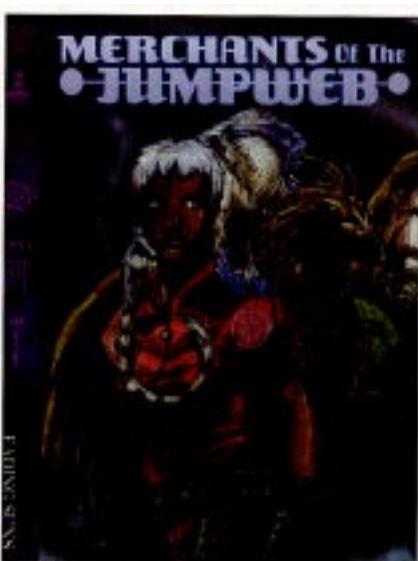
was clearly a good game in there somewhere, but it needed some focus to break out of the jumble of ideas. *Merchants of the Jumpweb* has both focus and vision. It details the Merchant League and its component guilds, finally giving League members the kind of attention the nobles and priests have already received.

Bill Bridges begins the book with a crash course in *Fading Suns* history, painting in broad strokes the rise and fall of the Second Republic and showing how merchants survived the crash by the formation of guilds and the Merchant League. Basically, the merchants had to find a way to survive the return of the nobility as a politically dominant force and the anti-technological teachings of the Church of the Pancreator. They did this by harkening back to the medieval idea of guilds, and the Merchant League was formed when the five most powerful guilds came together for self-defense and profit.

The remainder of the book focuses on the five major guilds, though minor guilds and freelancers get short treatments toward the end. Each chapter the history of one of the guilds, as well as its current operations and members of note. The chapters are rounded out with tips for roleplaying a guild member, adventure ideas for the GM, and appropriate new traits and equipment. The final chapter details Legenheim, the Merchant League's planetary base of operations and a self-described "den of iniquity and freedom."

The guilds themselves are a varied lot; appropriately enough, a different author tackles each one. Ross Isaacs takes on the Charioteers, the star-faring pilots of *Fading Suns*. While it at first seems improbable that any one group could control all the pilots, the simple fact is that the Charioteers control the jump-keys and the codes that go with them. Anyone who wants to travel out of system needs to deal with the Charioteers, and this is the basis of their power.

Sam Inabinet is next up with the Engineers, tech heads who walk a dangerous line. The Church tolerates only a certain level of technology, but it is in the Engineers' nature to push the boundaries of science. They are often found looking for lost planets and systems,



Merchants of the Jumpweb

*Fading Suns** game supplement

One 135-page
softcover book

Holistic Design, Inc. \$20.00



Design: Bill Bridges, Brian Campbell, Andrew Greenberg, Sam Inabinet, Ross Isaacs, James Moore, and Chris Wiese

Editing: Allison Sturms

Illustrations: John Bridges, Darryl Elliot, Sam Inabinet, Brian LeBlanc, Larry MacDougal, Ron Spencer

Cover: John Bridges

Fading Suns initially seemed to suffer from "kitchen sinkism." Nearly every science-fiction cliche could be found somewhere in the game, and this diluted the impact of its New Dark Ages. There

hoping that caches of Second Republic technology survive. Some of them belong to a secret society/religion called the Order of Pneumatic Engineers. This is an interesting cult of the machine that teaches members about the "Great Matrix," an idea that brings together science and spirituality.

Merchants of the Jumpweb is a textbook example of how to do a supplement right.

Every game setting needs an underworld organization, and Brian Campbell gives us one in the Scravers. Officially, the Scravers handle scavenging operations, but in reality they have their hand in most illegal activities. Like the NYC Mafia, they are organized into five families (called "Merchant Houses"). Each house handles a different kind of criminal activity, from drugs to gambling to smuggling. Interestingly, it was the Scravers who were crucial in bringing the Merchant League together. That they did so by a campaign of bribery and blackmail is now forgotten by most of the other guilds.

If Mafioso aren't seedy enough for you, then James Moore's Muster should fit the bill. The Muster started as a mercenary soldiers' guild, but they "diversified" by taking over the slave trade as well. Now the Muster acts as a fulfillment house for workers. They provide soldiers, construction workers, teamsters, and of course slaves. Because of their association with such an immoral trade, the Muster are often looked down on. Not that this prevents nobles from selling their enemies into slavery so they die in obscurity on a distant planet, but morality can be funny that way. The Muster also continues its original function of providing mercenary soldiers, though they have the proviso that soldiers of the Muster never fight against each other. While such loyalty is to be admired, it makes for a lousy system if all mercenaries come from the same source.

The last of the major guilds are the Reeves, handled by Holistic's own Andrew Greenberg. The Reeves are the bankers, lawyers, and financial advisors of the Merchant League. They wield quiet power behind the scenes, as

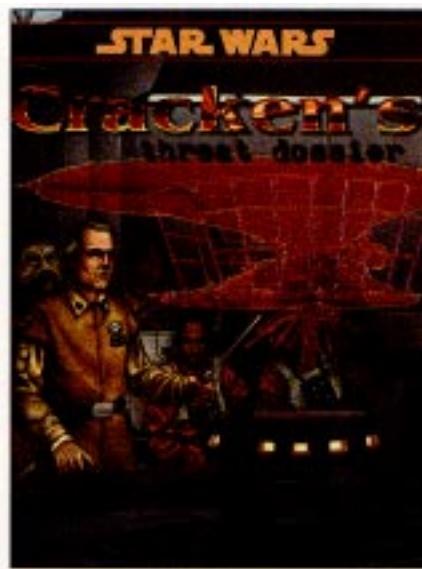
typified by the pseudo-religion Mammonism that many Reeves ascribe to. The Mammonists are part Masonic-style lodge and part religious sect. They believe that humanity will one day crash back into barbarism, and the best thing to do is accumulate as much wealth as possible.

is that, sooner or later, the source material runs out. The *Star Wars* RPG has wrung the movies dry, and West End has been forced to look farther afield for new ideas. Sometimes, this means quality original material such as the *Dark Stryder* Campaign. Other times, it means raiding less canonical sources, such as the numerous novels. *Cracken's Threat Dossier* is a new sourcebook based on seven of the "second string" *Star Wars* novels. While successful on its own terms, this book could only be as good as the novels upon which it was based. As you might guess from the fact that it took material from seven novels to produce one RPG supplement, the novels are best described as "content light."

Cracken's Threat Dossier is divided up into three sections. "The Hapan Cluster Incident" is based on Dave Wolverton's *The Courtship of Princess Leia*, the "Black Fleet Crisis" on a trilogy of novels by Michael P. Kube-McDowell, and the "Corellian Incident" on another trilogy by Roger MacBride Allen. The book is written in the form of field reports from the intelligence service of the New Republic. The layout attempts to support the text by simulating a datapad, but it severely undermines this tactic by using white and gray text boxes on a black background. Instead of a slick, technological look, *Cracken's Threat Dossier* appears more like a cut-and-paste board. Considering the pastiche of ideas, I suppose this is appropriate.

The basic idea of "The Hapan Cluster Incident" is sound enough. It posits that after the rebel victory at the Battle of Endor in *Return of the Jedi*, many Imperial Admirals used their fleets to set themselves up as warlords. This certainly makes sense, and Warlord Zsinj, the main villain presented here, is a fine example of his type. The quest to defeat Zsinj takes the heroes to a planet called Dathomir, where they encounter a group of Force-using Witches who practice "magic." Luke and company are caught up in a local struggle with these witches, which eventually leads to the defeat of the "evil" witches and of the Warlord Zsinj.

"The Black Fleet Crisis" involves a missing and potentially threatening fleet built in the final days of the empire. "The Corellian Incident" takes Han Solo back



Cracken's Threat Dossier

*Star Wars** game supplement

One 144 page softcover book

West End Games



\$20.00

Design: Drew Campbell, Matt Hong, Timothy S. O'Brien, Jen Seiden, and Eric S. Trautmann

Editing: Eric S. Trautmann with Jen Seiden

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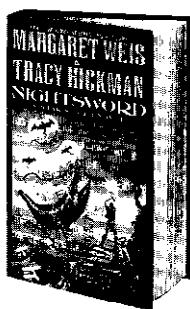
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to his home planet, where he and the other heroes get involved in a convoluted plot with a corrupt government, pirates, and a weapon capable of destroying stars.

As a gaming supplement, *Cracken's Threat Dossier* succeeds.

I must confess that I have not read any of the novels in question. Perhaps they come across better in the actual reading but the plots as described in *Cracken's Threat Dossier* fail to inspire. Sometimes it seems the authors just don't get the *Star Wars* universe. For instance, in the movies, Force-users are quite rare; the only order we know of is the long-defunct Jedi Knights. In these novels, two different organizations of Force-users appear. This only serves to cheapen the legacy of the Jedi and the Force from something very to something depressingly common.

Whatever the quality of the source material, however, *Cracken's Threat Dossier* is a gaming supplement and should be judged as such. As a resource for the GM, *Cracken's Threat Dossier* is actually quite good. Seven novels provide a lot of NPCs, planets, and space ships, and all of them receive a full treatment. The plot summaries are handy for those unfamiliar with the books (though the "Black Fleet Crisis" isn't explained nearly as well as the other two), but most GMs won't try to run their players through these as if they were adventures. They are far more likely to loot the book for useful bits for their own campaign, and this is its real strength. For those who can't resist the idea of new Force-users, the magic of the Witches of Dathomir and the powers of the mysterious Fallanassi are provided in game terms. There is also a handy section on the organization of the New Republic, the status of its military, and the strength of its enemies.

Evaluation: This sourcebook did not make me want to read any of the novels upon which it was based. However, as a gaming sourcebook, *Cracken's Threat Dossier* succeeds. There is a wealth of information in this book that can be used in your *Star Wars* campaign, especially if your players have become jaded ("Oh,

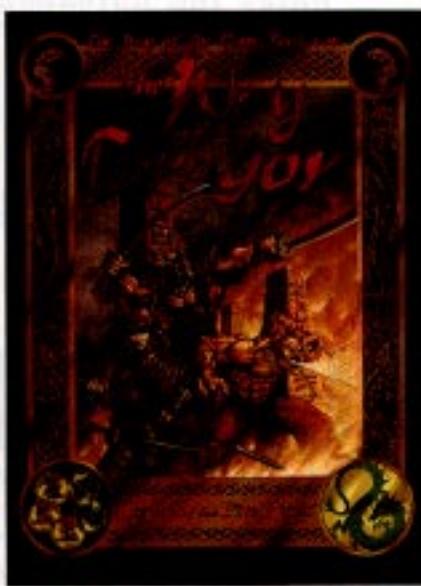
another Star Destroyer. Ho hum."). It is a credit to the gaming writers that they could take such mediocre material and make something useful out of it.

their mountain fortresses. Their numbers include the ferocious Ise Zumi, fire-breathing tattooed men whose cryptic sayings baffle the sharpest minds. The Ise Zumi are the most obvious thing that differentiates the Dragons from the other clans, but it is only the first of many. In fact, the Dragons depart from the norm in almost every way, so it is rather strange that they kick off this series of books. A clan like the Lion or Crane would have been a better choice, since they are more traditional. *Way of the Dragon* breaks all the rules before they are established, though perhaps that was the allure of this project for the writers.

Whereas all the other clans trace their bloodlines back to one of the Children of Sun and Moon, the Dragons do not. Togashi, their founder, did not have children but instead founded the monastic Ise Zumi. (Each of whom takes the last name Togashi upon acceptance into that order.) The other major families of the clan are descended from two of Togashi's loyal followers from the early days. The Mirumoto family are descended from Togashi's yojimbo (bodyguard), who invented the famous Daisho Technique. While other samurai duel with just the katana, the Dragons use the Mirumoto style that teaches them to use both katana and wakizashi in combat. The last of the original families is the Agasha, the shugenja who act as the clan's "human face" to the rest of Rokugan.

Way of the Dragon introduces quite a bit of new information. The history of the clan and its component families is mapped out, and famous ancestors discussed. Each family also receives a full treatment, including such details as its military strength and organization. A full chapter describes the major personalities of the clan, and gives stats for them as well.

On top of all that are new rules. Naturally enough, the Ise Zumi benefit the most from them. There are full rules for creating and playing one of the tattooed men, including a myriad of mystical tattoos that each has a unique power. Although the Ise Zumi are very powerful, they are tied to a strange philosophy that makes them a roleplaying challenge. Their power is great, but it comes at a price.



The Way of the Dragon

*Legend of the Five Rings**

game

supplement

One 103-page softcover book



Alderac Entertainment Group \$14.95

Design: John Wick with David

Williams, Rob Vaux, Cris Dornaus, Greg Stolze, and D.J. Trindle

Editing: D.J. Trindle, Rob Vaux

Illustrations: Tom Biondolillo, Cris Domaus, KC Lancaster, William O'Conner, Ben Peck, Brian Snoddy

Cover: Matthew D. Wilson

Way of the Dragon is the first of the clan books for the *Legend of the Five Rings* REG. The trading card game on which the RPG was based long ago mapped out the characters of each clan, but the flavor text of cards can tell you only so much. These books are an opportunity to flesh out both the clans and the history of Rokugan.

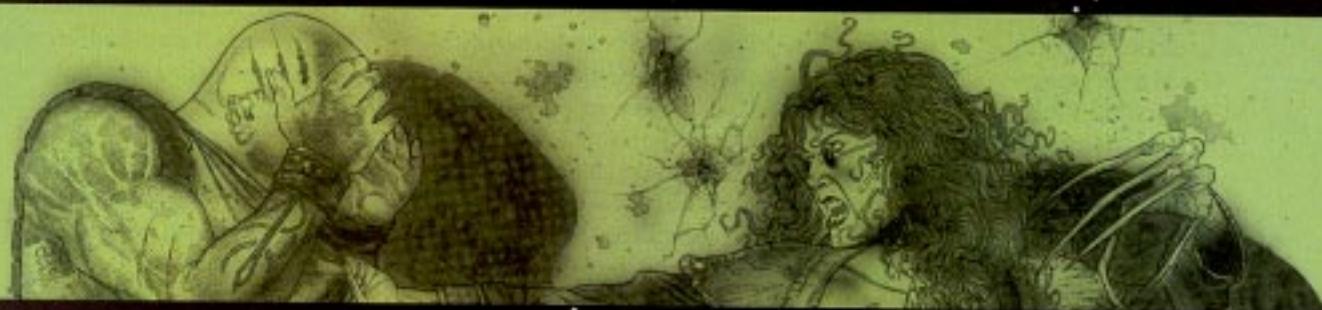
As players of the card game know, the Dragons are the strangest of the factions. They aren't interested in political power or money but pursue esoteric goals in



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Other new rules tweak character creation. Hegitate tables, which are similar to the lifepaths of *Cyberpunk** and *Fuzion** but apply to one's ancestors, appear here for the first time. These charts can help you generate details about your family. You can benefit from a famous ancestor or live with the shame

A lthough the choice of the Dragons for the first clanbook is questionable, the contents of this book make up for it.

of a dishonored one. You can also choose to have a "karmic tie" between your character and one of the great Dragons of legend. This costs points during character creation but gives certain benefits and, of course, prestige. There are also a number of new skills, advantages and disadvantages, and pre-generated characters. The five pregens each represent a classic Dragon archetype (like the Mirumoto Duellist of the Agasha Shugenja) and allow players to pick a name and jump right into the game.

One of these types is new, the Kitsuki Magistrate. The Kitsuki are a newer family descended from the Agasha, but unlike their ancestors they are not shugenja. Their founder, Kitsuki, developed a method of investigation that makes his family excellent magistrates and diplomats. This skill, called Nazodo, is very similar to modern police methods and seems to be an attempt to address the legal problems of Rokugan, which frankly are one of the silliest aspects of the setting. According to the main rulebook, evidence means nothing

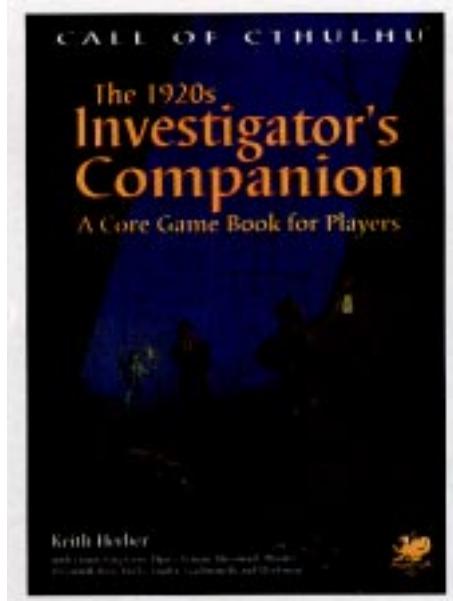
in Rokugan without a confession of guilt. This means that anyone can do anything, and as long as they deny it they are not prosecuted—surely a system that could appear only in a fantasy game. The Kitsuki are trying to change this system to take into account such wild concepts as motive and evidence.

Strange that the most esoteric of the clans would be home to such a dose of common sense.

The book is rounded out by five (!) appendices. These include new spells for a Dragon shugenja and a system of unarmed combat called Kaze-Do. A detailed look at the provinces and a two-page map of Mirumoto Castle are handy, though the "look ma, we're filling space" appendix with two Dragon deck designs for the card game is out of place.

Physically, the book is a beauty. Matt Wilson's cover is gorgeous, and the borders and design work only serve to complement it. The layout follows the basic design of the core game but uses the sidebars much more effectively and has decidedly less white space. The interior illos are all well-rendered and add character and flavor to the text. Hopefully, future clan books will share this level of production value.

Evaluation: Although the choice of the Dragons for the first clanbook is questionable, the contents of this book make up for it. The treatment is thorough and



entertaining, and the book is packed with information. The new rules add a lot to character creation, and players will be thrilled that they can now play an Ise Zumi. The only danger is that the Dragons have too many cool tricks, and that other clans will seem dull by comparison. Until the other clan books appear, we can only speculate.

Short and Sweet

The 1920s Investigator's Companion, by Keith Herbert and divers hands. Chaosium, Inc. \$18.95.

If you are running or playing in a 1920s *Call of Cthulhu** campaign, you want this book. It's that simple. Formerly released in two volumes, this revision puts all that great info under one cover. Its subtitle, a core game book for players, is entirely accurate. The book contains a revised version of the character creation rules and an exhaustive list of 140 occupations broken down by type. More importantly, Herbert and company have done an impressive amount of historical research and distilled down the parts most useful to role-players. You can find biographies of important personalities of the time, along with the hit movies and songs of the era. There are write-ups of libraries and research centers (all important in CoC), and notes on cost and availability of travel options. Newspapers, even more important before the advent of television, also get their due. Add in arms and equipment for the 20s, tips for first-time investigators, and annotated skill

By Joe Pillbury

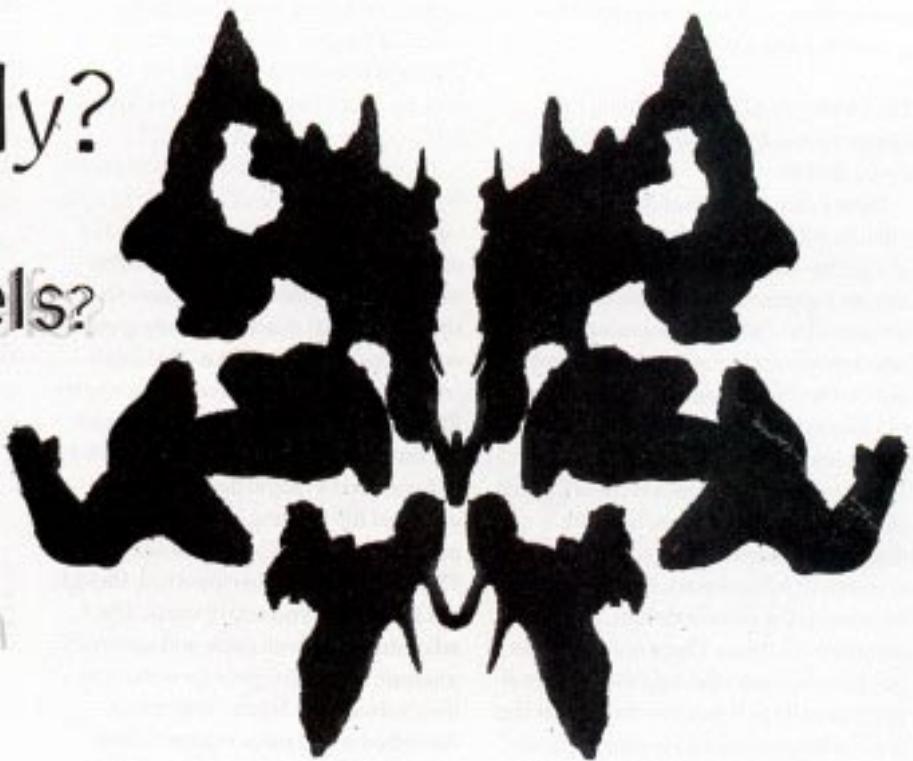
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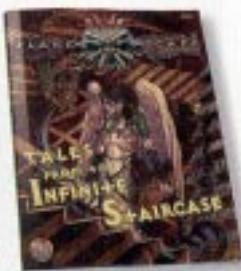
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descriptions, and you've got an indispensable resource.

The Making of a Universe, Heavy Gear Design Works, by the DP9 staff. Dream Pod 9. \$19.95

Here's something you don't see very often in gaming: a book about the design of a game world. This book is similar in size and appearance to *Crisis of Faith* (reviewed in *DRAGON® Magazine* #247), which means it's small and might get lost on the shelf. Inside is what amounts to a guided tour of Terra Nova, home to the *Heavy Gear* RPG and tactical system. The book features quite a bit of art, much of it in color. We get to see how the designs developed, from concept sketches to full color art. Much of the focus is on the vehicle design, with an emphasis on gears. There are also notes on characters and the way the line developed over its first few of years. All of this is quite interesting and is sure to please any fan of *Heavy Gear*. I only blanch at the price of \$19.95, which might scare off some consumers. Since there are no stats in the book, I can see why DP9 made this

choice, but it may keep it out of the hands of the very fans it was meant for. *Darkness Revealed 1: Descent Into Darkness*, by Bruce Baugh and Rich Dansky. White Wolf Game Studio. \$15.95.

This is the first book of adventures for *Trinity*—volume one of a three-part epic. Since *Trinity* was so badly focused and conceptually flawed, it really needed some solid published adventures to show you what exactly a *Trinity* game was supposed to look like. This book contains three linked adventures, one by Rich Dansky and two by Bruce Baugh. All three take place on the moon, which is developed in some detail. They involved the plotting of a number of a psi orders, primarily the Aesculapians. The Aberrants are also involved, though not in the way you might think. The adventures are well done and generally interesting. What is strange is the way they subvert the *Trinity* universe as described in the main rulebook. Basically, the rules established the setting and these adventures set in motion events that will utterly alter it. This isn't necessarily a bad idea, but it's odd that

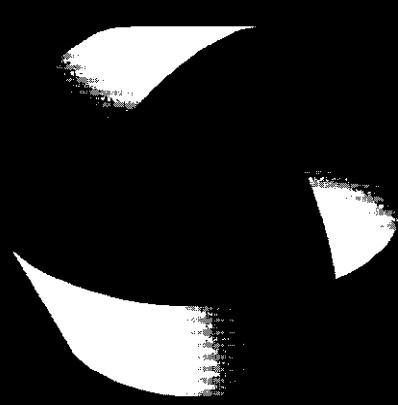
the first published adventures for the game would set about redefining it. Some adventures that developed the status quo would have been better starters, so that players would understand the implications of the plot that starts to unravel in *Descent Into Darkness*.



Former freelancer Chris Pramas recently succumbed to the lures of a steady income and recently joined the TSR design staff.

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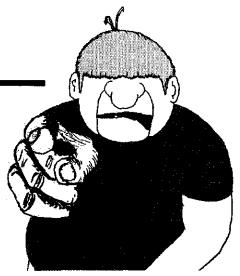
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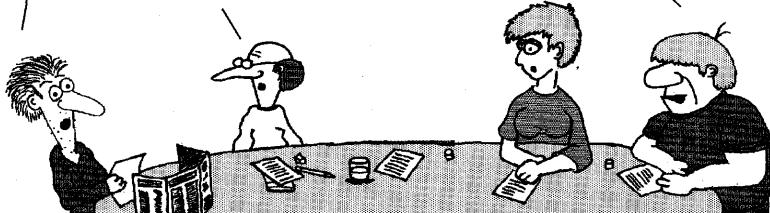


HEY? THE GAME IS ALMOST OVER AND DAVE STILL HASN'T SHOWN UP YET.

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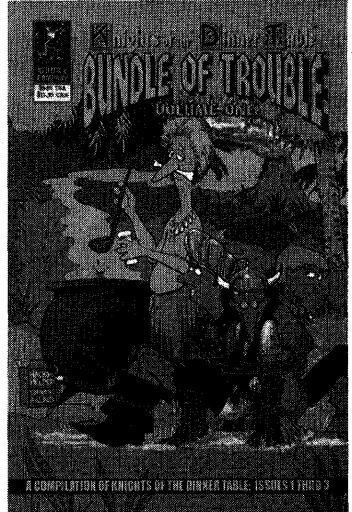
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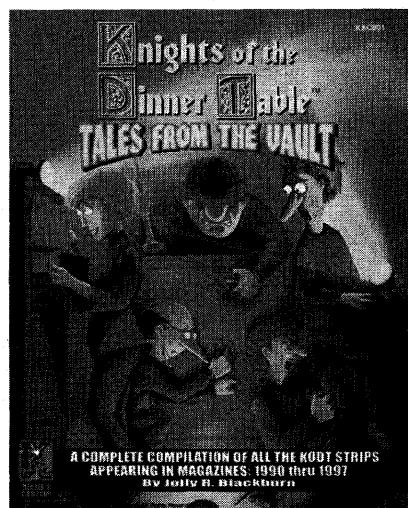


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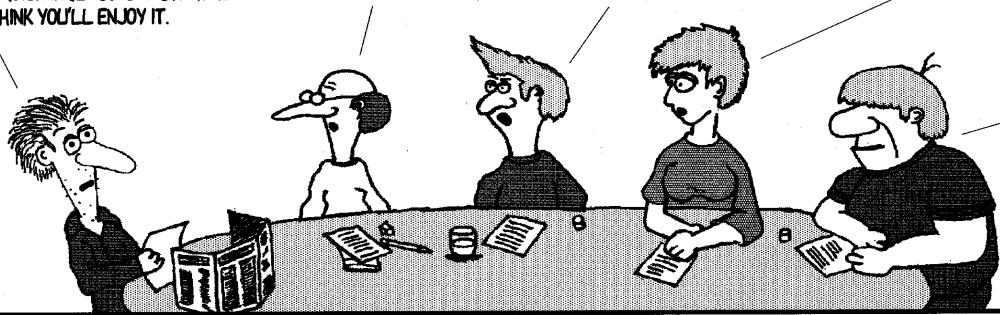
A COMPLETE COMPILATION OF ALL THE KODT STRIPS APPEARING IN MAGAZINES, 1990 thru 1997
 By Jolly R. Blackburn

HEY GUYS, I CAN'T MAKE NEXT WEEK'S GAME. BUT WEIRD PETE HAS AGREED TO COME IN AND RUN HIS DRAGONS OF ANGST MODULE. IT'S BEEN ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION IN HACK JOURNAL. I THINK YOU'LL ENJOY IT.

WEIRD PETE?? I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THAT OLD COOT RUNS A GAME. COULDN'T YOU FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO STAND IN?

I AGREE. THE MAN SCARES ME. I DON'T EVEN LIKE GOING INTO THE GAMES PIT ANY MORE. HE ALWAYS WANTS TO TALK TO ME ABOUT THE OLDEN DAYS OF GAMING AND HOW KEWL THEY WERE.

PETE'S A GOOD GUY. HE'S JUST PART OF THE OLD GUARD. HE PREFERS PLAYING VINTAGE RULES WHEN IT COMES TO HACKMASTER.



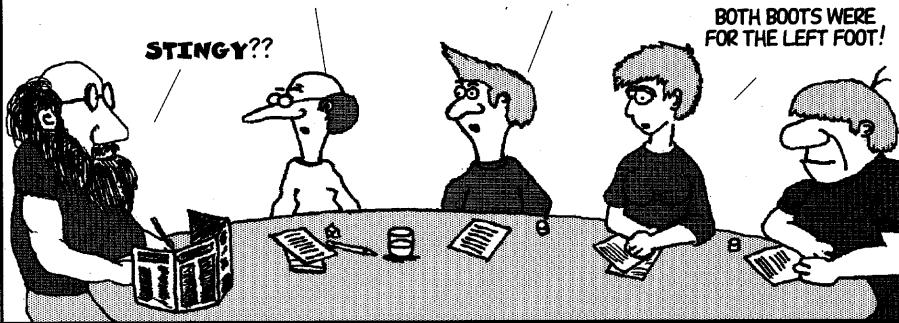
THE FOLLOWING WEEK...

WELL, LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE IS HERE. YOU DICE-GRUNTS READY TO RUMBLE??

SO THIS ADVENTURE IS ABOUT DRAGONS HUH? I HOPE THAT MEANS YOU AREN'T GOING TO BE STINGY WITH THE TREASURE AND EXPERIENCE POINTS LIKE YOU WERE LAST TIME WE PLAYED WITH YOU.

YEAH!! WE SPENT TWELVE HOURS CRAWLING THROUGH YOUR DUNGEON OF DREAD, AND ALL WE GOT OUT OF IT WAS A SACK OF COPPER PIECES AND A MISMATCHED PAIR OF OGRE-SIZED BOOTS OF SILENCE.

BOTH BOOTS WERE FOR THE LEFT FOOT!



WELL, WELL, LET ME JUST NIP THIS LITTLE WHINING SESSION RIGHT IN THE BLD. 15 DEMERITS FOR BOB AND DAVE FOR UNDERMINING THE MORALE OF THE PARTY. 35 MORE AND YOU LOSE A LEVEL. YOU WANT TO TEST ME?

YOU BETTER WALK SOFTLY LITTLE MAN!! I AGREED TO RUN THIS GAME TONIGHT ONLY IF ALL RESULTS WERE BINDING!! THAT MEANS I HAND A REPORT OVER TO B.A. AFTER THE GAME, AND YOUR CHARACTERS LIVE WITH THE OUTCOME. NOW THEN, DO YOU WANT TO DANCE WITH THE DEVIL OR SHALL WE PROCEED WITH THE GAME?

DEMERITS?? C'MON, PETE. WE'RE NOT GOING THROUGH THAT AGAIN.

BINDING? WHAT SORT OF UNHOLY ALLIANCE HAVE YOU AND B.A. ENTERED INTO? HUH?

LET IT GO BOB!! DON'T MESS WITH THE MAN.



AN HOUR LATER...

OKAY, AS YOU PEER INTO THE LARGE CAVERN, YOUR TORCHLIGHT REFLECTS OFF THE TRANSLUCENT SCALES OF AN ANCIENT ALBINO SCORIA DRAGON!!

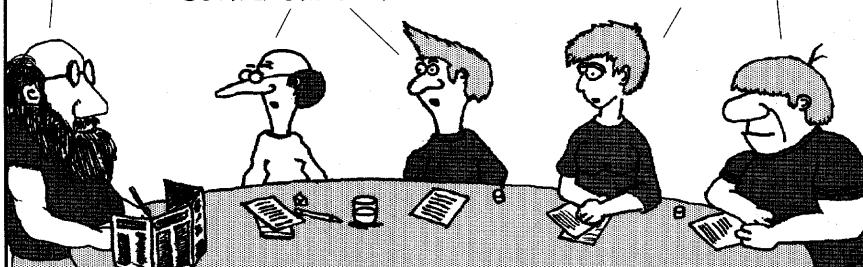
HOLY COW!! THE RAREST DRAGON IN THE ENTIRE HACKLOPEDIA OF BEASTS!! THESE GUYS MAX OUT ALL THE TREASURE TYPES ON THE DRAGON HOARD TABLES!!

THE DRAGON SLOWLY STIRS AS HE DETECTS YOUR PRESENCE. HE RAISES HIS HEAD SLOWLY, THE GREAT HORNS ON THE RIDGE OF HIS HEAD SCRABE ALONG THE CEILING OF THE CAVERN, STARTLING THE BATS, WHICH BEGIN TO FLUTTER ABOUT IN SMALL CLOUDS AROUND HIS TOWERING NECK.

SCORIA DRAGON??

THEY'RE SUCH BEAUTIFUL CREATURES.

'WHO DARES TO DISTURB THE SANCTITY OF MY LAIR?'



HOODY HOO!!! SOUNDS LIKE ONE OF THOSE DRAGONS THAT LIKES CHIT-CHAT AND STUFF. OKAY, SARA, MAKE WITH THE PARLEY-CRAP AND DISTRACT THIS DUDE WHILE I SNEAK AROUND AND CHECK OUT HIS TREASURE HOARD.

I'LL CAREFULLY UNISHEATH MY HACKMASTER +12 UNDER THE FOLDS OF MY CAPE.

UH GUYS, THIS DRAGON IS RATED AS A **MEGA-GENIUS!!** I DON'T THINK HE'S GOING TO FALL FOR ANY TRANSPARENT DELAY TACTICS!!

OFFER HIM ONE OF THOSE **MINT WAFERS** WE BOUGHT.

THE DRAGON SMILES AND BEGINS TO LAUGH. 'SILLY MAN-THINGS!! DONT BOTHER WITH THE 'PARLEY CRAP' OR THE 'CHIT-CHAT.' THE FLOOR OF MY LAIR IS LITTERED WITH THE BONES OF THOSE WHO WERE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO TRY TO MATCH WITS WITH ME!!'

AND YOU WILL NOT FIND ANY TREASURE HOARD HERE, FOOLISH MAN THINGS!!



NOW JUST A **DAMN MINUTE!!** I WASN'T TALKING TO HIM. WE WERE TALKING AMONGST OUR SELVES!!

'I HAVE VERY KEEN HEARING, YOU OBNOXIOUS LITTLE DWARF!!'

AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN THERE'S NO TREASURE??

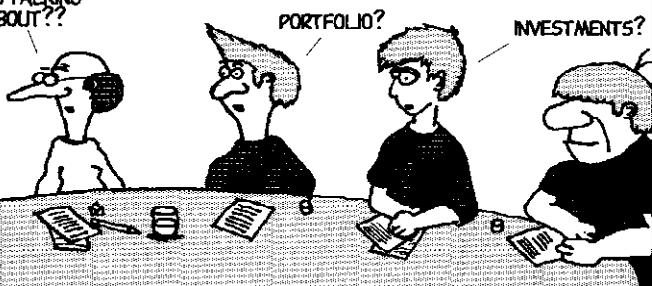
MAKE NO MISTAKE.. MY WEALTH IS CONSIDERABLE. IT JUST HAPPENS TO BE TIED UP AT THE MOMENT.

TIED UP!! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT??

TIED UP IN INVESTMENTS YOU CRETIN!!! YOU DON'T SERIOUSLY THINK I JUST SIT ON MY TAIL AND COUNT COINS ALL DAY, DO YOU? MY **PORTFOLIO** IS QUITE IMPRESSIVE. I BELIEVE IN MAKING MY TREASURE WORK FOR ME!! WHY JUST LAST QUARTER I INCREASED MY NET WORTH 32%. I FINANCED A **HOSTILE TAKE OVER** LAST SPRING, AND THE RETURNS WERE QUITE HANDSOME.

PORTFOLIO?

INVESTMENTS?



ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY THERE'S NO TREASURE HERE? **NOTHING??**

NOT A COPPER. I JUST LOANED THE LAST OF MY HARD COIN TO **LORD GILEAD** FOR HIS **LEVY AND DAM** PROGRAM.

LORD GILEAD?? YOU LOANED THAT JERK **OUR TREASURE??**

ACTUALLY, I'M QUITE IMPRESSED WITH **LORD GILEAD'S** INFRASTRUCTURE BUILDING PROGRAM. A **SURE BET** THERE!! BESIDES I'M GETTING 22% PERCENT INTEREST ON MY LOAN WITH AN OPTION TO CONVERT THE BALANCE TO HIGHER YIELD 30-YEAR BONDS AT MY DISCRETION. **GILEAD** MAY BE A WISE RULER, BUT HE DON'T KNOW JACK ABOUT DEALING IN **HIGH FINANCE** HAR HAR!!

OH I AINT BELIEVIN THIS. WE RUN INTO THE **DONALD TRUMP** OF DRAGONS. AND WE CAN'T EVEN TOUCH HIS ASSETS.

HEY, I HAVE SOME MONEY TUCKED AWAY. MAYBE I SHOULD INVEST IN **GILEAD** TOO!



THE FOLLOWING WEEK...

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT?
**STOCKS? BONDS?
PORTFOLIOS??**

WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT??

I TOLD YA!! I WANT TO INVEST 20,000 GOLD PIECES INTO **VANDOOGLE WAR ENGINES LTD.** OUT OF **WORTLILY PROVINC**E. A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME THAT THE **ORG ALLIANCE** IS ABOUT TO PLACE A MAJOR CONTRACT WITH THEM FOR A LARGE QUANTITY OF **TREBUCHETS**.

OOOHHH, THAT SOUNDS SWEET. I WANNA DUMP MY STOCK IN **GENERAL ARMORERS** AND LET MY MONEY RIDE ON **VANDOOGLE**.

HOW ARE MY **FANGAERIE SERIES 'E'** BONDS DOING?

HA!! **LOSERS!!** I STARTED THAT LITTLE RUMOR TO DRIVE UP THE SHARE PRICE. I'M DUMPING MY **VANDOOGLE** STOCK AND CASHING IN!!!





Previews

NEW for JUNE

I, Strahd The War Against Azalin

A RAVENLOFT® novel

By P.N. Elrod

The best-selling author of *I, Strahd: The Memoirs of a Vampire* returns with a second volume about the most famous darklord of the Demiplane of Dread. Strahd's aristocratic existence is threatened by the arrival of the lich Azalin.

\$5.99/\$6.99 CAN

TSR # 8075

ISBN: 0-7869-0754-1

Champions of the Mists

A RAVENLOFT Accessory

By William W. Connors

This accessory features a collection of popular heroic figures from RAVENLOFT novels, with full histories and game statistics, ready to incorporate into your campaign. A section on PC kits offers players special abilities unique to the RAVENLOFT campaign setting.

\$13.95/\$18.95 CAN

TSR # 9559

ISBN: 0-7869-0765-7

The Last Thane

A DRAGONLANCE® Novel

By Douglas Niles

The Hylar have grown complacent in their leadership of Thorbardin. While their best battalions are off fighting in the Chaos War, the lowliest clans plot insurrection, aided by demon creatures dispatched by Chaos, threatening the Life-Tree and Thorbardin itself.

\$5.99/\$6.99 CAN

TSR # 8393

ISBN: 0-7869-1172-7

MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game

Boxed Game

By Mike Selinker with Michele Carter, Bill Olmesdahl, Steven E. Schend, and Steve "Stan" Brown

You can play *Spider-Man**, *Wolverine**, *Iron Man**, and others as you dive into the action that makes Marvel comics number one. Play your favorite heroes or create new ones. Includes everything you need to start playing.

\$24.95/\$32.95 CAN

TSR # 6926

ISBN: 0-7869-1227-8



ALTERNITY® Campaign Kit

An ALTERNITY Accessory

By David Eckelberry

For both Gamemasters and players, the *Campaign Kit* features a four-panel Gamemaster screen that presents the most important tables and game information in one place, and the 32-page booklet contains a variety of forms, character sheets, and record logs.

\$12.95/\$17.95 CAN

TSR # 2808

ISBN: 0-7869-1213-8

A Darkness Gathering

A MONSTROUS ARCANA™ Adventure

By Bruce R. Cordell

A Darkness Gathering is the first in a three-part series that pits PCs against the dark agenda of the Illithids—namely, the extinguishing of the sun. May also be played as a stand-alone module.

\$9.95/\$12.95 CAN

TSR # 9570

ISBN: 0-7869-1208-1

Player's Guide to Greyhawk

A GREYHAWK® Accessory

By Anne Brown

An indispensable guide, the Player's *Guide to Greyhawk* features new legends and deadly dungeons for your heroes to explore. Included are special classes, national backgrounds, and new kits unique to Greyhawk.

\$9.95/\$12.95 CAN

TSR # 9578

ISBN: 0-7869-1248-0

Realms of Mystery

A FORGOTTEN REALMS® Anthology

Edited by Philip Athans

Favorite FORGOTTEN REALMS authors spin tales of murder, suspense, and intrigue in this new collection of stories.

\$5.99/\$6.99 CAN

TSR # 8582

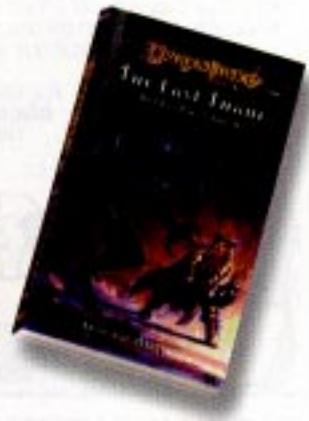
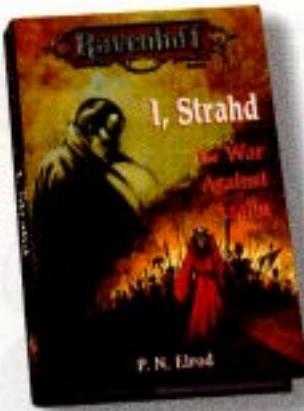
ISBN: 0-7869-1171-9

Jakandor: Isle of Destiny

An ODYSSEYS™ Supplement

By Kirk Botula, Dale Donovan, and Anne Brown

Jakandor: Isle of Destiny continues the saga of civilized wizards against savage barbarians. In this supplement, play the



role of a mage or apprentice trying to defend the land from barbarian hordes.

\$21.95/\$28.95 CAN

TSR # 9512

ISBN: 0-7869-1245-6

The Fall of Myth Drannor

An ARCANE AGE™ Adventure

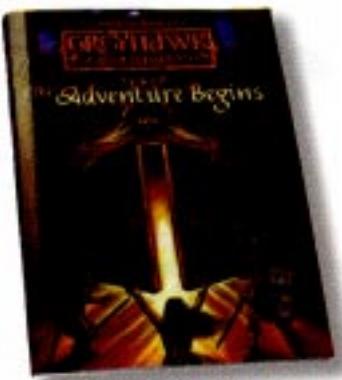
By Steven E. Schend

Everyone in Faerûn knows of the ruins of Myth Drannor, but the details of its fall have been lost. Now, your heroes can discover what really happened and play a pivotal role in events that shaped the Realms.

\$13.95/\$18.95 CAN

TSR # 9558

ISBN: 0-7869-1235-9



NEW for JULY

Greyhawk: The Adventure Begins

A GREYHAWK Adventure

By Roger Moore

Explore the lands of the Wild Coast, the Nyr Dyv, and the deadly Bright Desert. Customizable adventures make each quest a player's own creation.

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TSR # 9577

ISBN: 0-7869-1249-9

Murder in Cormyr

A FORGOTTEN REALMS Novel

By Chet Williamson

Benelaius, tired of politics and his egotistical brethren, resigns from the College of War Wizardry and takes up residence in a sleepy town in a remote area of Cormyr. When a messenger from King Azoun turns up dead, it is up to the conjurer to solve the crime.

\$5.99/\$6.99 CAN

TSR # 8655P

ISBN: 0-7869-1173-5

Villain's Lorebook

A FORGOTTEN REALMS Accessory

By Dale Donovan

This collection of miscreants and knaves provides famous, ready-made enemies for all FORGOTTEN REALMS and AD&D® campaigns. It features illustrations of each subject, plus complete game statistics. It also includes antagonists from the FORGOTTEN REALMS novels, ready to incorporate into your game.

\$22.95/\$29.95 CAN

TSR # 9552

ISBN: 0-7869-1236-7

Return to the Tomb of Horrors

An AD&D Game Adventure

By Bruce R. Cordell

The demi-lich was slain and the tomb cleansed of its terrors—or so we thought. Could it be that some other, more terrible evil has taken up residence in Acerak's tomb? Includes a bonus facsimile of the original *Tomb of Horrors* adventure.

\$29.95/\$39.95 CAN

TSR # 1162

ISBN: 0-7869-0732-0

Spirit of the Wind

A Bridges of Time Novel, Volume I

By Chris Pierson

Riverwind answers a call to aid the kender against the great red dragon, Malystryx. The first in a new series bridging the years between the Classic DRAGONLANCE and FIFTH AGE® settings.

\$5.99/\$6.99 CAN

TSR # 8390

ISBN: 0-7869-1174-3

The Dark Elf Trilogy

A FORGOTTEN REALMS Collector's Edition

By R. A. Salvatore

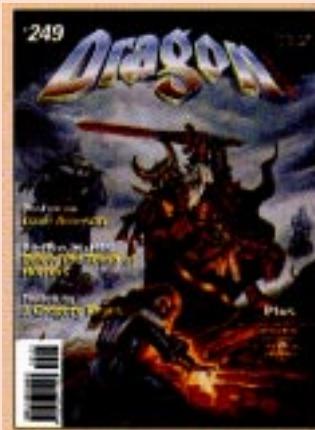
The Dark Elf Trilogy placed Drizzt Do'Urden, R.A. Salvatore's signature character, at center stage. Here, at last, is a hardcover collector's edition of the first novels starring TSR's most popular anti-hero.

\$23.95/\$30.95 CAN

TSR # 8589

ISBN: 0-7869-1176-X

Next Month



Cover by Tony Szczerba

Seeds of Evil

By James Wyatt

The history of the Red Death revealed through the many historical supplements for the AD&D game.

Below the Tomb of Horrors

By Bruce R. Cordell

All-new secrets of the most famous death-trap in the history of the AD&D game.

Wakes the Narrow Forest

Fiction by J. Gregory Keyes

Urged by the ghost of his father, Fool Wolf enters the territory of the giants. A new short story set in the world of *The Waterborn*.

Sixguns & Sesheyans

By Richard Baker

A full arsenal of throwback weapons for the ALTERNITY game, plus guidelines for creating your own Wild West science-fiction campaign.

ProFile: Dave Arneson

By Allen Varney

An interview with the co-founder of the D&D® game.

Plus "Wyrm of the North," "Forum," "DragonMirth," "Role-playing Reviews," "Knights of the Dinner Table," and more!

\$4.95 U.S./\$5.95 CAN

TSR Product No. 8115-07

DOUBLE DIAMOND TRIANGLE™ Saga

Available Now

The Abduction, by J. Robert King

The Paladins, by James M. Ward & David Wise

The Mercenaries, by Ed Greenwood

Errand of Mercy, by Roger Moore

An Opportunity for Profit, by Dave Gross

Conspiracy, by J. Robert King

Uneasy Alliances by David Cook with Peter Archer

New for June

Easy Betrayals

By Richard Baker

The heroes race after a threat to peace throughout the Realms, but the creature leads them on a chase that ends in the last place any suspected.

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TSR #8641

ISBN: 0-7869-0871-8

New for July

The Diamond

By Ed Greenwood & J. Robert Ring

As the quest draws to a close, the heroes gather for a celebration. But amid the merriment, there are still a few loose ends to tie up. Don't miss the exciting conclusion!

\$2.99/\$3.99 CAN

TSR #8642

ISBN: 0-7869-0872-6

Star* Drive™ Campaign Setting

An ALTERNITY Campaign Setting

By David Eckelberry and Richard Baker

This full-color volume hurls players into the 26th century with a galaxy of non-stop action, epic adventure, and astounding technology. Included are chapters on technology and equipment, professions, stellar nations, aliens, and the Galactic Concord—humanity's hope for survival in a hostile galaxy

\$29.95/\$39.95 CAN

TSR #2802

ISBN: 0-7869-0738-X

ALIEN COMPENDIUM: Creatures of the Verge

A STAR*DRIVE Accessory

By Richard Baker and Bill Slavicsek
Like the AD&D MONSTROUS

COMPENDIUM® tome, this full-color book presents the aliens of the STAR*DRIVE Campaign Setting. More than 60 different aliens are featured, with information on homeworlds, social organization, skills and abilities, and roleplaying suggestions.

\$21.95/\$28.95 CAN

TSR #2805

ISBN: 0-7869-0778-9

Citadel of Light

A FIFTH AGE Dramatic Supplement

By Steve Miller

The Citadel of Light is both a beacon of hope and a valuable weapon in the struggle against the Great Dragons. This resource offers a wealth of new information on mysticism and the Citadel to encourage campaigns based on this center of mystical power.

\$21.95/\$28.95 CAN

TSR #9554

ISBN: 0-7869-0748-7

HERCULES THE LEGENDARY JOURNEYS™ ENDLESS QUEST Adventure Game

By Ed Stark with Cindi Rice

Embark on a series of fantastic journeys in this exciting game based on Hercules: *The Legendary Journeys*, one of TV's most popular syndicated action series. Thwart the machinations of Ares, battle hideous monsters like Echidna, and defeat the agents of Hera at every turn. This game can be combined with the XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESSES™ ENDLESS QUEST Adventure Game.

\$19.95/\$26.95 CAN

TSR #1526

ISBN: 0-7869-1255-3

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS™ ENDLESS QUEST Adventure Game

By Ed Stark with Cindi Rice

Danger and adventure challenge Xena and her friends at every turn in this epic game based on *Xena: Warrior Princess*, the #1 syndicated action series on television. All Xena's steadfast friends and most implacable foes are represented in this game—from her bardic sidekick

Gabrielle to her most dangerous enemy, Callisto the mad. This game can be combined with the HERCULES: THE LEGENDARY JOURNEYS ENDLESS QUEST Adventure Game.

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TSR #1525

ISBN: 0-7869-1254-5



NEW for AUGUST

Masters of Eternal Night

A MONSTROUS ARCANA Adventure
By Bruce R. Cordell

Day by day, the power of the sun wanes as the Illithids continue toward the completion of their dark agenda. *Masters of Eternal Night* is the second adventure in a three-part series that began with *A Darkness Gathering* and concludes with *Dawn of the Overmind*.

\$9.95/\$12.95 CAN

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ISBN: 0-7869-1253-7

Empires of the Shining Sea

A FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Expansion Boxed Set
By Steven E. Schend and Dale Donovan

This boxed set brings to light a world of fantastic power, both magical and political. Inside is extensive history on the Calimshan area, from the ancient genie empires of Calim and Memnon to the rise and fall of the malefic Shoon Empire. Explore the Lake of Steam and the Lands of the Lions, and create a new magic by forming alliances with outcast genies and the undead!

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ISBN: 0-7869-1237-5

Free Newsletter!

The second issue of the LEGENDS OF THE LANCE™ newsletter is coming soon to a mailbox near you! This publication for the DRAGONLANCE Saga includes interviews, information on upcoming releases, recipes from the Fifth Age, and other fascinating items. To receive your free newsletter, write to legends@wizards.com or Wizards of the Coast; Customer Service Department; P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707. Be sure to include your name and mailing address.

Thornhold

Novel, Harpers #16

By Elaine Cunningham

A dark power from the mists of time threatens the very heart of the secret organization known as the Harpers, and only Khelben Arunsun can stop it—if his fellow Harpers don't stop him first! Don't miss the startling conclusion to the longest-running FORGOTTEN REALMS series.

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Vecna Reborn

A RAVENLOFT Adventure
By Monte Cook

One of the AD&D game's most notorious villains is now one of Ravenloft's newest darklords.

Great though his powers may be, Vecna is trapped in the Demiplane of Dread. Now he's preparing an unholy ritual designed to bridge the gap between the land of the Mists and his home world—unless the heroes can stop him!

\$13.95/\$18.95 CAN

TSR #9582

ISBN: 0-7869-1201-4



Arms and Equipment Guide

A STAR*DRIVE Accessory

By Richard Baker

From protective gear to weapons of mass destruction, you'll find everything you need to survive the STAR*DRIVE Campaign Setting in this comprehensive guide. More than 100 items are detailed, with descriptions, game statistics, and illustrations. Items are created specifically for the STAR*DRIVE Campaign Setting, but most can be incorporated into any far-future, space-opera setting.

\$16.95/\$21.95 CAN

TSR #2809

ISBN: 0-7869-1214-6

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DUNGEON® Adventures #69



Cover by Jeff Easley

Sleep of Ages

By Eric L. Boyd

What do a dragon, a beholder, and a dwarven army have in common? The answer lies beneath the Omlarandin Mountains. An AD&D FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure for levels 5-8, written by the author of Powers & Pantheons!

Slave Vats of the Yuan-ti

By Jason Kuhl

The search for a yuan-ti criminal leads to a frightening discovery in the cellars of Wolfhill House. The first module in The Mere of Dead Men series! An AD&D FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure for levels 3-5.

Challenge of Champions II

By Jonathan M. Richards

Ten new tests of teamwork for your stalwart band of adventurers. An AD&D adventure for any level. Includes an Illustration Booklet!

Stumping the Party

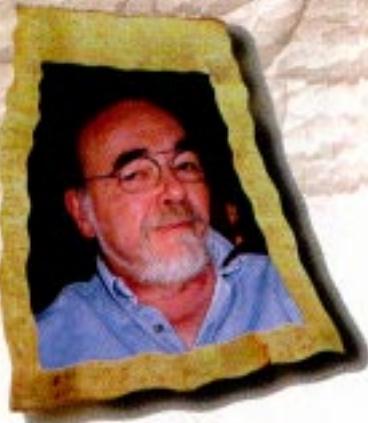
By Christopher Pomeroy

Afraid of spiders? Let's find out. An AD&D SideTrek for levels 3-5.

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TSR Product No. 8203-05

Profiles



GARY GYGAX

The Legendary designer of the AD&D® game's first edition, and some of its most popular supplements and adventures, deserves our praise. His bestselling S1 *Tomb of Horrors* has now

spawned July's huge new sequel campaign, *Return to the Tomb of Horrors*. And he did something else neat, too...

By Allen Varney

Which of Gary Gygax's many accomplishments shall we celebrate here? His founding the GEN CON® Game Fair (1968), or co-founding in 1973 (with the late Don Kaye) of Tactical Studies Rules—later TSR Hobbies, and now TSR, Inc.? No, we'll skip these for now.

What about co-designing (with Dave Arneson) the D&D® game in 1974 and designing the first-edition AD&D game (1978–80)? Shall we honor Gygax for his pivotal role in founding our hobby? Nope—everyone already knows that.

What, then? Well, Gygax wrote *Unearthed Arcana* (1981) and many popular adventures, such as the original Drow series (D1–3), the "Against the Giants" trilogy (G1–3), and the "Temple of Elemental Evil" series (T1–4, with Frank Mentzer). In fact, he formalized today's concept of the adventure module. How about honoring that?

Not this time—although Gygax's most popular module, S1 *Tomb of Horrors*, merits a digression. Stronghold of the demilich Acererak, the labyrinthine Tomb was the original "killer dungeon." From an idea by Alan Lucien, one of his original AD&D playtesters, Gygax "developed [what] was to become the *Tomb of Horrors*, and I admit to chuckling evilly as I did so." He wanted to challenge his expert players Rob Kuntz (Robilar) and Ernie Gygax (his own son, who played the arch-wizard Tenser). After they each looted the Tomb, Gygax used it to destroy many a PC at conventions. "I had a lot of equally difficult places in the Greyhawk Castle dungeons, but to get there one had to go through many levels." *Tomb of Horrors* more efficiently pulled player characters into its grinding jaws.

No wonder that next month, TSR revives Acererak's domain—now with a still nastier tenant—in Bruce R. Cordell's deluxe TOMES™ adventure *Return to the Tomb of Horrors*. The boxed campaign includes a reprint of Gygax's original S1.

Gygax contributes a preface to *Return*. Initially apprehensive that he wouldn't be able to offer "much in the way of a rave," he felt pleased when he read Cordell's sequel. "The new material is really excellent. *Return* is a whole mini-

campaign, not some rehash of previous work . . . It offers more by far than the old *Tomb of Horrors*, and it is more deadly too."

Yet *Tomb* is not today's reason to praise Gygax. As the real reason, many might suggest his creation of Greyhawk, one of the hobby's first published campaign settings. Responding to vociferous demand, TSR revives the dormant GREYHAWK® Adventures line starting this month, with Anne Brown's *Player's Guide to Greyhawk*. Though his future role in the revival remains undecided, Gygax believes the world's prospects are bright "if the products aim at new [players], as well as the shrinking 'old hands' market. It seems that TSR is looking to attract young gamers, so I believe the project will be very successful."

He feels new GREYHAWK products should resurrect the line's early-1980s approach: "The Oerth needs demons and devils to plague it, and why not PC assassins and the like, too? Those who object to such things don't buy RPGs anyway. Similarly, those who want 'storytelling,' an emphasis on 'roleplaying' (read: boring yakking and amateur thespianism), need to be ignored. The action is difficult to create, [but] opportunities for roleplaying can be created easily by even a moderately skilled DM."

But more than Greyhawk—more than Gygax's later RPGs (*Cyborg Commando*, *Dangerous Journeys*)—more than his remarkable website (www.gygax.com), offering his latest RPG (*Legendary Adventure*), his new interplanetary campaign setting (the Elder Worlds star system), and a candid account of his experiences with TSR—we hail Gary Gygax in this issue for one all-important reason: Twenty-two years ago this month, he founded *DRAGON Magazine*.

"When I decided that *The Strategic Review* was not the right vehicle, hired Tim Kask as a magazine editor for Tactical Studies Rules, and named the new publication he was to produce *The Dragon*, I thought we would eventually have a great periodical to serve gaming enthusiasts worldwide," Gygax says. "At no time did I ever contemplate so great a success or so long a lifespan."

To the magazine at age 22, and to its founder (who turns 60 in July), many happy returns!

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What the Hell is a Baatezu?



There was a world where demons were demons, dungeons were deathtraps, and assassins hung out in the Player's Handbook.

The treasure was piled high and every room held a damn good reason to roll for initiative. That world was Greyhawk, and it's back with a vengeance.

Explore the original AD&D® setting.
One bashed-in door at a time.



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