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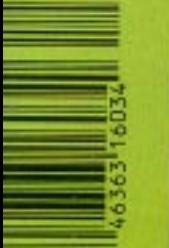
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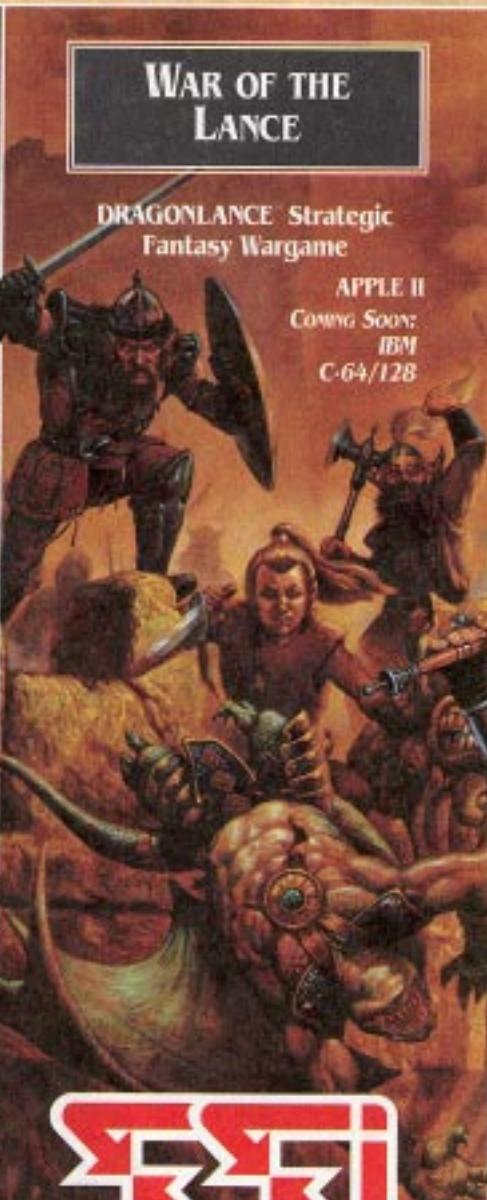
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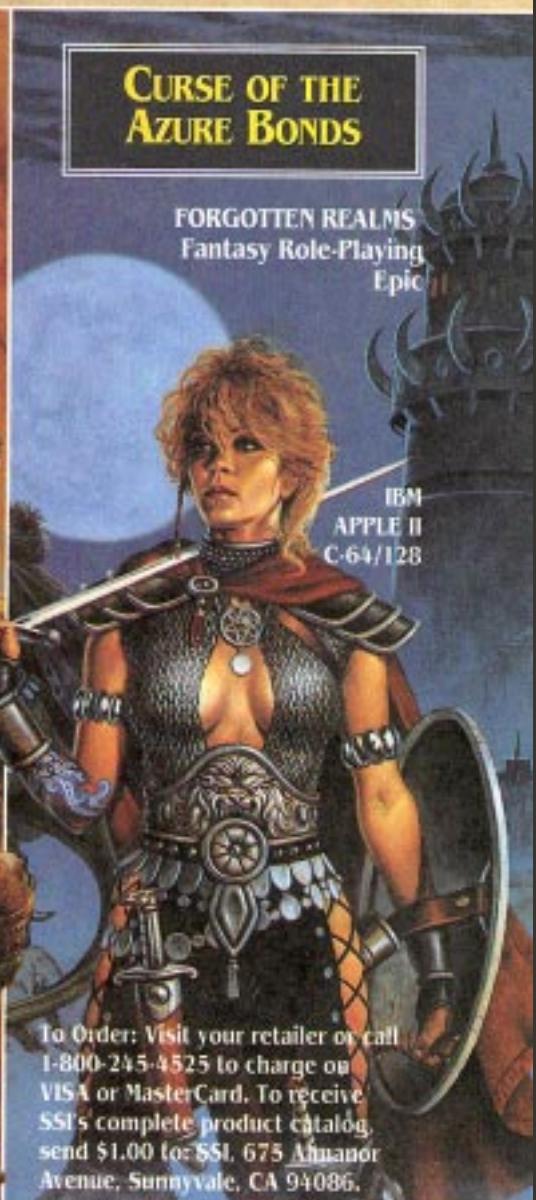


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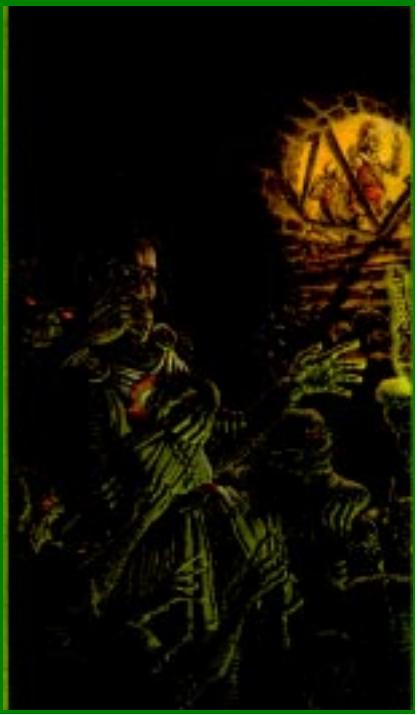
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## COVER

Paul Jaquays describes his cover painting: "The title of this painting is 'Cryson's Reward.' Cryson was a PC run by another player in AD&D® games I played about 10 years ago. This never happened to good ol' Cryson. It should have. Although it looks like a warrior or cleric being dragged off by goblins, it is in truth a statement about modern materialism, greed, and the cost of betraying one's friends, beliefs, and values. . . ."

# LETTERS

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

## Enough, already

Dear Weaklings:

Upon hearing of Waldorf's insubordination [in DRAGON issues #137 and 149], I would like to show you a *truly* powerful character. His name is Thor, and he is a 6,253rd-level magic-user, a 25,001st-level cleric, and a 3,000,000th-level fighter. Once he sneezed and destroyed the entire Forgotten Realms world, so think of what will happen when he wields his 80'-long sword +5,682. Waldorf's enslaving of the gods was very unrealistic, since all the gods are servants of Thor, and furthermore [*The remainder of this letter has been deleted by the editor for reasons that must be all too painfully apparent. We continue now with our regular "Letters" feature.*]

## More outrages

Dear Dragon:

I am interested in sculpting my own fantasy figures. Have you any information you can send me on this subject, or any idea where I can get information on it? Any reply would be deeply appreciated.

One other thing. I loved the article, "Still More Outrages From the Mages," in issue #144. I have used it a few times. Once the party was being chased by five minotaurs when the spell-caster tripped over Nimrod's scroll, picked it up, and cast *monster invulnerability* upon the minotaurs. The party charged and couldn't figure out why they couldn't hit the minotaurs. Seven out of the party of eight died, but amazingly the spell-caster was still alive. He was using a sling, so he cast *minor globe of iron*, threw the BB, and ran. He was almost safe when he cast *wall of missiles* (poor sod). The minotaurs had a good lunch.

One of my characters gave an evil spell-caster his *remove hand* spell, then pulled a dagger on the mage. *Audible curse* has often been used when a battle is lost, and *detect object* was used by one of my dumber players.

Jon Enge  
Vista CA

We don't have a lot of information on how to sculpt your own fantasy figures at the moment, though we might be able to get an article on this topic in the future.

And we loved hearing about the spells. Maybe we should print more of them.

## Hawks = falcons?

Dear Dragon:

I am writing in praise of Patricia Nead Elrod's "Getting Familiar" article in issue #147. The information presented was fabulous for bringing familiars to life as an important part of the gaming universe. The article was in-depth, informative, and quite useful to the familiar-using characters in my many campaigns. I especially liked the comment: "Few wizards would want a toad for a familiar. Toads are almost a punishment." Any player can agree with this!

One mistake I spotted, however, was the information contained in the following line: "Female hawks are called falcons; males are tiercels." This didn't seem quite right, so I consulted the 1974 edition of *Funk and Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary*. It says that a falcon is "Any of a genus (*falco*) of . . . birds of prey noted for their powerful wings [and] keen vision . . . especially, the peregrine falcon, the male of which is called a tercel" (or tiercel, as Patricia noted).

In other words, DMs should keep in mind that hawks and falcons are entirely different birds, rather than the latter being the female version of the former. Aside from this, the article was fantastic! I hope to see more of Patricia Elrod's work in future issues of DRAGON Magazine.

Jarod Warner  
Cedar Rapids IA

*My copy of Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (Second College Edition, 1984), says that a falcon is "any hawk trained to hunt and kill small game: in falconry the female is called a falcon, the male a tiercel." It goes on to say (under the entries on hawk and falcon) that falcons are usually considered to be part of the hawk family, but both terms seem to be loosely used.*

## Dragon hunting

Dear Dragon:

Concerning Mr. Moore's editorial in issue #148, I remember seeing the gray and rainbow dragons in issue #146, but I don't remember seeing the brown, stone, rock, or purple dragons anywhere. Have they appeared in any other issues of DRAGON Magazine? If so, which ones? The purple dragon sounds interesting.

Chris Connelly  
Dearborn MI

We've published brown dragons in issue #38, grey dragons (not the same as gray dragons) in issue #62, purple dragons in issue #65, and stone dragons in issue #134 (we've rejected all rock dragons as a result). One can never have too many dragons, we always say.

## Saving our world

I would like to use this space this month to talk about saving the world, or at least as much of it as you yourself can save. If you've envied the heroic exploits of your player characters, you now have the chance to exceed even the wildest acts of role-playing derring-do in real life.

Most of us did not have to worry this year about a hurricane or earthquake striking our homes, as did the residents of Charleston and San Francisco. Many of us did not worry about heart disease, cancer, AIDS, lacks of funds for schools and hospitals, poverty, homelessness, and a thousand other calamities that so often affect only "other people." But some of us did have to worry about those things, and the rest of us saw the terrible effects of disasters and deprivation and disease every morning and evening in the news. Those of us who were lucky didn't know what to do about those who weren't, so we went back to our role-playing games and imagined that it was possible for little groups of people to have any real control at all over a hostile world.

But you do have that control. You can do something about all of the above problems and more, and you can do it by gaming. No kidding. Listen:

**Conventions:** It is rare (perhaps too much so) for game conventions to take a part of their proceeds and donate them to helpful causes. I would like to suggest that this practice become much more common—in fact, it should become standard procedure.

A few conventions do this regularly. GLATHRICON, which is held in Evansville, Ind., supports the American Cancer Society through its Joe Martin Benefit Tournament. During the 1989 GEN CON® game fair, the RPGA™ Network was able to donate \$1,000 to the literacy programs of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee, thanks to one tournament's entry fees, an autographed-book auction, and a donation from TSR, Inc. WINTER FANTASY, coming up this January, has a benefit tournament for the Salvation Army's Homeless Program. Last year, one California convention donated all of its proceeds from RPGA Network tournaments to the American Red Cross.

*Continued on page 91*

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you supposed to  
be dead?**

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# FORUM

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I have a suggestion for other DMs, and "Forum" seems to be the best place to make it. I have found that it is very helpful to mix game systems. I'm not talking about putting guns and lasers in the AD&D® game, slavering demons in the STAR FRONTIERS® game, or aliens or wizards in TSR's TOP SECRET® and West End Games' JAMES BOND 007 games. What I'm talking about is mixing their systems. For example, the magic system in the AD&D game can be converted for use in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, which spends about three vague pages on magic and doesn't need supplements. The system for swordplay, knife fighting, and unarmed combat in the first-edition TOP SECRET game is far better than the one in the AD&D game but takes more time. Thus, if the final scene is a duel between the party paladin and an evil fighter, the TOP SECRET system could be temporarily altered to fit, while the faster AD&D game system can be used when hacking down giant rats and webbirds. Damage bonuses and bonuses to hit can be put into damage bonuses or penalties when using the TOP SECRET melee system.

I am telling you this because I've tried it and it works. While some adaptations are harder than others (and others are simply impossible), it is possible to create a superior espionage, fantasy, superhero, or science-fiction game. Try it.

Toby Myers  
Hamilton NY

I would be interested in finding out when most players of the AD&D game consider their campaign worlds to be set. I have always assumed that the game was set in the 20th Century, in a world like that of Lord Darcy's in the Randall Garrett stories. Although the setting is medieval, my reasoning is that a world of magic would not develop much technology.

Magic, whether by mage or cleric, is spectacular. A single person can use it to perform feats that would require a hundred men otherwise. This power would be jealously guarded by its practitioners, and rival skills, such as technology, would be suppressed. Technology would also have the stigma of being messy, dirty and hard work. A mage mutters, waves a few leaves, and produces a piece of cloth. A weaver bends over a loom for days to do the same thing, then dyes it, cuts it, and tailors it.

But not everyone can perform magic. Magic would be practiced by anyone capable of it but less intelligent beings would develop technology,

which can be used by anyone.

Some technology would be developed to handle simple tasks that magic-users and clerics would consider beneath their dignity. More technology would be developed by envious persons who, being unable to perform magic, wanted power of their own. Still more would be developed because of the small number of spells available. When plague comes along, some people are going to go without healing spells. Then medicine is going to be developed.

James R. Collier  
Georgetown, Ontario

After reading all of the articles on humanoids in issue #141, I felt I had to write in. In my AD&D campaign, orcs and other less-powerful humanoids are not as weak as characters would like to believe. I took my friend's 13th-level necromantic-specialist mage on a solo adventure, and it was great fun to see him actually start to worry about his character's welfare! The adventure went as follows:

The mage entered a dark cave, where he found an ogre slumped over, sleeping. Quietly dispatching the guard, he continued on. As he peered around the corner of the next room, he saw two goblins playing knucklebones on the ground. Thinking of them as easy prey, he pompously strolled in. Immediately, the goblins sounded the alarm (he thought they were too disorganized to use one) and rushed into the fray. He slew both of them with a *magic missile* spell, but not before most of the other monsters knew he was there. He continued down a very narrow passage that led to a dead end. Turning around, he came face-to-face with the biggest ogre he had ever seen. Quickly casting a *fireball* spell, he incinerated the ogre. Because he had his *minor globe of invulnerability* up, he was unaffected by the backlash.

Continuing on he stumbled onto an orc sacrificial ceremony. This chamber was actually a series of layers sunk into the ground. The four orc guards quickly rushed to destroy him and he was hit twice (his AC is -5) before he killed them. At that moment, the orc shaman whirled around and hurled his *dagger of piercing* +2, which struck the mage with terrible force. His spell ruined, the mage then attacked the orc with his *wand of magic missiles*. Though he smashed the mage with his *mace* +1, the shaman was killed immediately after his blow struck by a well-placed *dagger* +2.

The mage heard a loud noise coming from the passage above the sacrificial platform, and he cast a *levitate* spell to investigate the disturbance. Seeing an ogre and deciding he had just about enough of this, the mage cast a *teleport* spell to take him home. Unfortunately, the ogre was quicker. He leaped up and caught the mage around the midsection, causing both of them to plummet to the ground 60' below. The ogre did not survive the fall, and the mage was barely hanging on to life.

Continued on page 92

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# SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

The sage makes another tour of the AD&D® 2nd Edition game, focusing on the new *Player's Handbook* (PHB) and *Dungeon Master's Guide* (DMG).

**The rules on page 97 of the PHB say that polearms and spears do double damage vs. charging opponents, but the tables on pages 68 and 69 say only a few polearms can do this. Which is correct?**

Those polearms marked with a "#" and all spears do double damage when set vs. a charge. Polearms marked with a "\*" do double damage vs. charging opponents that are larger than man size.

**Both of the AD&D game 2nd Edition rule books say that magical rings "radiate" magic. Does this mean they glow with a magical aura all the time? Can you tell an item is magical just by looking at it?**

The term "radiates" indicates there is a magical aura which cannot be seen, touched, tasted, or smelled but can be detected with the proper divination; a ring can radiate magic, a dragon can radiate evil, and so on. While the DM might rule that an aura might be detectable without magical aid, magical items usually are found only with *detect magic* spells or by experimenting with them to test for unusual properties.

**If an identify spell will not tell you the exact number of charges or pluses an item has, how do you find out? Can a sage tell?**

The best way to get an item's exact charges or pluses is to start with an *identify* spell to determine the approximate number, then use a *contact other plane* or *commune* spell to get the exact number. The DM has to decide what sages can do in his campaign, but giving a sage a chance to determine an item's exact pluses is reasonable. Sages have no way to determine charges; a wand with one charge looks exactly like a wand with 99 charges. If the item was first studied with *detect magic* and *identify* spells, a sage could study the item for additional clues about



who made and enchanted it and stand a good chance of guessing its powers. This would require a sage with knowledge of folklore, history, or both.

**Can a player who finds a potion taste it and immediately find out exactly what it is?**

First, players cannot test potions, but player characters can. When a character tastes a potion, the DM should give some hint or clue about its properties (see the DMG, page 141).

**Is there a reason why all the character-class experience charts stop at level 20?**

In the AD&D 2nd edition game, 20th level is the intended stopping point for all character advancement. This is because the designers and editors believe (and I agree) that the AD&D game system begins to break down around level 20. After level 20, continued advancement becomes almost meaningless, adventures are hard to design, and campaigns are hard to maintain. An expansion for character levels 21 and up has been discussed, but there are no current plans for such a product. Players and DMs who want to use megalevel characters are on their own.

**Does a cleric's ability to turn undead really stop getting better at level 14, as table 61 (page 103) in the PHB suggests?**

Yes, the progression does stop at level 14, at least for now. In game terms, this is the limit of power that deities can (or will) "lend" to clerics to fight undead. In design terms, this keeps high-level clerics from blowing away liches and other powerful undead with a simple die roll.

**How come the "death at - 10 hp" rule was dropped from the game?**

It hasn't been dropped. See the "Hovering on Death's Door" optional rule in the DMG, page 75.

**Should characters who put on a cloak of poisonousness be allowed a save vs. poison or a save vs. death?**

Neither. Characters who don the cloak die.

**Does attacking dispel the invisibility given to the attacker by a ring of invisibility or a cloak of elvenkind? If so, who long must the attacker remain visible?**

Offensive actions break the *invisibility*. The wearer must remain visible at least until the beginning of the next melee round.

*Continued on page 14*

# Welcome to the Underdark



# The Ecology of the Umber Hulk

A three-quarter-ton rock drill with a bad temper

by Tony Jones

*The following was taken from Creatures of the Earth's Deeps, by the sage and wizard Archmyel:*

The umber hulk is one of the more powerful and dangerous underground denizens. Although only infrequently encountered, umber hulks have become well known because of their distinctive appearance and the ferocity of their attacks on adventurers. I have heard numerous stories of small bands of umber hulks destroying larger parties of experienced adventurers, leaving nothing but dropped weapons and debris behind.

Umber hulks are extremely large, bulky creatures often standing nearly three yards tall and over one and a half yards wide. Their powerful arms end in hands with claws like iron that are capable of ripping through solid stone quickly. The rest of their stout bodies are very muscular, but because of their weight (1,500-1,750 lbs.) and size, umber hulks are slow, awkward creatures. Such a creature's mouth is filled with many small teeth, but the major damage is inflicted by the umber hulks two sets of mandibles.

In addition, the umber hulk has two sets of eyes, one on the outside of its flat head and the other in the middle of its forehead. The eyes on the outside of its head are white with black irises, while those on its forehead are purple with yellow or amber irises. The creature lacks a nose but breathes through gill-like structures on its almost nonexistent neck, evidence of a possible previous aquatic existence. It can thus eat and breathe at the same time. The color of the umber hulk's tough hide is black but lightens to a grayish or burnt brown hue on the head and front. The mandibles and claws are ivory colored. Adventurers have been known to mistake umber hulks for some other type of creature at a distance of 15 yards or more because of their dark coloring.

Umber hulks are, as noted earlier, well known for their ferocious attacks on adventurers—particularly humans, which are relished.. Using their powerful claws and great strength to rend opponents, they have been known to kill with a single attack, literally ripping their foes in two.

These monsters usually prey on other subterranean creatures like ankhhegs and small purple worms, against which the umber hulks developed their powerful offensive array. It is said that umber hulks allow themselves to be swallowed alive by great purple worms for the thrill of "tunneling out" and slaying the worms.

Umber hulks use their great claws and strength to good advantage in the subterranean areas they haunt. The area surrounding an umber hulk's underground lair is crisscrossed with numerous tunnels, making it difficult for other creatures to find the lair itself. Some of the tunnels are dead ends, while others lead back to their points of origin in very roundabout fashion. All such tunnels are well known to the umber hulk, which uses these passages to catch victims by outflanking them.

The reverse also holds true, as the umber hulk can use its many tunnels to elude determined pursuit. While it is not impossible to hunt down a fleeing umber hulk, it is difficult even for experienced trackers such as rangers to do so as it leaves few tracks on rocky floors. The umber hulk also could lead pursuers around in circles long enough for others to join it and turn the tables on its hunters. In dire circumstance, an umber hulk will go to an area with a deliberately weakened ceiling, so it may cause a cave-in and later escape. Deliberately caused floods are also possible, as the umber hulk can breathe water for short periods (up to 10 minutes).

Umber hulks are very destructive creatures that will always attempt to destroy what they cannot use. Thus, any clothing found in the lair will be shredded, armor torn and dented, weapons broken and useless. Umber hulks are wanton killers whose courage is not always overcome by self-preservation. They will almost immediately attack any creature they deem weaker than themselves. Only the sight of gold or platinum, in very large amounts, will halt their attacks once begun.

The most dangerous aspect of the umber hulk is its two sets of eyes. Should any creature of even slight intelligence meet the direct gaze of an umber hulk, it be-

comes instantly befuddled, often attacking its companions or standing dazed as the creature advances. This "gaze of confusion" is magical in nature and is constantly in effect. Other umber hulks are immune to the effects, which affect the victim's brain through the optic nerve in a manner which I have yet to discover. The effect seems to be created by the pair of eyes in the forehead, for the vodyanoi, the umber hulk's marine cousin, lacks this set of eyes and the peculiar gaze. The victim recovers shortly, usually within a few minutes, unless the monster has eaten him.

Both male and female umber hulks appear the same externally, equal in size and ferocity. However, female umber hulks are much rarer than the male, with only one umber hulk in four being female. For this reason, the males are very protective of the females, often sacrificing their own lives in the females' defense.

Little is known about how umber hulks reproduce. The female bears her young live a year after mating, producing one to three "hulklings." The young are quickly able to move about and defend themselves, developing all of their special powers with great rapidity. The mother is especially dangerous during this time, as she will hunt down and kill as much food as possible to feed her young, who eat voraciously. After two years, the young umber hulks learn to hunt at their mother's side. Those that have survived this long are considered mature adults in every respect. After a few months more, the young leave, and the mother may start another litter. Male umber hulks live an average of 50 years; females, 75 years.

Like most underground creatures, umber hulks have more highly developed senses of smell and hearing than eyesight, and they use the former two senses when searching for prey, tracking and fighting without penalty for darkness. However, their eyesight is not bad, and umber hulks have no trouble seeing prey at normal distances. Like most underground creatures, umber hulks dislike bright light, but they suffer ill effects only from the brightest sources. Umber hulks venture above ground only at night and only when des-

perate for prey.

Umber hulks are reasonably intelligent creatures and have developed their own spoken tongue. The language is fairly easy to learn and understand as it conveys only limited information, but only magical intervention (*clairaudience* or spying while *invisible*) permits anyone to hear the language used. However, "Hulkish" is difficult to actually speak as umber hulks make some sounds that are impossible for humans to duplicate. It is a very direct, concrete, brutal tongue as befits their nature. The umber hulk also uses various grunts, hisses, and gestures for added emphasis when speaking, as well as mouth, mandible, and eye movements.

Though umber hulks are basically loners, they will sometimes cooperate with other evil creatures, including evil humans, if paid in gold and platinum or, possibly, human victims. They will serve in any capacity—as guards, part of a main

attack force, even as manual labor—as long as they receive their gold and are not expected to risk their own lives in vain. They will not venture above ground for any price and are therefore of limited use. Their fickle nature causes them to turn on their "masters," often for no reason.

This begs the question, of course, of what umber hulks do with their monetary gains. No one knows, though not all umber hulks seem to value precious metals. It may be that they use their gains as part of their economy, if the rumors of their cities beneath the earth are true, or it may be that the umber hulks consume such metals for dietary reasons (finding coins to be excellent gizzard stones). None can say.

The lair of an umber hulk is a large, spacious cavern or room, the walls of which are always covered by marks from the umber hulk honing its claws or possibly from having carved the cave from the stone itself. Attached to the large cavern

are numerous smaller rooms of storage for what few personal items, such as treasure and food, such monsters accumulate. All the rooms will be littered with the remains of previous victims brought here for leisurely consumption. The treasure cave is usually hidden by rocks and debris, with simple but deadly traps such as rock-slides. Small items can be found scattered throughout all rooms—curios that caught the monster's interest, such as peculiar gems or devices from a past victim.

Dead umber hulks (the only good ones, some say) have numerous uses. The hide of an umber hulk is extremely tough and damage resistant. Some underground races, notably kobolds and goblins, cure the hides of umber hulks and make armors and shields out of them. (Although they would not dare to attack a living umber hulk, these races recover their prizes from beasts slain by disease, age, or adventurers.) The hard mandibles are



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used as hand-held weapons, and the claws are turned into spiked clubs and maces. The eyes from the forehead are often needed by magic-users for potions and magical inks, and they can be sold for a profit to alchemical shops or wizards' guilds.

Though it poses little threat to normal human existence, the umber hulk is a notable danger to those who venture beneath the earth in search of adventure and riches. It makes the life of a farmer much more attractive.

### Gaming notes

Most umber hulks have strengths of 19, equal to a hill giant, but one in 20 has a strength of 20 and does  $1d6 + 6$  hp damage with each claw, rather than the  $3d4$  hp damage listed in the *Monstrous Compendium*. If the umber hulk's strength should be reduced, claw damage should be reduced accordingly. Damage done by the mandibles remains the same.

The effects of an umber hulk's gaze are like the effects of a *confusion* spell lasting  $3d4$  rounds, affecting as many victims as are looking at it within 40' of its front. Umber hulks themselves are immune to the effects of the gaze, as are vodyanoi, creatures already suffering from *confusion*, and *mind-barred* victims. Use the following chart (from the description of

the dracolisk in the *Monster Manual II*, page 55) to determine the chances of meeting an umber hulk's gaze:

Character is—	Chance to meet gaze
Surprised	7 in 10
Viewing monster	3 in 10
Attacking normally	3 in 10
Avoiding gaze	1 in 10

When born, umber hulks are helpless, but by three months of age they have  $1 + 1$

HD, are 1' tall, and do  $1d4/1d4/1d2$  hp damage with claws and mandibles. They grow thereafter at the rate shown in the umber hulk growth table.

Extremely bright light, such as sunlight, causes the umber hulk to take a -1 penalty to hit and to saving throws.

The claws and mandibles of dead umber hulks do  $1d4$  hp damage per blow when used as weapons. Armor made from the hides of umber hulks is AC 4 and resembles a suit of plate armor. The eyes from the forehead can be worth 100-400 gp apiece to the right people.

Ω

Umber Hulk Growth Table

Age	Hit dice	Claw damage	Mandible damage	Duration in rounds of confusion gaze
0-2 mo.	1-1	-	-	-
3-5 mo.	1+1	1d4	1d2	1d4
6-8 mo.	2+2	1d4	1d3	1d4
9-11 mo.	3+3	1d6	1d4	1d4
12-14 mo.	4+4	2d4	1d6	2d4
15-17 mo.	5+5	2d4	1d6	2d4
18-20 mo.	6+6	2d6	1d8	2d4
21-23 mo.	7+7	2d6	1d10	2d4
24+ mo.	8+8	3d4	1d10	3d4



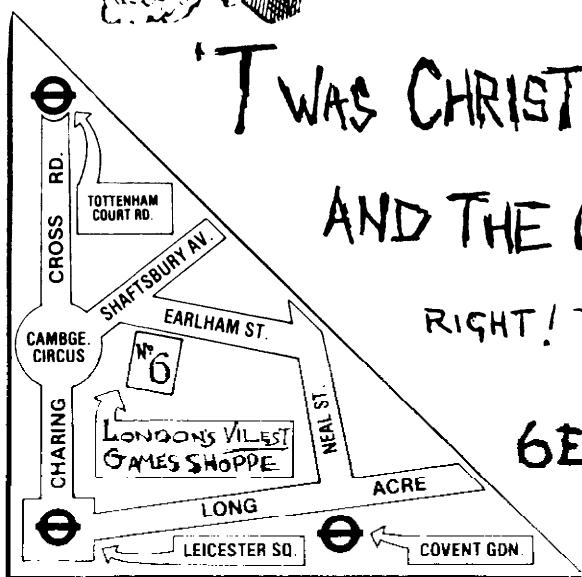
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## Sage Advice

Continued from page 8

### Can a cleric use an amulet vs. undead? Can a druid?

Clerics whose power to turn undead is equal to or better than the amulet's get no benefit from it; all other characters turn undead at the amulet's level regardless of class or alignment.

The table for the *staff-spear* (*DMG*, page 154) says a roll of 20 indicates a +3 weapon. Shouldn't this be +6?

A roll of "20" indicates the ranseur version of the *staff-spear*; the asterisk should have been placed by the "+3" figure in the bottom line.

The description of a *helm of teleportation* mentions a risk for non-wizards when teleporting. What is the risk?

The "risk" is the same for all characters; see the wizard spell, *teleport*, in the *PHB*, page 172.

### At what level is a wizard character allowed to specialize?

Wizard specialties should be chosen when the character is created. If a character does not meet the ability score requirements for his desired specialty, the DM might allow him to specialize later in his career if the deficiency is resolved and the character does not have spells from a prohibited school in his spell books.

### Can a nonwarrior have a strength greater than 18? If so, does the character get exceptional strength or does he proceed straight to 19?

Strength ratings over 18 are possible through the use of *wishes* or magical items. Generally, an increase in an ability score that is higher than 16 and less than 20 comes in increments of one-tenth of a point (see the *DMG*, pages 11-12). A non-warrior with a strength greater than 18 but less than 19 gets no special benefits; treat the character's strength as an unremarkable 18.

### Do halflings get any combat modifiers due to their small size?

Halflings get no combat modifiers due to size in the core rules, but this could change in a future supplement.

### Can a character with a strength of 1 wear clothes? The chart on page 14 of the *PHB* says the PC's maximum press is 3 lbs., but the text on page 75 says clothes weigh 5 lbs.

The character's maximum press has nothing to do with what he can carry. The character cannot raise the clothes above his head, but he can wear or carry them. Clothes, however, would encumber the character.

### If the minimum wisdom score for a cleric is 9, why does table 5 list spell failure chances for wisdoms of less than 9?

A cleric must begin play with a wisdom score of 9 or higher, but the score might drop temporarily (or permanently) during play; most DMs allow PCs to continue in their classes, even if their ability scores fall below the minimum requirements.

### Can nonelven characters find secret or concealed doors?

Yes. Generally, the chance for them to do so is one in six, only if the character is actively searching a 10' section of a surface.

### Do gnomes get a constitution-based saving throw bonus vs. poison like dwarves do?

No; gnomes have no special resistance to poison.

### Does fighting with two weapons require a special weapon slot? If so, do rangers have to spend a weapon proficiency on it?

This is up to the DM. If a slot is required, rangers get it free.

### Is there a range limit on the clerical undead turning ability?

A cleric can turn undead if he can see and recognize them as undead, and if they can see and recognize him as a cleric. The range indoors is limited by the size of the area and the available light. The absolute limit outdoors is about 240 yards, less in poor light or through concealment.

### How long does it take a druid to change form when *shape changing*? How long do changes in form take with a *polymorph self* or *shape change* spell? Do protective items like rings or bracers work with druid's new form? Are protective items like bracers or rings considered clothing, since only clothing and one item held in each hand changes along with the druid?

Generally, assuming a new form counts as an action and takes three segments (+3 initiative modifier). The first change in form is usually considered part of the casting time for *polymorph self* and *shape change* spells. Most DMs allow protective devices to work even on *polymorphed* or *shape changed* creatures, and most DMs I know ignore the clothing-and-two-items restriction for druids and allow all the druids equipment to change with him.

The set snares proficiency is available to both rogues and warriors. However, table 37 (*PHB*, pages 54-55) says this requires a dexterity check for rogues and an intelligence check for warriors. Are these really different skills or is there an error?

Check dexterity in either case.

### Will 90% soft cover, such as a tapestry or overturned table, protect a character from spells, or does only hard cover do this?

DMs must resolve this on a case-by-case basis. When in doubt, have the cover make an item saving throw; if this succeeds, characters behind it take one-half or no damage.

### Can monsters use breath weapons or innate spell abilities during the "free" round they get when they achieve surprise?

You bet. Any creature who surprises another can use any attack it has, but it cannot cast a spell.

### Does a PC's lifetime limit on the number of henchmen apply to henchmen who leave because they equal or surpass the PC's level? I assume not. Henchmen achieve high levels with help from PCs. If "graduating" henchmen did count, it would be in the player's best interest to see that none of his character's henchmen ever became high level.

This is up to the DM, but your argument is very persuasive.

### Can a wizard or priest pick the number of people affected by a *hold person* spell?

Yes, the number of creatures effected by a *hold person* spell is under the caster's control.

### How much does one day's amount of common meals weigh?

The weight of a day's common meals varies with the locale, season, and cuisine, but 2-5 lbs. per person is a good rule of thumb. This weight includes bones, skins and other inedibles. Common meals, however, are rarely carried anywhere, so their weights don't matter much. A week's dry rations generally weigh 7-10 lbs., all of which is edible.

### Can specialist wizards use scroll spells from opposition schools? Can clerics use scroll spells from outside their spheres?

A character who can use spells can use a scroll if it matches his class, so priests can use scroll spells from outside their spheres and wizards can use scroll spells from outside their schools.

### Table 56 in the *PHB* (page 94) says that a scroll's initiative modifier is the same as the spell on the scroll. What is the modifier for a protection scroll?

Unless stated otherwise in the scroll's description, a protection scroll has an initiative modifier of +3.

Continued on page 59



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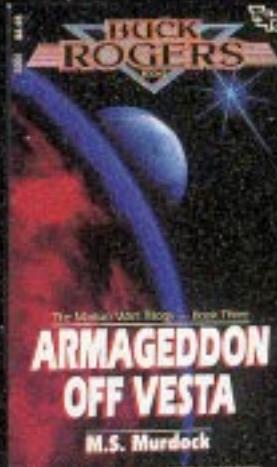
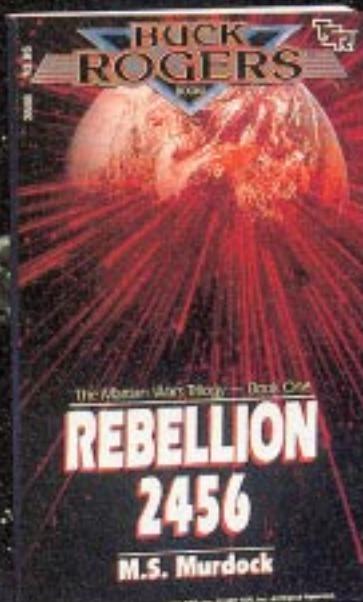
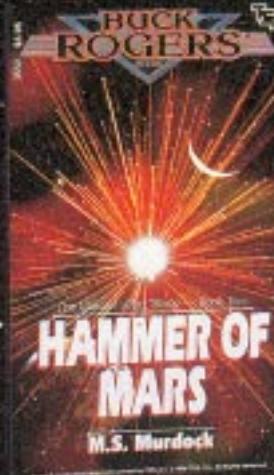
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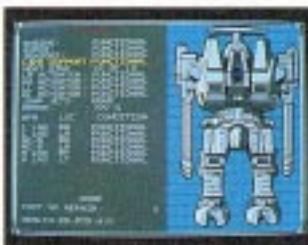
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# In a Cavern, In a Canyon...

## Mines and metallurgy in fantasy campaigns

by Thomas M. Kane

"Certainly, though it is but one . . . method of acquiring wealth . . . a careful and diligent man can attain this result in no easier way than by mining"

Georgius Agricola, *De Re Metallica*

Every dwarf knows how important mines are. As Agricola stated, there are few better ways for someone to get rich than discovering ore and digging it up. Mines also make ideal "dungeons." Adventurers can comb through abandoned tunnels or active shafts owned by their enemies or creatures from below.

The AD&D® *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* presented some basic information about mining on pages 48-55. This article expands that material with information about medieval prospecting and metallurgy, based on Georgius Agricola's *De Re Metallica*, a German text written in A.D. 1550. Dwarves, gnomes, drow, and humans with the miner secondary skill or mining proficiency should have access to this knowledge in AD&D games.

### To find a mine

In medieval times, prospectors began their search for valuable ores in early spring. They looked for far more than tell-tale ore-bearing rocks. Agricola stated that a warm and dry "exhalation" comes from underground metal, preventing hoar-frost from forming on short new grass. By observing the patterns of frost on grassy ground, one can see where ore veins run. Furthermore, trees absorb metal through their roots, and such metal causes the first leaves of the season to blacken or fall off if the trees stand over a vein.

Medieval prospectors knew to look for natural springs because water often congeals in mineral veins and flows along them. This gives the water a distinctive taste. Salty springs (found inland) indicate underground salt, and salt would be precious in any medieval-style fantasy society. In our own world, a few ounces of salt were worth more than two slaves as recently as the 1700s. An experienced miner could also taste for soda (nitrium), alum, vitriol, sulfur, and bitumen, all of which were used in smelting ore, in alchemy, and

in medicine. In the AD&D® game, bitumen, sulfur, and alum are also used as material spell components.

The DM can role-play this search, making a map of the area of interest and letting PCs explore it (dwarves might appreciate this activity most). It takes one week for a miner to prospect four square miles, longer if the ore is particularly difficult to find. As noted beforehand, the searchers must examine springs and herbs as well as stones. A group containing characters with knowledge of mining as well as wilderness-wise rangers, elves, druids, and NPC treants (or trees contacted through *speak with plants* spells) can finish the search in half the normal time. Of course, these latter experts may refuse to despoil the earth by mining. Clever NPCs (or PCs!) might guide prospectors away from veins, to avoid having forests cut down for timber used in building the mine itself.

After this exploration, PCs may attempt mining proficiency checks (explained on pages 25-26 and 48-49 of the *DSG*, and on pages 54 and 61 of the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*). If the checks succeed, the DM tells PCs where they find springs, colored trees, or bits of ore (and what these may mean). Of course, the PCs might discover monsters or claim jumpers, too, as the DM wishes.

Miners in medieval times practiced a whole branch of sorcery. They believed that ore radiated an aura or "field"; when a magician walked over such a field with a forked divining rod, this field caused the stick to twist in his hands. Some diviners employed hazel rods, while others claimed that hazel could find only silver. The latter used ash rods for copper, pitch pine rods for lead or tin, and iron wires for gold. Others preferred to use magic rings for divining, and others looked for an ore's field by observing the area in a magical mirror or through an enchanted crystal. Agricola did not believe in diviners, although he suggested that such magic might have existed in ages past. In AD&D games, a *ring of x-ray vision*, might help prospectors find dense metal ore, and a *wand of metal and mineral detection* could

locate veins (see the AD&D 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, pages 151 and 157, respectively, for more information). Mages can research spells or develop items to find ore, using the items described above as guidelines. Of course, all magic flirts with peril. New spells might invoke the elemental plane of Earth, and powerful but miscast spells could unleash volcanoes, earthquakes, or malign beings from other planes.

Despite their lore, prospectors depend on luck. Some mines begin in farmers' fields when plows turn up metallic stones. Other veins are found after landslides or earthquakes, and once a wildfire melted ore near the ground surface, causing rivulets of gold to trickle down a mountainside. The *DSG* contains guidelines for placing ore veins, but ore can appear wherever the DM wants it. Furthermore, if mining would slow the campaign, no amount of successful dice-rolling should produce a vein. Charlatans, "fool's gold" (iron pyrite), and the simple absence of metal can frustrate the wisest prospectors.

Humans did not practice scientific geology until the 19th century. However, in a fantasy world, different races may be intimately familiar with the patterns of ore placement underground. Drow and svirfneblin, among others, certainly know where the earth hides its metals. Prospectors might venture underground to beg the advice of such races, but might eventually fight these races bitterly. Surface and underworld miners often clash because each group desires the same resources. PCs digging down into ore beds might meet beings chipping their way up.

Deep-dwelling races know that the earth is formed in layers of stone and dirt, with new layers forming over the old. Veins of ore usually appear where something disrupts these layers, concentrating minerals in one place. For example, magma can squeeze its way into other stones, carrying ore with it. It forms vertical *dikes*, horizontal *sills*, blisterlike *laccoliths*, and vast, rippling *batholiths*. Diamonds collect in kimberlite *pipes*, cones of volcanic rocks that project upward. Tectonic plates also alter the geology of an area. A rising plate

might lift metals or oil, creating a chain of 'deposits along the edge of a continent.

Underground peoples might also know about oil. Petroleum collects where the layers of earth curve, forming a trough or a trap for it. Petroleum is likely the "flaming oil" adventurers hurl at monsters; the only oils in the Middle Ages came from animal or vegetable fat and were unsuitable as weapons. Perhaps fantasy warriors import their oil from the underworld. Dungeon explorers may grow rich trading in oil they recover. Petroleum deposits might also interest Oriental characters; the ancient Chinese drilled for oil and salt water with bamboo derricks. Some Chinese emperors tried to tax these wells, but rural landlords resisted by posting scouts who dismantled the drills before inspectors arrived.

## Assaying

Once prospectors discover a vein, they must evaluate it by assaying (testing) the ore. Miners often judged unknown ores by chewing them. They also suspended earth in water so it could be studied with color-changing slips of paper, like the litmus paper used by modern chemists. Roman craftsmen made this paper by dipping parchment in shoe-black. It turned green when exposed to vitriol, a sulfate often found with metallic ores.

When these tests seem promising, assayers then heated ore in crucibles. Pure metals melt smoothly and at precise temperatures. Medieval assayers used flammable compounds to measure the melting points of ores. The craftsmen knew the temperature at which the powdered compounds would combust, so if a molten metal ignited them, that showed how hot the metal was. These tests also helped miners choose fluxes for smelting. Fluxes are substances that aid the separation of slag from pure metal in the smelting process. Different colors of smoke created during these tests suggested different chemicals for use as fluxes, and deep purple smoke meant that the ore needed no flux at all. Each such test had to be performed in a *cupel*, or dish of ashes. The ashes were especially pure so they did not absorb the metal. Assayers preferred ash burned from beech or other trees that grow slowly.

Experts on metallurgy did more than test mines. They hunted counterfeiters and set values for metals. Grossly adulterated gold (used in forged coins or as part of a fake gold-mine scam) turns black in a candle flame. More sophisticated counterfeit metals appear real but will not melt until treated with lead flux. Once an assayer determined that a metal was genuine, he tested it with a touchstone to reveal its purity. The sample was beaten into a needle shape and scratched against black slate until it left a streak. By looking at the mark, a learned metallurgist could determine the ratio of metals in any alloy.

A character must make a smelter profi-

ciency check to assay a sample (see the *DSG*, pages 25-26). The tools required for assaying cost 50 gp, more if pure ashes are unavailable. DMs should make this check in secret. If the character succeeds, he learns the exact purity of the ore or coin being tested. The DM can determine a mine's value with the results on Table 33: Ore Quality, on page 51 of the *DSG*. If the check fails, the assayer believes that the mine is either far more or far less valuable than it really is (there is a 50% chance of either result). PCs might then abandon a priceless mine or be convinced that a mine should be producing more than it does (and thus conclude that their workers are stealing ore).

## Mines and the law

It appears to be a basic law of mining that once someone finds metal, the government will certainly interfere. In Agricola's Germany, each miner was required to register his mine with the local burgomaster or town mayor, so he could divide the ground above the mine into *meers*. Whoever possessed a meer owned all ore found beneath it. Meers were of different sizes, and the mine's discoverer always received the largest one. Smaller portions belonged to business partners and landowners. The law reserved other meers for the king, his consort, his master of horses, his cupbearer, his groom of the chamber, the bishop, and the burgomaster himself. The local baron did not automatically receive a meer. Miners were legally vassals of the crown and paid tribute directly to the king.

Metal brings wealth, technology, and independence in war, so most rulers want their people to mine. Some kings granted prospectors permission to dig wherever they found ore, no matter who owned the land above it. Other kings allowed miners to seize only "wastrel land" that was not being farmed. These laws usually included another provision requiring miners to work their mines. If a mine owner failed to produce ore for nine weeks, the baron often confiscated his holding and awarded it to the informer.

Medieval laws also covered labor in the mines. Shifts could not exceed seven hours, and foremen had to warn workers when their time ended. Bosses communicated with subordinates in deep tunnels by ringing a great bell called a *campana*, by stamping rhythmically on mine timbers, or by relaying codes of hammer taps from miner to miner. If miners missed these messages, their shifts were still legally over when their lamps burned out. For this reason, foremen filled the miners' lamps and weighed them to be sure that nobody had too little. Most burgomasters refused to allow foremen to work their miners at night or for two shifts in a row, except during emergencies. The miners usually resented these rules, since they wanted two shifts' worth of pay. (As a side note, many miners fell asleep in lonely

tunnels even during a single shift. Miners sang to stay awake, and Agricola noted that the singing "is not wholly untrained or unpleasing." Dwarves, gnomes, humans, and other races that are not accustomed to eternal existence underground might do the same; the dwarves in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* sang—and quite well, too.)

## Wheels, gears, & pulleys

Ingenious machinery filled medieval mines. Agricola considered the idea of carrying ore out on workers' backs barbaric because mine carts had replaced porters for centuries. Carts were rolled into a mine on tracks using the force of gravity, then pulled out by mules or pack dogs. (In AD&D game terms, pack dogs are treated as war dogs and carry 20 lbs. at normal speed or 50 lbs. at half speed.) Outside the mine, daredevil sledge drivers guided loads of ore down mountainsides, steering themselves with poles. Agricola mentioned that these sledgers worked "not without risk of life." Other loads were lifted out of vertical mine shafts by cables. Hand-powered windlasses and cranes operated by treadmills dotted the ground above mines. Miners did not even have to climb down the shafts to work. They slid on chutes or clung to rope elevators powered by treadmills.

Some mines flooded constantly, so orangelike pump arrays descended into the tunnels, powered by treadmills or water wheels in nearby streams. Some pumps used a single plunger, while others involved dragging a chain with bundles of watertight leather set at given intervals through a pipe. Pumps become inefficient when the distance they travel is too long, so deep mines used other systems. Some dragged chains with buckets attached through the water. Others required pump relays, each one raising water one level using buckets or Archimedes' screws. Relayed pumps could use relayed water wheels, in which water poured down a deep shaft and turned a different engine on each floor.

Nothing could be more important than oxygen to miners of any race. Medieval engineers dug horizontal shafts into mountainsides so air could flow freely into some mines, but many lodes were too deep to be reached in that manner. In windy spots, miners used funnels and pipes on the surface to ventilate tunnels. These devices had fans that rotated in the wind using vanes and sails. Deeper tunnels required miners to invent various air pumps, including men fanning air into shafts with linen sheets, feathered propellers, vast blower boxes powered by water wheels, and gigantic bellows. Gearboxes allowed these air pumps to be powered by treadmills or water wheels as well as by hand.

When these devices break (or are sabotaged) in game campaigns, characters might be trapped without fresh air. A 10' cube (not "10 cubic feet" as noted in the *DSG*, page 36) contains enough oxygen to

last one man for one day. If the character exerts himself by exploring, fighting, or digging, he needs twice as much oxygen.

Fires also consume oxygen. A torch consumes a 10' cube of oxygen in eight hours, and a small bonfire uses this much in two hours. Burning oil uses 10 times as much oxygen as a wood fire, so an oil-burning fire uses up a 10' cube's oxygen in only 12 rounds. An adventurer can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to one-third his constitution, rounded up. After this, the character must attempt a 1d20 roll against his constitution each round, with a penalty of +2 per round. When this roll fails, the victim suffocates. More information on this topic is contained in the *DSG*, pages 36-38.

### Perils underground

Medieval miners believed that a whole host of demons and gnomes lived in the shafts with them. Most tunnel spirits were benign. They appeared to work vigorously and carry away ore, but they never seemed to deplete the veins. These creatures threw pebbles at workmen who teased them but did no harm. Other haunts were invisible but made knocking noises. A few demanded offerings before they allowed anyone to dig their favorite lodes. Anyone who refused to give an offering would die by falling down a shaft, being buried by a cave-in, or becoming a victim of one of the mishaps so common

underground. The same spirits befriended kindly people and led them to riches. In AD&D games, these creatures could be pech, booka, and underground pixies.

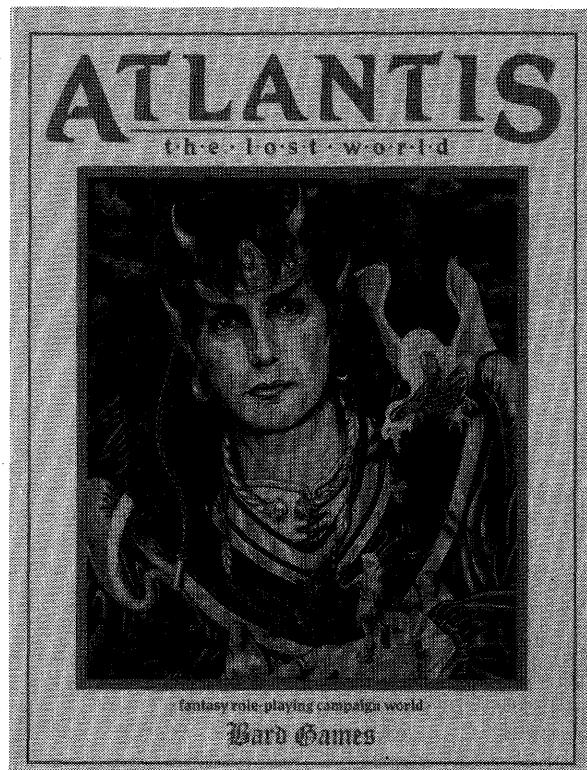
Miners dreaded the more fearsome creatures. They considered it impossible to keep kobolds out of mines, and these small, evil beings supposedly sabotaged elevators, allowing people to plunge into the depths. (Miners also believed that cobalt, a gray metal later used in alloys and paints, was a worthless metal substituted for silver by kobolds in the mines.) Deadly ants and solifuga (sun spiders, tiny versions of those in *Monster Manual II*) stung people who sat on them. Many believed that each mine had its own breed of poisonous bugs; nothing could save their victims except a drink from one particular hot spring that was hidden somewhere within the same mine (which DMs may wish to include).

The earth that miners dig can kill them, too—and it does so in real life. Ordinary dust scars the windpipe and causes lung diseases in old age. Other powders corrode the lungs at once, and Agricola reported that in the Carpathian mountains most women married at least seven husbands, as one by one each man smothered underground. A black dirt called *pompholyx* settled in open wounds and ate them to the bone. It also destroyed iron, so wooden tools were used in the mines it infested. Cadmia dust does even more

harm; it can burn into uninjured skin when moistened. A greenish metal called *kobelt* was said to devour the feet of men who walked over it. This was the origin of the word "kobold," because people assumed that little goblins laid kobelt traps on purpose. Miners protected themselves from these dusts with sealed leather coveralls and breathing masks made of animal bladders.

Poisonous dusts like pompholyx do no harm to healthy characters, but they infect any wound that is not bound within one round after contact. Pompholyx causes 1 hp damage per round to such open wounds until half again as much damage is taken as the character originally suffered. Any iron exposed to pompholyx (including armor) must save vs. acid every hour or be damaged. Armor loses one armor class of protection; weapons suffer a -1 on damage rolls, and small items break. Intelligent enchanted swords plead not to be exposed to pompholyx. Cadmia dust causes 1-4 hp damage per round, or 1-8 hp damage if the victim has wet skin. Kobelt destroys boots after 1-10 turns (if not brushed off) and causes 1 hp damage per round to bare feet. When characters stand on kobelt without shoes, they must save vs. poison or be unable to stand thereafter until their wounds are healed, otherwise falling to the ground in the kobelt for 1-10 hp damage. (Kobelt might also be green slime.) Protective clothing

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prevents damage from dusts, but such clothing is useless once perforated. Whenever a PC suffers damage, he must make a dexterity check on 1d20 to protect his suit.

People who get any corrosive dust in their eyes (for whatever reason) must save vs. poison or go blind. Dusts have a 20% chance of blinding both of a person's eyes even if only one eye is exposed, due to sympathetic eye syndrome.

Stagnant air in mines could be cleared with pumps, but poisonous gases killed victims nonetheless. Dangerous fumes arose from some ores but could usually be detected with candles (which burned in different colors) or with canaries (which died when exposed to methane, as per the DSG, page 37; checking for methane with open flame is dangerous, as it will cause an explosion). The most common poisonous gas was carbon monoxide, created when workmen set underground bonfires. These fires were necessary to heat rock so that it could be cracked open with cold water. Miners usually did this chore on Friday, evacuated their tunnels, and did not return until Monday. Some smoke settled on water, forming an arsenic film that floated into the air when the pools were disturbed. Those who survived the fumes reported that their limbs swelled until their hands and feet were spherical. Agricola reported watching men climb ladders to escape arsenic gas, only to fall as their fingers grew too bloated to grip the rungs.

Sulfurous fumes, present with volcanic activity, suffocate victims as if there were no oxygen in the air (see the DSG, page 36). Carbon monoxide smothers any character in only 1-3 rounds because of its potent poisons: Anyone exposed to arsenic gases must save vs. poison; if the roll fails, he is immobilized by swelling. Arsenic also smothers victims as if it were carbon monoxide. When this material settles in pools, characters can walk past safely. However, when anything disturbs the water, gas is released. If a character actually touches the water, he must save at -3 or be paralyzed and begin to choke. Furthermore, anything wetted with arsenic-tainted water exudes poisonous gas in a 10' radius until it is scrubbed.

Some PCs may want to use these chemicals against enemies. If so, the DM should remember the dangers of carrying these poisons and being caught in one's own gas. None of the gases but arsenic have any effect aboveground in open air. Even inside buildings, they disperse too quickly to kill most people, given an open window or two. The corrosive dusts cannot cause full damage except when concentrated. A few handfuls of kobelt or cadmia should be treated like the acid described in the 1st Edition DMG on page 64. Pompholyx cannot harm living things aboveground. PCs might use it to sabotage iron objects, but it would have to be applied directly and allowed to sit undisturbed for one hour.

Mines can also collapse. Tunnels in

AD&D campaigns must be supported by timbers or stone every 10', and these supports require four man-hours to construct, given a source of wood or worked stone along with ways of transporting it to the mine. With supports, there is a 2% per day chance of a cave-in somewhere within the mine; without them, there is a 10% chance per turn that a once-reinforced tunnel collapses. The DM should decide where the cave-in occurs, placing it wherever miners have weakened the ceiling most recently (also see the tables on pages 39-40 of the DSG). Damage from falling rock is given in the DSG on page 40. Even if cave-ins miss characters entirely, they may trap the PCs underground. Table 27: Mining Rates, on page 50 of the DSG, shows how fast rescuers can dig. Victims may try to scoop their way out, but unless they have picks and shovels, they dig at one-quarter the usual rate.

### Digging

Determine a mine's output by calculating the amount of ore its workers can dig each day, using Table 27: Mining Rates, on page 50 of the DSG. Some magic, including *dig* and *move earth* spells and *spades of colossal excavation*, may speed the work. The tables in this article show how difficult ore is to dig, what it weighs, and how much metal can be extracted from it. Tables on pages 50-52 of the DSG help the DM determine other details, such as the location of veins and their composition. Remember that ore not only needs to be dug, it must be transported to a smelter.

Table 1 herein describes common sorts of ore and the ease of mining them. The classification of an ore as "hard" or "soft" applies to the Mining Rates table previously noted. Weights are given in pounds per cubic foot.

Ore appears in vertical columns called *vena profunda*, horizontal veins called *vena dilatata*, or lone masses called *vena cumulata*. Use Tables 28 and 29 on page 50 of the DSG to determine where the *vena dilatata* go or else choose the direction. *Vena cumulata* and *vena profunda* can be approached from above and are easy to excavate using vertical shafts. Miners dig *vena dilatata* while lying down; this keeps miners from wasting time digging useless stone but forces them to work in cramped positions, Dwarves excel at this job because they fit into these narrow tunnels. Larger miners can only mine these passages at 75% their normal rate, or one-half the normal rate if they insist on digging tunnels in which they can stand upright.

When characters smelt their ore, you will need to know how much metal the ore contains. Table 2 herein converts the Ore Quality table on page 51 of the DSG to the gold-piece weight of actual metal per 25 cubic feet of ore, the typical daily production for a human miner in hard rock (this is about the size of a 3' cube). When a mineral can be extracted from different sorts of ore, a letter code indicates what

sort of ore is present.

No one mined platinum until the 18th century. It was first found in riverbeds as part of a native alloy. This metal had to be dissolved in aqua regia and reprecipitated to form platinum. The exact methods used remain trade secrets even today.

### Smelting

Once the ore is aboveground, it is sent though a new series of machines. Workers sort ore from stones by hand because plain earth soaks up metal when the two are placed in a furnace together. Each metal requires different treatment. Antimony had to be treated gingerly, because alchemists warned that it might turn into lead. Pliny the Elder, a Roman naturalist, recommended mixing silver and gold ores, claiming that the electrum produced would create magical lightning and detect poison by turning black. When gold or silver mingles with lesser ores, acid is used to dissolve the unwanted metal. Adept miners could then reconstitute the other metals from solution. Some miners were even brave enough to dissolve the gold with a mix of hydrochloric and nitric acids, then precipitate it (check a basic chemistry text for details).

Gold can usually be washed out of its ore without heat or acid. There were an amazing variety of machines for purifying it, all based on the principle that gold is heavier than dirt and settles to the bottom when suspended in water. "Panning" by hand is the most basic version of this method. Other systems involved placing the ore on a screen with a tray underneath and running water over it, or lining streambeds with collector plates. Workmen patrolled these chutes with hoes to push lumps of gold back into the plates if they were washing away.

Ore that is to be smelted in a furnace must first be crushed. Some mine owners employed men with hammers to beat the stones, but mines with nearby streams used water wheels to power huge automatic hammers or grindstones to grind soft ore like wheat. (Orcs or other foul creatures might enjoy pounding people in this machinery.) Smelters roasted ore in open fires to burn away sulfur and bitumen before placing it in the furnace. In the smelter, ore was mixed with appropriate fluxes to make metals melt easily and at regular temperatures. Copper will not melt until all traces of iron with it have melted, so it is never worked with iron tools. Most furnaces required large bellows or mechanical blowers, and some were so large that operators needed cranes to open them. However, even these furnaces were not always large enough. A few miners preferred to build hills of ore against windy mountainsides and smelt hundreds of tons at once. Other smelters completely automated the process of refining metal, using water-powered conveyor belts and engines to crush, rinse, strain, and heat the ore.

It is always worthwhile to recycle processed ore. Some smelters accepted their slag instead of a fee, knowing that the slag still contained valuable metal. In the case of gold, even the water that washed it remained precious. Many miners strained gold dust from waste water with sheep's wool, and Agricola suggested that this was the origin of the Greek myth concerning the Golden Fleece. Clever miners could always extract even more gold by mixing mercury with the ore. Smelters put the most promising pieces of stone in a cloth bag with mercury and squeezed the bag until the quicksilver trickled out. The material left inside appeared to be pure gold; it was actually an amalgam, but not

even experts could tell.

An alchemist could also use quicksilver to separate gold from silver. The process involved heating a gilt object in mercury, then rapping it sharply. All gold would crumble off, leaving the surface below intact. Other chemists used a powder of sal ammoniac and sulfur that could be applied to an object with oil. Gold would then flake away as soon as the object was heated. These methods were usually used by craftsmen who wanted to remake fine gilt items, but they have obvious applications for theft. A dose of this solution costs 50 gp and can remove 10 lbs. of gold.

Miners leached salt and chemicals from their ore. Medieval chemists made lye by

soaking the ashes of reeds and distilling the water. Saltpeter could be made the same way, but it came from the earth on cellar walls and oak ash instead of reeds; it was usually purified by heating it in a copper pot. Bitumen did not even need to be fully dried; it floated to the top of water, where workers skimmed off the oily substance with goose wings. Alum came from certain porous rocks, which were heated and dissolved in human urine. The reconstituted material could be used in many ways. Doctors prescribed alum to stop bleeding, as mouthwash, and to cure dysentery. Dyemasters made a remarkable pigment from alum that did not appear to have any effect on cloth at first but gradually became colored. Cloth dipped in a single vat of alum dye could take on many different shades. Miners prized salty hot springs, since these not only contained minerals but their natural steam could power an apparatus designed to draw out water and automatically evaporate it with geothermal heat. The spring did all the work; its owner simply came at the end of each day to collect his minerals.

Smelting is partially described on page 26 of the **DSG**. Every 200 gp weight of ore requires 5 gp worth of fluxes and one worker. Automatic machinery costs 1,000 gp to install but reduces the need for labor by one-half. Have the character in charge of a smelter make a smelting proficiency check (see the **DSG**, page 25). Smelters suffer a +3 penalty on this roll if they have not successfully assayed the ore. If the check fails, half of the metal is lost, and the rest must be resmelted. If the check succeeds, the character obtains 75% of the available metal. Smelters must pass a second check to get the rest.

### Ending a mine

Eventually, miners will have dug all the metal they can safely take from a mine. During Roman times, people hoped that ore would grow back in an exhausted mine, as if the earth were a living thing

*Continued on page 27*

**Table 1**  
**Metallic Ores and Gems**

Ore	Element	Hardness*	Weight**	Notes
Argentite	Silver	Soft	450	Silvery crystals
Bornite	Copper	Hard	312	Bronze color, purple sheen
Cassiterite	Tin	Hard	437	Fibrous masses
Chalcocite	Copper	Soft	344	Gray-black
Cinnabar	Mercury	Soft	506	Red, used in dyes
Copper, native	Copper	Hard	556	-4 bonus on smelting rolls
Galena	Lead	Soft	469	Gray crystals
Gem minerals	Varies	Hard	162	See the <b>DSG</b> , pages 51 and 53, for output
Gold ore	Gold	Soft	600	Gray
Hematite	Iron	Hard	312	Red stone or gray crystal
Limonite	Iron	Hard	219	Rounded ochre lumps
Magnetite	Iron	Hard	325	Black, magnetic (lodestone); see the <b>DSG</b> , page 42
Malachite	Copper	Hard	231	Ornamental (azurite)
Pentlandite	Nickel	Hard	287	Brassy, contains iron; miners once considered it cursed
Pyrite	Iron	Hard	312	"Fools' gold"
Siderite	Iron	Hard	237	Brown crystals
Skutterudite	Cobalt	Hard	406	Gray clusters
Sphalerite	Zinc	Hard	250	Yellow-brown, brittle

\* "Hard" and "soft" apply to Table 27: Mining Rates, in the **DSG**, page 50, and to the Mining table in the 1st Edition **DMG**, page 106.

\*\* Figures show the weight of excavated ore in pounds per cubic foot. The amount of actual metal extracted from this ore can be determined using Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Ore Purity**

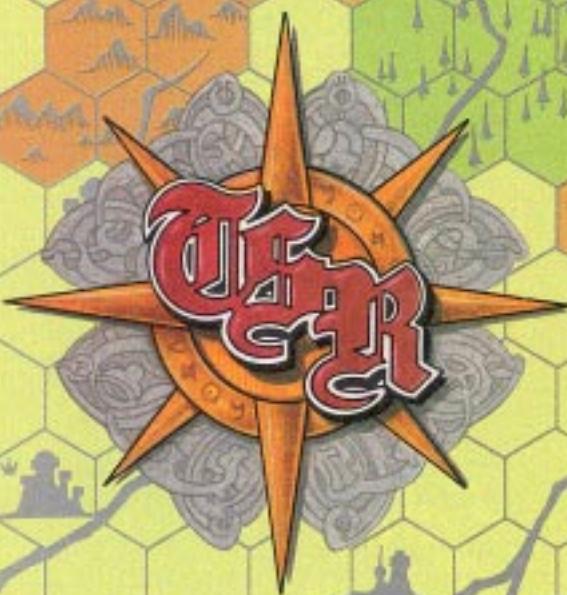
Metal	1d10 roll*									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cobalt	5	10	20	40	75	90	110	150	200	250
Copper	16A	33B	41 A	50 C	58 A	66 C	83 A	125 C	166 D	333 D
Gold	2	4	8	16	32	50	67	83	125	166
Iron	33 E	50 F	83 F	116 F	150 G	200 H	266 G	333 H	500 H	660 H
Lead	16	33	41	50	58	66	83	125	166	333
Mercury	16	33	41	50	58	66	83	125	166	333
Nickel	15	30	40	50	60	70	80	120	170	300
Platinum	1	2	3	4	12	17	42	67	134	167
Silver	4	8	16	32	50	64	83	125	167	166
Tin	30	60	90	100	130	135	140	150	160	170
Zinc	15	30	40	50	58	66	83	125	166	333

\* Figures show the gold-piece weight of metal per 25 cubic feet of ore mined.

A = halocite; B = Malachite; C = Bornite; D = Native copper; E = Siderite; F = Pyrite; G = Limonite; H = Hematite. For game purposes, all other minerals come from single ores, as per Table 1.



# WHERE ARE WE?



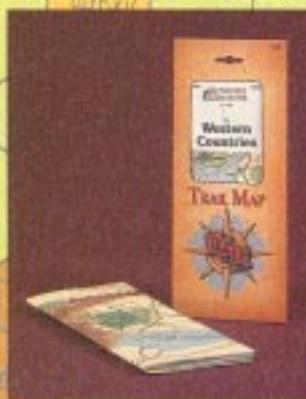
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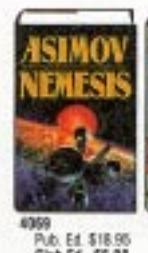


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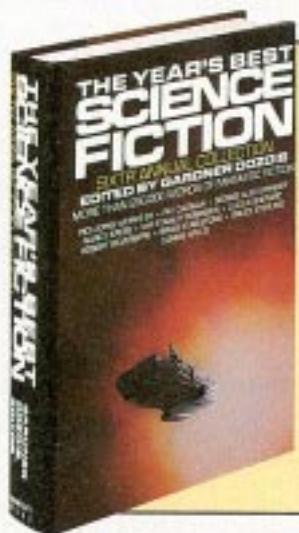
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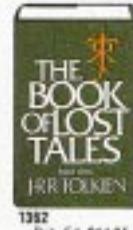
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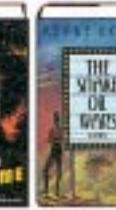
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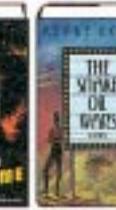
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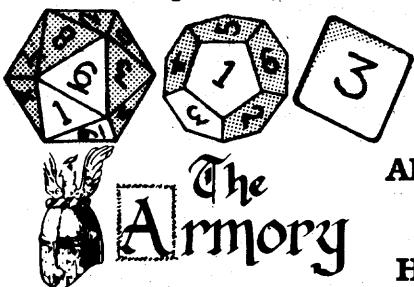
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## In a Cavern

Continued from page 23

healing its wounds. This might be true on the elemental plane of Earth in a fantasy world. However, even Agricola knew that this was wrong, and he warned that no one should abandon a mine without leaving a record of why it was unsuitable. Many miners wasted fortunes trying to reopen empty mines. Mines in fantasy could be abandoned because of gases or monsters, or because the shafts had nearly tapped underground lakes or magma. But many an adventure might unfold as unknowing characters make their way through old shafts and tunnelings, in search of dangerous beasts or lost and forgotten riches beneath the ground.

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# The Wanderers Below



Illustration by Jim Holloway

## Random encounter tables for the depths of the earth

by Buddy Pennington

Before the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* was published, underground delving was usually limited to artificial settings like dungeons. Now characters have many, many miles of caverns and passages to explore as well.

Unfortunately, there have been no random encounter tables provided for underground campaigns. There are tables for wilderness, oceans, the planes, cities, manmade dungeons, and even for psionic creatures, but not natural underground areas. With this in mind, I present a series of tables to give random encounters when your players are traveling in the majestic realms below the earth.

Encounters should be checked for once every six hours (there is no day or night underground). There is a 1 in 10 chance of an encounter, unless noted below. The number of creatures encountered has

been deliberately left out so you can tailor the encounter to your party's level. The tables are explained as follows:

"Unpatrolled" caverns and tunnels (Table 1) are those with no major communities of intelligent beings, though small groups of drow, duergar, etc., may be present.

"Heated" caverns and tunnels (Table 2) are those that are unbearably hot and cause damage to most player characters. (Cooler caves should use Table 1 for random encounters.) The chance of an encounter in a heated area is 1 in 8. If a gateway is rolled, there should be a large number of creatures, native to the given plane, near the gate.

Water-filled caverns and tunnels (Table 3) are partially or completely submerged. A few of these encounters (aboeth, eye of the deep, etc.) are only found in deep lakes and rivers. If an unsuitable encounter is

rolled, simply roll again or pick an encounter from the table. The chance for an encounter is 1 in 12. Caves with small streams or pools should use Table 1.

Use Table 4 when PCs are within 20 miles of a duergar city. The chance of an encounter is 1 in 6.

Use Table 5 when PCs are within 15 miles of a svirfneblin community. The chance of an encounter is 1 in 8. Beings and creatures encountered here will usually be neutral or good in alignment.

Use Table 6 when PCs are within 30 miles of a drow city. The chance of an encounter is 1 in 6. Demons encountered should be determined by the DM to challenge the party. Driders are only found along the fringes of drow communities, as they are considered outcasts. Arachnids are found everywhere, as they are considered pets. Character parties encountered

here will usually be evil spell-casters seeking alliances with the drow.

Other tables may be created for the rest of the underground races, such as derro, kuo-toa, and so forth. These tables may also be redesigned to fit each DM's Underdark campaign.  $\Omega$

**Table 1**  
**Unpatrolled Caverns and Tunnels**

**1d100 Result**

- 01-04 Roll on Table 1.A.
- 05-12 Roll on Table 1.B.
- 13-15 Roll on Table 1.C.
- 16-17 Basilisk
  - 18 Basilisk, greater
- 19-22 Bat, ordinary
- 23-24 Bat, giant
- 25-27 Beetle, giant, fire
- 28 Beholder
- 29-30 Blindheim
- 31-32 Boggle
- 33-35 Carrion crawler
- 36 Cave cricket
- 37-38 Cave fisher
- 39 Cave moray
- 40-42 Centipede, giant
- 43 Character party
- 44-45 Cockatrice
- 46-47 Dark creeper
- 48 Dark stalker
- 49 Doombat
- 50 Doppelganger
- 51-52 Gargoyle
- 53 Gas spore
- 54-55 Giant, stone
- 56 Gibbering mouther
- 57-59 Hook horror
- 60 Intellect devourer
- 61 Khargra
- 62-63 Lizard, giant, subterranean
- 64-65 Lurker above
- 66-67 Lycanthrope, wererat
- 68-69 Magoyle
- 70-72 Piercer
- 73 Purple worm
- 74-77 Rat, giant
- 78 Rothe
- 79-80 Roper
- 81-84 Rust monster
- 85-88 Slug, giant
- 89 Spectator
- 90 Storoper
- 91-92 Trapper
- 93-95 Umber hulk
- 96-97 Xaren
- 98-00 Xorn

**Table 1.A.**  
**Fungi, Slimes, and Jellies**

**1d100 Result**

- 01-05 Black pudding
- 06-14 Fungi, violet
- 15-20 Gelatinous cube
- 21-24 Gray ooze
- 25-35 Green slime
- 36-44 Mold, brown
- 45-56 Mold, yellow

- 57-65 Ochre jelly
- 66-75 Olive slime
- 76-00 Shrieker

- 81-82 Mephit, steam
- 83-86 Para-elemental, magma
- 87-93 Pyrolisk
- 94-00 Salamander

**Table 1.B.**  
**Intelligent Dwellers**

**1d100 Result**

- 01-06 Bugbear/gnoll
- 07-10 Cloaker
- 11-13 Derro
- 14-16 Drider
- 17-25 Drow
- 26-34 Duergar/dwarf
- 35-46 Goblin/hobgoblin
- 47-50 Jermelaine/mite/snyad
- 51-53 Kuo-toa
- 54-58 Mind flayer
- 59-61 Myconid
- 62-70 Ogre
- 71-75 Orc
- 76-78 Pech
- 79-81 Svirfneblin/gnome
- 82-90 Troglodyte
- 91-96 Troll
- 97-00 Xgart/kobold

**Table 1.C.**  
**Undead**

**1d100 Result**

- 01-07 Apparition
- 08-13 Coffin corpse
- 14-20 Ghast
- 21-30 Ghoul
- 31-34 Huecuba
- 35 Lich
- 36-45 Shadow
- 46-50 Shadow demon
- 51-65 Skeleton
- 66-68 Spectre
- 69-77 Wight
- 78-84 Wraith
- 85-86 Vampire
- 87-00 Zombie

**Table 2**  
**Heated Caverns and Tunnels**

**1d100 Result**

- 01-04 Azer
- 05-12 Bat, fire
- 13-17 Elemental, fire
- 18-20 Efreeti,
- 21-23 Fire snake
- 24-27 Firetoad
- 28-30 Gate to elemental plane of Fire
- 31. Gate to para-elemental plane of Magma
- 32-50 Giant, fire
- 51-54 Harginn (elemental grue)
- 55-60 Hell hound
- 61-64 Lava children
- 65-70 Lizard, giant, fire
- 71-74 Magman
- 75-76 Mephit, fire
- 77-78 Mephit, lava
- 79-80 Mephit, smoke

**Table 3**  
**Water-Filled Caverns and Tunnels**

**1d100 Result**

- 01-15 Aboleth
- 16-20 Bloodworm, giant
- 21-28 Bullywug
- 29-30 Eye of the deep
- 31-38 Frog, giant
- 39-65 Kuo-toa
- 66-67 Morkoth
- 68-70 Mudman
- 71-73 Nereid
- 74-80 Ogre, aquatic
- 81-83 Sirine
- 84-00 Troll, marine

**Table 4**  
**Duergar Caverns and Tunnels**

**1d100 Result**

- 01-05 Character party
- 06-60 Duergar
- 61-70 Derro
- 71-00 Use Table 1

**Table 5**  
**Svirfneblin Caverns and Tunnels**

**1d100 Result**

- 01-10 Character party
- 11-60 Svirfneblin
- 61-65 Rothe
- 66-00 Use Table 1

**Table 6**  
**Drow Caverns and Tunnels**

**1d100 Result**

- 01-05 Character party
- 06-08 Demon
- 09-19 Displacer beast
- 20-22 Drider
- 23-60 Drow
- 61-64 Pedipalp
- 65-70 Scorpion, giant
- 71-75 Spider\*
- 76-00 Use Table 1

\* 01-30 giant, 31-60 huge, 61-00 large.

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# Role-playing Reviews

Adventuring in the modern world

©1989 by Jim Bambra

This issue's reviews focus on the world of the soldier, special-forces member, and mercenary in role-playing games. In modern military settings, a player character's success and ultimate survival depends on his tactical skills, coupled with his knowledge of the capabilities of modern weapons. Normally, this is the terrain of the war game. It's fun fighting out battles by maneuvering card chits on a map covered in hex grids, or moving miniature figures across a tabletop set up with model trees, houses, hills and rivers. But, by the nature of warfare, war games frequently overlook the individual soldier. Board and miniatures gamers are used to taking on the roles of commanders, not individual soldiers. I've spent many happy hours poring over maps and committing my

troops to assaults or last-ditch defenses—but when it comes right down to it, I'm detached from what is really happening to the individual troop. The challenge of making tactical decisions is not the same as being there.

Role-playing games deal with individuals and their problems. They allow us to exercise our imaginations as we run our alter-egos through all kinds of dramatic situations: battling dragons, piloting faster-than-light starships, or probing Horrors That Man Was Not Meant To Know. But taking part in firefights, calling in artillery and air strikes, and driving tanks can be just as exciting in gaming.

**TWILIGHT: 2000™ game**  
Near-future role-playing game

24-page Play Manual; 32-page Referee's Manual; 1-page of Players' Charts; 8-page Referee's Charts booklet; 12-page Equipment List booklet; 8-page Beginning Adventure booklet; 1-page Adventure Handout; 1-page Intelligence Briefing; Campaign Map; Character and Vehicle Record Sheets; 1-page Errata Sheet; 4d6, 1d10

Games Designers' Workshop \$20.00

**Design:** Frank Chadwick

**Additional design and development:** John

Astell, John Harshman, and Loren Wiseman

**Research assistance:** Marc Miller

**Illustrations:** Steve Venters

**Background:** As the title implies, the TWILIGHT: 2000 game is set in a projected

near future in which the Third World War has been raging for five years. Tactical and strategic nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons, and the relentless use of conventional weapons have had a dramatic effect on the world. Governments have collapsed, industrial centers have been reduced to piles of smoking rubble, and communications have been severely disrupted. With the loss of industrial capacity, arms and equipment are in short supply. Most units are greatly reduced in strength, and many armored units are fighting with only a handful of vehicles, most running on alcohol because of widespread petrol shortages. The world has entered a period of disruption and chaos. The twilight of civilization is at hand.

The boxed set of the TWILIGHT: 2000 game sets the scene for what is to follow by describing the events of the previous six years in a very realistic and plausible manner. Since its release in 1984, the TWILIGHT: 2000 game has received solid and consistent support from GDW. Events in Europe and in America have been described, and many adventure opportunities are available to the survivors of the holocaust. But let's first take a look at the situation facing player characters as described in the boxed set.

Characters are initially assumed to be members of the U.S. 5th Division (Mechanized). Overrun by the tanks of the Soviet 4th Guards Tank and the 22nd Cavalry, survivors of the 5th Division receive a final message from their Divisional HQ: "You're on your own. Good luck."

Faced with superior enemy forces and the disintegration of their unit, the soldiers have to stay alive and find a way back home; The collapse of the military command structure and the breakdown of much of their equipment leaves player characters free to make their own decisions and forces them to rely on their wits and skills. This involves hiding from pursuing troops, struggling to maintain equipment, and constantly searching for ammunition and supplies. Instead of war on a large scale, this situation is one of small-scale skirmishes where, with dwindling supplies of ammunition, every bullet counts.

The TWILIGHT: 2000 game is military role-playing with a difference. In the absence of adequate supply lines and support, characters fight for survival under adverse conditions. Often they cannot rely on superior firepower to gain their goals; stealth and hit-and-run tactics are required. With no safe place to hide, caution must be exercised constantly. Finding food, shelter, and spare parts for vehicles becomes a prime concern.

*Escape From Kalisz* is the adventure included in the TWILIGHT: 2000 game's boxed set. It describes the situation for the players and provides background information for the GM on the location of enemy forces. Faced with advancing Soviet troops, the soldiers of the 5th Division are going to

do their utmost to avoid capture. Free-form in nature, the adventure is really nothing more than an outline to aid the GM in designing suitable encounters for the PCs. With no developed NPCs or individual encounters described, it's pretty directionless and places great emphasis on a GM's ability to improvise. Viewed as an expansion of the background, it's useful, but as a developed adventure it barely makes it. Subsequent adventures, however, have been of a much higher standard.

**Characters:** Character creation produces well-rounded soldiers using random determination with built-in checks and balances to avoid unplayable characters. There are opportunities for players to affect the outcome of some of the dice rolls, making it more than just an exercise in rolling dice.

Not all characters respond in the same way to combat situations and this is handled admirably by assigning a Coolness Under Fire rating. Basically, the more combat your character has seen, the less likely he is to hesitate when the lead starts flying. Neatly integrated into the rules, it adds a whole new dimension to combat.

Skills are rated on a 1d100 scale and are bought during the character-generation process. A few basic skills are obligatory; every soldier needs to know how to fight, and depending on a character's service branch, other skills are also required. Otherwise, players have a relatively free hand in determining their characters' skills.

**Combat:** Small-arms combat is fast and effective. Personal body armor is available and provides reasonably good protection against small arms fire; it won't stop all bullets, but it helps to reduce damage from them. Most characters can survive a single shot from a small-arms weapon, providing it doesn't hit the head. This gives characters a fighting chance, but don't expect to walk away after a hit from a large-calibre weapon.

Whether combat is hand-to-hand, ranged, direct, or indirect (mortar and artillery), the basic mechanics are the same, allowing a wide range of actions to be adjudicated relatively quickly. Vehicle combat is, however, more complicated and takes longer to work out. It produces realistic results, but it can be time consuming, particularly when more than one vehicle is involved.

**Survival:** Characters have more than just enemy forces to contend with. The ever-present need to secure supplies of uncontaminated food and water, vehicle parts and ammunition is succinctly covered in the rules. A wide variety of diseases and the danger of radiation sickness are summarized and neatly worked into the rules. Characters who are not too fussy about what they are eating or drinking could find themselves in a bad way and might easily die if not given correct medical treatment.

**Equipment:** The equipment list covers

and describes the hardware available to the various sides. Although more equipment has been added in subsequent releases, there's enough here to supply most groups' needs.

**Presentation:** Overall, the standard of presentation is high. The inclusion of separate booklets listing the most frequently used charts is an admirable one and allows GMs to run a game without constantly having to flip through the rule books. Similarly, a sheet of players' charts and character-generation worksheets are included; used together, they greatly speed up character creation.

The layout of the rules is clear and accessible, and the errata sheet clears up the errors that occurred during production. My only gripe is the way that abbreviations are scattered throughout the rules. For example, skill titles are abbreviated to two- or three-letter codes, which makes remembering them tricky. SWM is short for swimming, but what's wrong with "swim"? You can at least pronounce it!

**Adventures:** Today, the TWILIGHT: 2000 game has an extensive line of products available for it, some of which are reviewed below. While I haven't had time to read all of the supplements, those that I've looked at have struck me as useful. The adventures are more detailed campaign settings than structured adventures. They contain extensive background information, developed NPCs, details of military and paramilitary forces operating within an area, encounter tables, general plot lines, and maps of major locations. This allows an adventuring group to choose its own way through the adventure without having to follow a predetermined path. By providing extensive background material, the GM's job is made much easier, and the inclusion of numerous monologues, as though spoken by the player characters, adds color and atmosphere.

Rather than a detailed look at individual adventures, here's a brief overview of the course of the campaign as outlined in various TWILIGHT: 2000 modules.

The first release was *The Free City of Krakow*, which provided an adventure and a city setting complete with prominent NPCs and power groups. The rationale behind this module is very good, and the module also includes rules for helicopters. The next adventure, *Pirates of the Vistula*, involved the characters in a trip up the Vistula River to Warsaw. *The Ruins of Warsaw* continued the campaign in Poland and provided a devastated city setting. Then came *Going Home*, an adventure that dealt with crossing Poland and northern Germany in order to catch a ship back to the U.S.A.

Various modules described the situation in the States and continued the struggle for survival in the war-torn U.S. These opened the campaign up, allowing soldiers from different backgrounds to become involved in various local power struggles. Russian and Mexican troops have invaded

and are fighting for survival as they, too, try to get back home. Local dictators and street gangs have carved out their own niches, and New America, a powerful right-wing extremist organization, is growing in strength. The adventures cover a wide variety of missions taking characters from the oil fields of Texas to the Ozark Mountains, and even into the Caribbean aboard a replica of a sailing ship.

*Kidnapped* described the initial effects of the nuclear exchange on the world's ecosystem and posed new problems for the survivors. Recent adventures have involved a nuclear submarine, and the latest series, *Return to Europe*, has seen U.S. forces again operating in Europe.

The large number of support products available for the *TWILIGHT: 2000* game means that a long-term campaign can be started in Poland, moved to the U.S., and then back to Europe. GMs can pick and choose what they play and can now easily ignore the European side if desired. However, not all *TWILIGHT: 2000* modules are still available; write to GDW for an up-to-date catalog.

**Evaluation:** The *TWILIGHT: 2000* game has grown tremendously since its initial release and now offers a wide variety of settings and adventures. As such, it is well worth a look by anyone interested in military or survivalist role-playing. Its systems work well, and it bridges the gap between war games and role-playing in a very satisfactory manner. The emphasis on the breakdown of society and industrial production keeps the conflicts at a small scale and keeps characters motivated. While the idea of a nuclear exchange within the next 10 years leaves me feeling uncomfortable, GDW has done a good job of showing what the devastating effects of even a limited nuclear war could be like. The *TWILIGHT: 2000* game and supplements are available from Game Designers' Workshop, PO. Box 1646; Bloomington IL 61702-1646.

#### *Commando*

TOP SECRET/S.I.<sup>TM</sup> supplement  
96-page perfect-bound book  
TSR, Inc. \$8.95

**Design:** David Cook

**Editing:** Scott Bowles

**Cover illustration:** David Dorman

**Interior illustrations:** Bob Dvorak

**Cartography:** Dave "Diesel" LaForce

The TOP SECRET/S.I. game (reviewed in DRAGON® issue #137) deals with the world of espionage and secret agents. The *Commando* supplement takes this one step further by describing small-scale military operations, allowing PCs the thrill of rescuing hostages, carrying out commando raids, and engaging in guerilla warfare. Firmly based on the TOP SECRET/S.I. game system, it provides extra rules and background to allow GMs to present coherent and workable military-orientated adventures for their players.

**Background:** The modern-day world is the setting for *Commando*. With 30 pages dedicated to describing trouble spots around the world and the organizations involved, it provides a solid and realistic backdrop for characters' adventures. GMs can use the information here as the basis for a wide range of military operations.

It's assumed that characters are members of an elite special force. This can be the U.S. Marines, Rangers, Green Berets, or the British S.A.S., Soviet Spetnaz, French Foreign Legion, or one of a host of other real-world organizations. Alternatively, the characters can belong to the military wing of the TOP SECRET/S.I. game's Orion organization, working as members of a Titan Team. They could also be mercenaries, working for the highest bidder but also getting saddled with sensitive missions in which their employers could easily deny any involvement.

**Characters:** To qualify for special forces training, characters must be physically fit and mentally stable. No psychopaths need apply. This is covered well in game terms, as are the basic skills that a character must possess. New skills and advantages are included to take into account the setting, and certain disadvantages stop a character from being accepted for special training. The military wants the best it can get, not people who are going to go to pieces in combat or suffer from other problems.

**Adventures:** Great emphasis is placed on the dangerous nature of the missions that special-forces characters undertake. Solid advice is provided for the players to help their characters survive in enemy-occupied jungles and on how to avoid causing civilian casualties in hostage situations. This is not merely window dressing; the GM is strongly advised to not pull any punches. Letting players learn from their mistakes, rather than making things soft for them, means the players will quickly get into their roles and take their missions more seriously. Failure to do so will result in the deaths of their characters.

Special forces' troops frequently rely on immediate action drills (IAs) to get them out of trouble. These maneuvers are practiced by a team and are implemented in certain situations, such as when the team is ambushed or is attempting to break contact with the enemy. Two IAs are detailed in the rules, along with a suggestion that character teams devise their own.

The life of a special forces' soldier is not a very glamorous one. He is subject to constant psychological pressures which could easily lead him to break down and become a liability to his comrades. This, along with other realistic factors like fatigue and the relative danger of missions, are taken into account and presented in a very playable manner.

**Equipment:** Pistols, assault rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers, claymore mines, artillery, observation gear, parachutes, and helicopters are all covered. The

only major omission is the lack of damage stats for claymore mines. [David "Zeb" Cook notes that *1d6 wounds for 1d8 points of damage each would be appropriate.*]

Short essays offer advice on how to get the best and safest use out of the various types of equipment, and they demonstrate various techniques for inserting troops into or taking them out of a combat zone. This contains plenty of neat touches that a GM can use to good effect to create and maintain atmosphere during missions.

**Evaluation:** *Commando* adds a new, gritty dimension to the TOP SECRET/S.I. rules and allows small-scale military missions to be conducted with ease. Well presented and full of background information and flavor, *Commando* is a valuable addition to the TOP SECRET/S.I. game. GMs and players looking for a change of pace and a military flavor to their games won't be disappointed. Players of other military role-playing games will find *Commando* to be a worthwhile purchase.

#### *Brushfire Wars*

TOP SECRET/S.I. game supplement  
TSR, Inc. \$9.95

96-page perfect-bound book

**Design:** Scott Bowles, Paula Bowne-Woods, Bob Kern, Mike Stackpole, Rick Swan, and John Terra

**Editing:** Scott Haring

**Cover illustration:** Joe Chiodo

**Interior illustrations:** Dan Spiegle

**Cartography:** Dave "Diesel" La Force, Dennis Kauth, and Dave Sutherland

*Brushfire Wars* contains 13 short missions for special forces' soldiers. Although playable with just the TOP SECRET/S.I. game, players and GMs really ought to have the *Commando* supplement handy in order to benefit from its background and rules sections.

The missions are worldwide, and are all military oriented. They are also tough. Good planning, careful analysis of intelligence reports, and an eye to detail are essential if they are to be pulled off successfully. And so it should be. Military missions are not noted for being forgiving.

The range of missions is quite wide: rescuing hostages from an airport, raiding a terrorist training camp, trekking through the jungles of Vietnam and the Philippines, and street-fighting in Seoul and Beirut. The standard of presentation is high, with clear maps of major locations and easily located information.

**Evaluation:** *Brushfire Wars* offers and delivers military adventures with bite. The usefulness of the missions outside of a military campaign is much more limited, but, as this is not the book's intention, it's hardly a problem. If you're looking for short, solid, military-oriented adventures, then look no further.

#### GURPS® High-Tech

GURPS game sourcebook  
128-page perfect-bound book

Steve Jackson Games \$14.95

**Design:** Michael Hurst

**Editing:** Steve Jackson

**Illustrations:** Guy Burchak

GURPS High-Tech is a useful and informative sourcebook detailing gunpowder weapons and technology from the end of the Middle Ages to the present. Designed to expand and enhance the rules in the GURPS game's Basic Set, it's also useful to players and GMs of other historical or modern-era role-playing games.

The emphasis is very much on weaponry, although transport, communications, and medicine are covered. The writing style is very accessible and does an excellent job of converting real-world weapons into game rules. I found it to be very readable and a gold mine of useful information. Having read GURPS High-Tech, my knowledge of guns through the ages has expanded enormously. Sidebars contain many examples of the wide range of weapons and equipment in use, and provide plenty of ideas on how to incorporate them into games.

The workings of matchlock, flintlock, wheellock, percussion, and caplock guns are neatly summarized along with their assorted drawbacks and benefits. Questions such as the effects of bad weather, misfires, and the different types of ammunition available are addressed and answered in a clear fashion. Artillery, nuclear weapons, explosives, flamethrowers, armored fighting vehicles (AFVs), air support, and personal body armor are all covered, some in more detail than others. For example, AFVs are discussed in general terms, but their armor ratings and weaponry are not detailed.

After looking at four broad historical periods (A.D. 1450-1700, 1700-1900, 1900-1950, and 1950 to the near future), game stats are provided for the major types and models of weapons in use in these periods. Each weapon is then described in detail, with information on its historical use and development.

**Evaluation:** GURPS High-Tech is a valuable addition to the GURPS system, particularly to GMs running historical or time-travel campaigns. Using these rules, small-scale military actions can easily be staged and have the added bonus of being set in any gunpowder era—modern day, World War II, the American Civil War, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Thirty Years War being just some of the possibilities.

The generic nature of the GURPS game also means that the *Brushfire Wars* supplement or one of the many TWILIGHT: 2000 adventures can be converted with the help of this sourcebook to the GURPS game system. Even you have no interest in the GURPS game system, GURPS High-Tech is still a very useful guide to weaponry and equipment.

GURPS High-Tech is available from:  
Steven Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin  
TX 78760.

### Short and sweet

LAST BATTLE game, by Tim Ryan. GDW, \$2A. Set in the post-holocaust world of the TWILIGHT: 2000 game, this is a board game of small unit and armor battles. It plays fast and gives a good feel for modern combat without recourse to complicated rules. The LAST BATTLE game suffers from sloppy proofreading with various names being assigned to the same technical terms, not enough vehicle counters being provided for scenario three, and a few other muddy areas. Overall, however, the production standard is high. The vehicle record sheets in particular are nicely done and make vehicles very easy to handle. Nine scenarios drawn from various TWILIGHT: 2000 modules are included, and the programmed-learning approach of the rules makes learning the game easy.

The LAST BATTLE game is also an alternate system for running TWILIGHT: 2000 game combats. It plays much faster than the role-playing rules, speeding up vehicle combat considerably, but the guidelines for converting vehicles to the LAST BATTLE game don't quite work. For example, according to the guidelines, the M1 Main Battle Tank should have a frontal armor rating of 100, but the rating is given as 60. Similar discrepancies exist; use with care. The character conversion rules seem to work and allow large battles to be fought out quickly at the expense of some role-playing color and detail.

As a war game, this one is very good and I recommend it highly. How useful it will be in determining TWILIGHT: 2000 game combats is really a matter of personal taste. If you enjoy diving behind walls to avoid enemy fire and fumbling to change weapon clips, then the LAST BATTLE game has limited usefulness. But if you want a quick way to lead lots of troops into action, then it may well be what you've been waiting for.

*U.S. Army Vehicle Guide*, by Frank Chadwick and Loren Wiseman. GDW, \$7. *Soviet Vehicle Guide*, by Frank Frey and Brad Hey. GDW, \$7. These two sourcebooks for TWILIGHT: 2000 campaigns are well-produced, each with eight pages of color plates illustrating many of the vehicles described in these books and in the

boxed set. Within these 48-page books are details of U.S. and Soviet forces, respectively, as of July 2000, their theaters of operation, their organizational structures, and their vehicles. New vehicles and weapons are described making these books invaluable reference works for both GMs and players.

*Howling Wilderness*, by Loren Wiseman. GDW, \$7. With Europe in such a mess following five years of fighting and the use of nuclear warheads, it's easy to view the U.S.A. as a safe haven—but that would be a big mistake. Targeted in tactical nuclear strikes, many U.S. cities have been destroyed. The collapse of communications, industry, and services have caused widespread misery. Now, as the nuclear attacks begin to take their toll on the earth's atmosphere and weather patterns, things are set to get a lot worse in the TWILIGHT: 2000 game world.

An abnormally cold winter has killed many, and as the summer approaches, diseases are spreading. Spring rainfall has been slight as America enters a widespread drought. With no chemical fertilizers, modern machinery, or water, famine looms spectrelike over the survivors.

*Howling Wilderness* gives you the facts on the current state of the nation. After an overview of the war, military forces are described and areas of the U.S. are examined. Fairly complete, *Howling Wilderness* paints a grim picture for the years to come. This is an essential purchase for GMs basing their Campaigns in the States.

GURPS Swashbucklers game, by Steffan O'Sullivan. Steve Jackson Games, \$11.95. In this 96-page sourcebook, the world of the swashbucllers is given the GURPS game treatment. Give loyal service to King Louis as one of his Musketeers, or hoist the Jolly Roger and seek gold and glory on the Spanish Main. Extensive background notes define the historical setting, but they fall short of really bringing the fictional worlds of pirates and Musketeers to life. As a basis for establishing swashbuckling campaigns it does a good job, but more detailed development of the individual settings is really needed to bring out the true potential of the genre.

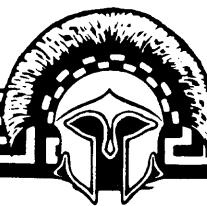
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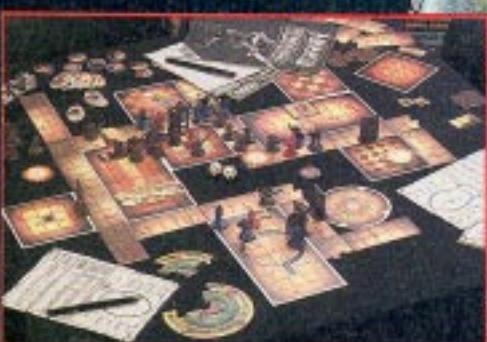
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# Servants of the Jewelled Dagger

The lives and habits of the duergar—the gray dwarves

by Eric Oppen

Despite what you'd think, duergar and surface dwarves have much in common in AD&D® campaigns, more than do drow and surface elves but less than svirfneblin and surface gnomes. This is partially because the duergar lifestyle is not as radically different from surface dwarven life as drow life is from other elves. The basic dwarven nature both races share dictates many similarities.

The physical differences between dwarf and duergar, however, are easily spotted. The duergar is pale, with a distinct gray undertone to its skin (unlike the ruddy hill or mountain dwarf), leading to the nickname "gray dwarf." This lack of coloration is the result of untold centuries spent far

from the light of the sun, in greater isolation than their better-known cousins experience. The relative emaciation of duergar results from the relative lack of food in the underworld—and the quality of what food they do eat, consisting of subterranean beasts and fungi. Then, too, the hostile environment of the Underdark does not allow a fat, slow, clumsy duergar to survive for long.

Ages of living under these conditions have made duergar tougher in stamina than their surface cousins. Duergar are able to resist the effects of poison and paralysis as a result. Their great skills at surprising foes and resisting illusions come from ages of life within the twisting laby-

riths of the Underdark, which has sharpened their senses of hearing, vision, and smell to exceptional levels. The magical abilities to *enlarge* themselves or go *invisible* are suspected of being gifts of Abbor, their patron deity (see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 111).

The psychological differences between dwarves and duergar are considerable. Accustomed to lives of hardship and deprivation, duergar scorn the values of surface races and of other dwarves. They are believers in the absolute control of all resources to benefit themselves, at whatever cost to other races and beings. They thus have a penchant for slave labor and mount many raids to secure more slaves.



Illustration by Jim Holloway

In these raids, any beings not currently allied with the duergar are fair game, and resistance is overcome with skill and fury. The fate of these slaves is not enviable; any duergar slaveowner will treat rebellious and useless slaves with utter ruthlessness. Indeed, there are those who say that duergar have more in common with orcs than with other dwarves.

Similarities between dwarves and duergar, however, are so widespread that former duergar slaves generally find themselves quite uncomfortable among surface dwarves. Under circumstances where dwarves and duergar must get along, as when they are both slaves of some other race, they generally find that they have much more in common with each other than with nondwarven fellow slaves, and cooperation between them—however forced and temporary—is remarkably smooth and effective.

One cultural trait shared by duergar and dwarf is their attitude toward the beard, though this is not universally shared by all duergar. To those who care, the beard is a symbol of status and a source of pride. Cutting or shaving the beard is a mark of great shame, while burning the beard off with a coal or candle is reserved for those who have utterly disgraced themselves or their clan. As do surface dwarves, duergar plait their beards and braid them, using dull-colored strips of leather to indicate status and profession. These decorations follow a system, but the systems differ enough that a duergar and surface dwarf cannot "read" each others' beards, except in the vaguest way. The closest analogy to this is the widely varying systems of indicating rank and status used by human armies; most soldiers can tell an officer from an enlisted man in an unfamiliar army, but finer distinctions are difficult to make.

As noted, not all duergar share this pride in the beard: Those who do not are often regarded as uncivilized and the least worthy of favorable attention—i.e., other duergar clans will raid those "prideless" clans without hesitation.

Another similarity between surface dwarves and duergar concerns an appreciation for craftsmanship. Duergar craftsmen make many of the finest tools, armor, and weapons available to the underground races and take great pride in them. Even the dark elves and deep gnomes, no mean craftsmen in their own rights, admire the duergar's solid, unadorned, but highly effective creations: As is the case with surface dwarves, many duergar are so immersed in their crafts that they have no desire to marry. However, duergar are almost exclusively concerned with craftsmanship of a hard, practical, military nature, involving the construction of fortifications and the smithing of weapons, armor, traps, and the like. Artistic endeavors are rarely practiced and tend to be crude, though even these have a peculiar, harsh strength in artistic terms.

## The duergars' world

Duergar society is highly structured. The basic unit is the clan, an extended family of duergar. Most clans are so ancient that the actual kinship between most living members is quite remote. A duergar is highly loyal to his or her clan and will not willingly betray or weaken it. Duergar adventurers have great difficulty in transferring this attitude to their comrades, seeing them always as "outsiders." Given considerable time and reason for respect, however, duergar may become quite loyal to their companions once their comradeship is won, especially if dwarves or gnomes of similar alignment and attitudes are present.

The clan itself is supported by the priesthood of the duergar community, which is almost always in the service of Abbathor, the much-feared dwarven god whose greed is his hallmark. Little attention is given to the other major dwarven gods, and services and offerings to them are often so minimal as to be insulting.

The clan is also supported by its internal security force, in some ways a combination of police, thieves' guild, and assassins' guild. These carefully trained duergar rogues and warriors operate under the direct command of the leaders of a duergar colony and form the leaders' intelligence system, warning of danger outside and dissension within the colony. Dissident duergar and enemy leaders are quietly put out of the way.

## Duergar professions

Young duergar are put through intensive testing when they reach adolescence. This testing, which may prove fatal, has two purposes. The main purpose is to identify professions for which a youngster is suited. The dangerous tests, the duergar say, also have the side effect of weeding out weaklings before they can harm the community.

When the testing is completed, the youths are sent to rigorous training in a particular profession. This training is carefully designed to foster qualities such as ruthlessness, a racial self-centeredness, and a disregard for life, mercy, and other beings.

Duergar priests call themselves the servants of Abbathor, whose symbol is the jewelled dagger, and they are permitted to use daggers as normal weapons (learning to use them at 1st level). They use their spells to improve the duergar community in general: first to aid their own clans, then to aid any other duergar, then the priests themselves, then any allies their clans may have.

The majority of the youth pass through the hands of the best warriors in the community, who drill them in the skills of underground and surface warfare. This training is considered supremely important, and many of the best minds the duergar have are devoted to improving it. To be selected as a "trainer of the young"

is one of the highest honors a duergar warrior can aspire to. The first part of the training course is spent determining which students are best with which weapons. The second part of the course is devoted to perfecting the students' skills, and the last part, which is considered the most important of all, is spent honing the ruthless attitude of the young warriors.

Ruthlessness, in truth, is the specialty of the duergar. They make war with ferocity and duplicity, cheerfully sacrificing allies if necessary to secure a victory. They will act cautiously in the presence of powerful enemies, but they will attack with reckless courage if a chance of victory is seen. Their few allies, such as the drow, recognize that the duergar are prone to treachery—but treachery is an art among the drow, who regard the duergar as narrow-minded and predictable.

Duergar youth with unusual intelligence and dexterity are usually apprenticed to local rogues—the spies, assassins, and scouts of the clan. Besides their functions as a combined secret police and intelligence service for the rulers of the community, duergar thieves are useful to their community for their skills with locks and traps (thus gaining the treasures of their foes). Their climbing skills come in handy on expeditions into new areas of the underworld. In some duergar communities, assassins must be carefully watched because of the power and skills (and political pretensions) they have acquired.

Since most duergar have the ability to be multiclassed, a youth can easily pass through several courses of instruction, one after the other. When a youth's education has ended, he returns to his clan, marries if at all so inclined, and is considered an adult. The clan marks this occasion with celebration, climaxed by the initiation of the newest member into full clan membership.

## Duergar life

The various clans composing a duergar community often do not much like each other. Their relationships range from warm friendship to armed neutrality to ill-suppressed hostility. The clerics do their best to keep matters under control, but many interclan hatreds run so strong that usually the clerics merely suppress open warfare. In these "cold wars," assassination comes onto its own. Accordingly, assassins are as highly esteemed among the duergar as among the drow. When open fighting between duergar clans occurs, it is often by arrangement and takes place in a deserted cavern cleared for the purpose. This way, the feuding clans can have it out without endangering the community in general (not that this always works).

Within a clan, duergar usually plot and scheme endlessly for advancement. Assassination of a fellow clan member is strongly tabooed, but manipulating one's "enemy" into a situation that is bound to be fatal is a skill that is much admired. For all

their rough exterior, the duergar are plotters of incredible subtlety and skill. The only persons a duergar can usually trust are a spouse, parents, and children. Duergar families work closely together, though they lack affection. Often a husband, wife, and their adult children will go adventuring together; the demanding environment of the underworld, they feel, is no place for finicky considerations about keeping ones' family out of all danger. There are no safe places.

Clans that are not riven with internal rivalry still see extremely intense competition for higher status. In many clans, this takes the form of ever-more daring mercantile expeditions to garner greater wealth. A duergar who has successfully traded with peoples whom his friends considered unreachable will be honored but will soon find those same friends outfitting expeditions to share the riches to be had. Trade in the underworld is a dangerous business. In the depths of the earth, duergar merchants must be able to deal with kuo-toa, mind flayers, and creatures that most surface-dwellers cannot even imagine. The duergar feel that the profits make all the risks worthwhile, and add that the perils of the underworld merely weed out the incompetent.

### Relations with others

As is well known, duergar and other dwarves regard each other with antipathy, mostly because of their deep cultural differences on such issues as slavery. Their feud is not as bitter as the elf-drow vendetta but is very real nonetheless. The duergar call surface dwarves cowards, weaklings, and "half-dwarves" (as they live near the surface instead of deep inside the earth).

Duergar and gnomes do not get along at all. To the duergar, gnomes are bumptious little creatures without proper dignity, who just want to steal treasure. To surface gnomes, duergar are a greater danger than orcs because of their intelligence and skills. Deep gnomes and duergar have feuded for centuries over living space, ores, gems, and duergar slave raids. Despite their smaller size, the svirfneblin have done well in this feud.

Duergar and elves have mixed relations. The drow are often the closest allies the duergar have, and unless two communities of these races are actually at war, they will trade materials and information, particularly on the doings of the more alien underground races, such as the aboleth, cloakers, or mind flayers. As if to compensate, the duergar find surface elves even more worthless and irritating than do other dwarves, and they are prone to torture or slay elves out of hand.

The duergar hardly know halflings exist. When duergar and halflings cross paths (which is rare enough), the gray dwarves often make the mistake of not taking the halflings seriously, considering the latter to make poor slaves at best.

One noteworthy area of difference between surface dwarves and duergar regards their attitudes toward humanoid races such as orcs, kobolds, goblins, and the like. Duergar regard these races as inferior but useful as fodder if manipulated properly. Some half-orcs have even been seen working within duergar communities as mercenaries (though poorly trusted ones). Humanoids are also seen as potential reservoirs of slaves, particularly when cheap, expendable laborers are needed. The humanoids' craftsmanship is crude, their fighting skill is relatively low, and they have no claim on duergar respect—particularly for their lives.

Duergar regard humans with mixed emotions. On one side, they grudgingly admire humans with greater skills than duergar can attain, or with abilities such as spell-casting that they lack entirely. The gray dwarves will hire (and closely monitor) such humans when their services are needed. At the same time, they fear and are jealous of humans and have few compunctions about enslaving or raiding them

### Conclusion

"Strive to survive, and survive to strive" is a duergar truism. Whether as grim warriors, crafty thieves, subtle assassins, or clan-proud clerics, duergar take their lives very seriously. Duergar of all walks

of life usually exhibit incredible tenacity and single-mindedness, for which they are valued by allies—but for which they are often cursed and never trusted. Theirs is a spare and unforgiving existence; though they have no love for it, they have come to accept it as their fate and will make the most of it.

[More information on the duergar is found in the AD&D® 1st Edition Monster Manual II (page 61), Unearthed Arcana (page 10), and in the AD&D 2nd Edition Monstrous Compendium ("Dwarf, Duergar").]

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### In Memoriam

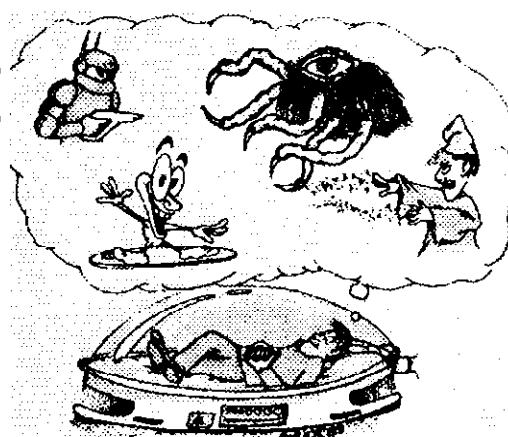
We are saddened to report that Andy Faulkner, the 1989 British AD&D® Champion, was involved in a fatal car accident on October 20th of this year. He was the U.K. representative at the 1989 GEN CON® game fair.

He will be missed by the many people who have enjoyed his company. He brought a tremendous sense of humor and fun into all the games he ran or played in, and he gave his time unselfishly to organize games for other people. Andy was a champion husband, father, teacher, and friend. He is greatly missed.

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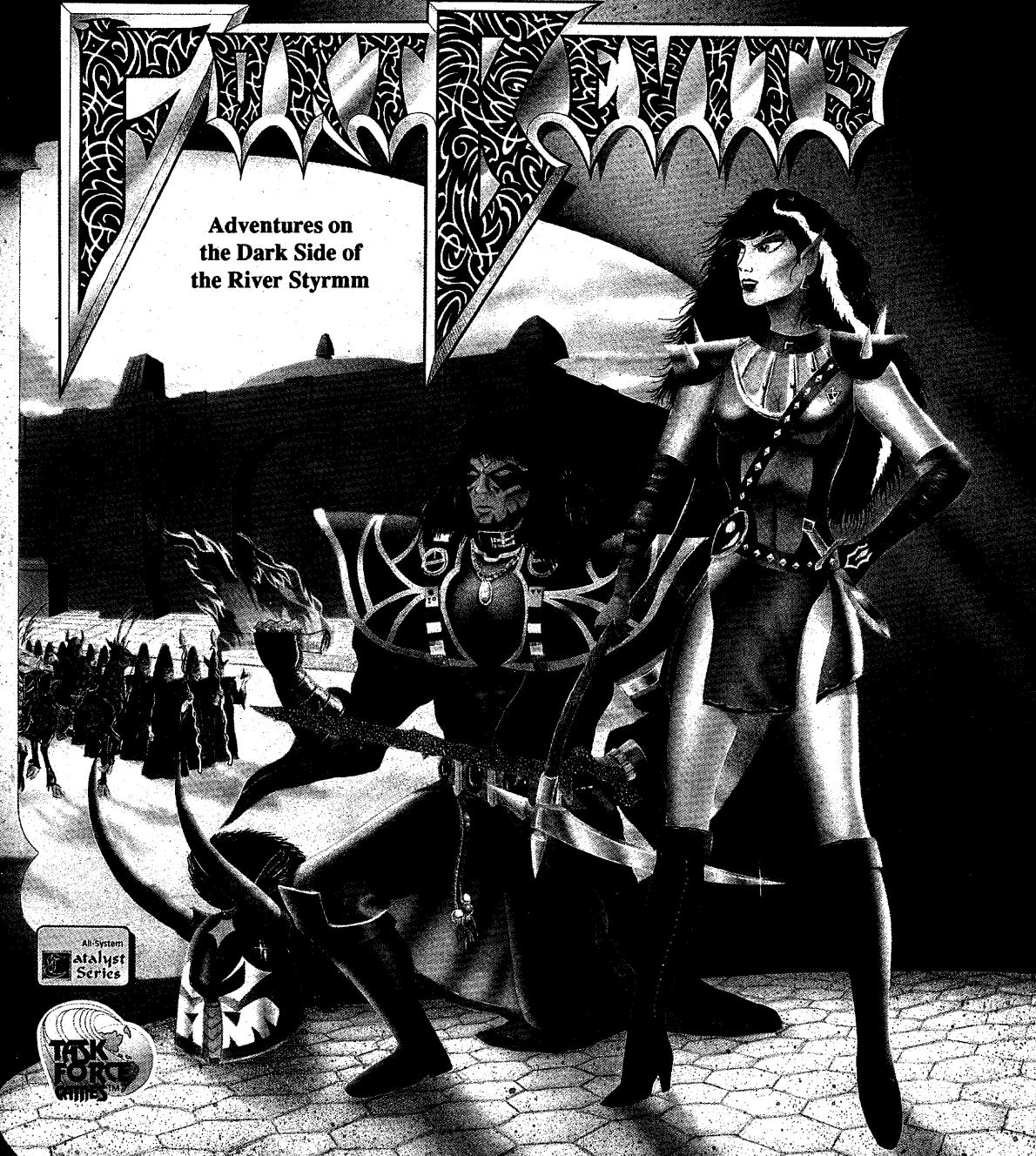
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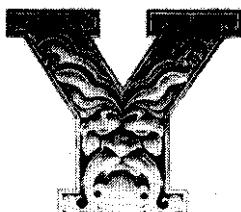
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e got it all?" asked the stocky young dwarf, his hand stroking his still-hairless cheeks and chin.

The two smaller dwarves, Khardrin and Yorik, nodded and dropped their large sacks, the clanging as the bundles struck the stone floor echoing through the stillness of the deep caverns.

"Quiet, will ye!" snapped Feldegar, the fourth member of the conspiracy. "Garumn'd have our heads if he knew!"

"Garumn'll know well enough when we're done," said Bruenor, the stocky dwarf, with a sly wink and a smile that eased the sudden tension. "Sort it out, then. No time for wastin'!"

Khardrin and Yorik began fishing through the assorted pieces of armor and weapons in the sacks. "Got ye the foaming mug," Khardrin said proudly, handing Bruenor a shining shield.

"Me father's own!" Bruenor laughed, marvelling at the stealth and nerve his younger cousins had shown. He slid the heavy shield on his arm and took up the newly crafted axe that he had brought, wondering in sudden seriousness if he was worthy to bear the shield emblazoned with the foaming mug, the standard of Clan Battlehammer. He had passed the midpoint of his third decade, nearly into his threens, yet truly he felt a child when he thought of his hairless face, not a single whisker showing. He turned away to hide his blush.

"Four sets?" said Feldegar, looking at the piles of battle gear. "Nay! The two o' ye are to stay. Ye're too young for such fightin'!"

Khardrin and Yorik looked helplessly to Bruenor.

Feldegar's observation made sense, Bruenor knew, but he couldn't ignore the crestfallen looks on the faces of his younger cousins, nor the pains the two had taken to get them all this far. "Four sets'll be needed," he said at length. Feldegar snapped an angry glare at him.

"Yorik's comin' with us," Bruenor said to him, holding the look with his own. "But I've a more important job for, Khardrin." He winked at the littlest of the four. "The door's to be closed an' locked behind us," he explained. "We be needin' a guard who's quick to open, and quicker still with his tongue. Ye're the only one o' us sneaky enough to dodge the askins o' any who might wander down here. Think ye can do it?"

Khardrin nodded with as much enthusiasm as he could muster, feeling important once again, though he still would have preferred to go along.

But Feldegar wasn't appeased. "Yorik's too young," he growled at Bruenor.

"By yer measure, not mine," Bruenor retorted.

"I be leadin'!" said Feldegar.

"Bruenor's the leader," Yorik and Khardrin said together. Feldegar's glare turned dangerous.

"His grandfather's the king," reasoned Khardrin.

Feldegar stuck his chin out. "Ye see this?" he asked, pointing to the patches of hair on his face. "Whiskers! I am the leader!"

"Ah, yer no older than Bruenor," said Yorik. "And he's a Battlehammer, second behind the throne. And Battlehammers rule in Mithril Hall!"

# The First Notch

by R. A. Salvatore

Illustrations by Karl Waller

"That tunnel's not yet claimed," Feldegar said wryly. "Outside o' Mithril Hall, it is, and beyond Garumn's domain. In there, the one with the beard leads."

Bruenor shrugged the comment away, despite yet another reminder of his hairless face. He understood the danger and daring of their adventure and wasn't about to see it all unravel over a title that would mean little when the fighting began. "Ye're right, Feldegar," he conceded, to the amazement and disappointment of Khardrin and Yorik. "In the tunnel, ye be leadin'. But by me figuring, we're still in Mithril Hall, and me word holds. Khardrin guards the door, and Yorik goes."

Despite his bravado, Feldegar was smart enough to give a concession to get a concession. He could snort and holler and stick out his beard all he wanted, but if Bruenor opposed him, he knew, none of the others would follow him. "Then let's get the business done," he grunted, and he lifted the iron bar off of the heavy stone door.

Bruenor grasped the iron ring on the door and reconsidered (and not for the first time) the path he was about to take. Of the five adult dwarves who had recently gone down to explore this tunnel, only one had returned, and his tale had shot shivers up the spines of the hardiest of Clan Battlehammer's warriors.

And now Bruenor and his young friends, not one of them old enough to be counted among those warriors, had taken it upon themselves to clear the tunnel and avenge their kin.

Bruenor grunted away a shudder and pulled the door open, its swing releasing a gush of the cramped air inside. Blackness loomed up before them. They had lived underground all their lives, tunnels had ever been their homes, but this one seemed darker still, and its stifled air pressed in on them heavily.

Feldegar grabbed a torch from a wall sconce, its light hardly denting the depth of the darkness. "Wait 'til we're from sight," he told Khardrin, "then bar the door! Three taps, then two, means it's us returned." He steadied himself and led them in.

For the first time, Khardrin was truly glad to be left behind.

The torchlight seemed pitiful indeed when the bang of the stone door echoed behind them. Boulders and rocks sent them stumbling and scrambling, stalagmites leered down from the low ceiling, and rock buttresses kept them turning one blind corner after another, each promising a monster poised to spring upon them.

Yorik had brought a good supply of torches, but when the second had died away and the third burned low, the tension began to wear at their resolve. They found a flat stone to use as a seat and took their first break.

"Drat and begrudges on this whole thing!" growled Feldegar, rubbing a sore foot. "Three hours it's been, an' not a sign o' the filthy thing! Me mind's wonderin' at the truth o' the tale."

"Then yer mind's wanderin' from its wits," said Yorik. "Twas an ettin that took the four, an' not to doubt!"

"Wag yer tongues in a whisper," Bruenor scolded them. "If the torch ain't enough a beacon, the echo o' yer words suren are!"

"Bah!" Feldegar snapped. "And if yer father were true to being a prince, he'd've come down here and finished the thing proper!"

Bruenor's eyes narrowed dangerously. But he shook his head and walked a few paces off, not about to get into such an argument. Not here, not now.

"Bangor did promise to take the heads o' the thing," protested Yorik. "But after the merchants from Settlestone are gone, when there's more time for plannin'."

"And when the ettin's got away?"

If they had been back in the halls, Feldegar would have paid for that insult with a few teeth, but Bruenor let it go. He knew that his father, Bangor, and King Garumn had done right in sealing off the tunnel with the heavy door until they could devote their fullest efforts to battling the ettin. Any ettin is a formidable foe, a two-headed giant more at home in the dark than even a dwarf, Careless and quick is not the way to go after an ettin.

Yet here he was with only two companions, and not a one of them even tested in real battle.

Again Bruenor fought through his fear, reminding himself that he was a dwarven prince. He and his friends had spent countless hours in training. Weapons sat easily in their young hands, and they knew all the tactics. "Come, let us be on our way," Bruenor growled stubbornly, picking up the torch.

"I say when we go," Feldegar countered. "I am the leader."

Bruenor threw the torch to him. "Then lead!"

"Is dwarvses! Is dwarvses!" Sniglet squealed in glee. "Threes of them!"

"Shh!" Toadface slapped him down to the ground. "Fives to three. And we sees them, but they not sees usses." An evil grin spread across the big goblin's face. He had come down this dark tunnel from goblin town to loot the lair of the ettin, though truth be told, Toadface wasn't thrilled about going anywhere near the thing. Of such previous expeditions, the goblins had returned less than half of the time. But maybe Toadface had found an out. Wouldn't the goblin king be overjoyed if he delivered the heads of three hated dwarves?

The torch was still only a speck of light far down the tunnel ahead of them, but it was moving again. Toadface motioned to the largest of the others. "The side tunnel," he ordered. "Gets them when they crosses. Usses'll rush them up front."

They started off slowly and silently on soft footpads, each of them thinking it grand that dwarves used torches.

And goblins didn't.

The tunnel had widened out; ten could walk abreast, and the ceiling had moved higher as well. "High enough for a giant," Bruenor observed grimly.

The three moved into the classic dwarven hunting formation. Feldegar walked down the middle of the passage with the torch, while Bruenor and Yorik slipped in and out of the shadows of the walls to either side. While Feldegar controlled the pace, the two on the sides kept their backs to the walls, barely watching where they were going. In this alignment, Bruenor's duty was to Yorik, and Yorik's

to Bruenor, each using the advantage of the angle to scout the wall ahead of his companion.

Thus it was Bruenor, to the left of Feldegar, who first noticed a side passage breaking off of the right wall. He motioned to his wary companions, and he and Feldegar waited while Yorik moved into a ready position behind a convenient jutting stone against the corner of the side passage.

Then Bruenor and Feldegar started out straight ahead down the main passage, seemingly taking no notice of the new tunnel.

The expected ambush came before they were halfway across the mouth of the tunnel.

Yorik tripped the large goblin who darted out at them, then dove into a roll behind him, taking him out with a hammer smash to the back of his head as he tried to rise.

Up ahead in the main corridor, the other goblins hooted and charged, hurling spears as they came.

Bruenor, too, was moving, crossing behind Feldegar. He saw the first spear break into the torchlight, aimed right for his young cousin, and dove headlong in front of Yorik, knocking the missile harmlessly aside with his crafted shield. Then he continued his roll to the safety of the jutting stone beside the side passage.

Feldegar didn't hesitate. Understanding the main threat to be up ahead, he flung his torch forward and brought his crossbow to bear.

Horrified to find themselves suddenly within the revealing sphere of light, the goblins shrieked and scrambled into the shadows, diving behind boulders or stalagmites.

Feldegar's bolt took one in the heart.

"Nasty dwarves," Sniglet whispered, crawling up to Toadface. "They knows we was here!"

Toadface threw the little goblin down behind him and considered the dilemma.

"We runs?" Sniglet asked.

Toadface shook his head angrily. Normally, retreat would have been the preferred course of action, but Toadface knew that the option wasn't open. "The king bites our necks if we comes back empty," he hissed at the little goblin.

"How do we fare?" Feldegar whispered to Bruenor from a cranny in the other wall of the main tunnel.

"Yorik got one," Bruenor replied.

Groaning, Yorik crawled over to join Bruenor behind the jutting stone. A second spear had found the young dwarfs hip.

"But he took a hit!" the dwarf added in a voice he hoped only Feldegar could hear.

"I can fight," Yorik insisted loudly.

"Wonderful," Feldegar whispered to himself, remembering that he had argued against bringing the young dwarf. His sarcasm didn't hold, though, when he took the time to realize that Yorik had foiled the goblins' ambush and had probably saved his life.

"How many did ye make?" Bruenor called.

"Four up front," replied Feldegar. "But one's lost his heart for the fight," he added with a grim chuckle.

"Threes to threes, then, wicked dwarves!" Toadface

yelled out to them.

Feldegar launched a second quarrel in the direction of the voice, smiling as it sparked off the stone just an inch from the big goblin's nose.

"Wicked dwarves!"

Bruenor worked to dress his young cousin's nasty wound, while Yorik, ever a brave lad, fumbled out his tinderbox and torches, lighting them and heaving them down the tunnel to take away the goblins' advantage of darkness.

And then they waited as the long minutes passed, each side searching for some way to break the stalemate and get in on their foes.

"Hold on the torches," Bruenor whispered to Yorik. "Mighten that we be here awhile." Bruenor knew that time was on the goblins' side. Dwarves could get around in the darkness but lived most of their lives in torchlit tunnels. Goblins, though, knew only the absolute darkness of deep caverns. When the torches burned low, their enemies would strike.

"How much nasty lights has yous got, wicked dwarves?" taunted Toadface, apparently seeing the same advantage.

"Shut yer face!" roared Feldegar and he put another quarrel off the stone to emphasize his point.

Bruenor looked down at his young cousin and considered retreating. But that route seemed impossible, for Yorik obviously couldn't run. Even if they managed to slip away unnoticed, the goblins would soon be on them. Bruenor saw one slim chance. Perhaps he was far enough from the light. If he could manage to get over the jutting stone and slip around the corner into the shadows of the side tunnel, he could come back into the main tunnel right in front of the goblins' position, too close for another volley of spears.

"Wait here and ready yerself," he whispered to Yorik.

The young dwarf nodded and clutched his hammer, coiling his good leg under him for a spring that might propel him out when battle was joined.

Bruenor belly-crawled over the rock but froze when he heard Toadface's call.

"Lights is dying, wicked dwarves," the goblin teased, hoping he could get the dwarves to run away. He figured that looting the ettin's lair was less dangerous than fighting against an even number of dwarves.

Bruenor sighed when he realized that he hadn't been spotted. He eased himself out of the, main corridor and down the side passage. So far, so good.

This second tunnel fell away steeply after a few steps, rolling down into the blackness of a huge chamber. Bruenor could only guess at its dimensions, but he understood the implications when he remembered suddenly that the survivor of the first expedition had mentioned a side passage in his tale of terror. And if the goblins had come down the main tunnel from one direction, and he and his friends from another . . .

"Time for . . ." he heard one deep voice say from the depths of the side tunnel.

"Lunch," answered another.

"Damn!" Bruenor spat, and he quickly slipped back to Yorik.

"Ettin?" Yorik asked him rhetorically, for Yorik had also heard the voices.

"What's the wait, Bruenor?" Feldegar called softly from across the way. "The torches'll burn low."

"Lunch . . ." one of the giant's heads answered for Bruenor.

". . . time!" growled the other.

"Drats," came Toadface's voice from down the hall.

Bruenor knew the fight with the goblins to be at an end. They would flee at the approach of the ettin, and his group would be wise to do the same. But what of Yorik? Bruenor grabbed at a desperate plan. "Get yer bow ready," he called to Feldegar. "And me an' Yorik ours," he lied, for he and Yorik didn't have bows. "Goblins won't be staying for the ettin; take 'em in their backs as they leave!"

Feldegar understood the reasoning. "Oh, I've got me goblin all picked and ready," he pointedly laughed, knowing his previous target to be the leader and wanting the big goblin to understand its peril completely.

"Lights I see!" boomed the ettin.

"Lights they be!" it answered itself.

"Waits, wicked dwarves!" cried Toadface. "Dwarves is not fer fightin' two-heads!"

"A bargain, then?" Bruenor offered.

"Says it," answered Toadface.

"A truce."

"And runs?"

"Not to run," Bruenor growled. "To fight!"

"Two-heads?!" Toadface shrieked.

"Run, then, and catch me bolt in yer back!" Feldegar reminded the goblin.

Caught in the trap, Toadface gingerly stepped out from his nook and moved to the corner of the side passage opposite from Bruenor and Yorik. Bruenor moved out around the jutting stone to face the goblin.

"Me and yerself trip it up," Bruenor whispered to Toadface. "Bait it," he then called quietly to Feldegar. Understanding the plan, Feldegar was already moving. He put his back to the wall directly across from the entrance to the side passage, waiting to meet the approaching monster head on.

Toadface motioned similarly to his forces, and Sniglet squeamishly moved out into the open next to Feldegar. But the last of the goblins, terrified, darted away down the darkness of the corridor.

Feldegar raised his crossbow and snarled.

"Hold!" Bruenor said to him. "Let the miserable rat run. We've bigger things to fight!"

Feldegar growled again and turned an angry glare on Sniglet, who shrank back. "Hold yer ground!" the dwarf snapped. He slapped the head of the goblin's spear out toward the side passage. "And make yer throw count!"

"Left leg, right leg?" Bruenor said to Toadface. The big goblin nodded, though he wasn't sure which was which.

The stamp of a heavy foot issued from the passage. Then another. Bruenor tensed and held his breath.

Ettins grew large in this part of the Realms, and this one was big even by their standards. It towered fully fifteen feet, and its girth nearly filled the corridor. Even fearless Feldegar blew a sigh when he saw it, and when he

saw, more pointedly, the cruelly spiked club it held in each huge hand.

"Goblin!" yelled one of the ettin's heads.

"Dwarfmeat!" hooted the other.

"Goblin!" the first argued.

"Goblin, always goblin!" complained the second. "I want dwarfmeat!" The ettin hesitated for just a moment, giving Feldegar the chance to settle its foolish argument.

The dwarfs crossbow twanged, the stinging quarrel nicking wickedly into the ettin's ribs. The hungry giant looked at the impudent little dwarf, both heads smiling. "Dwarfmeat!" they roared together and the giant rushed ahead. One great stride carried it to the main corridor.

Toadface struck next. He leaped onto the ettin's leg, biting and stabbing with his little sword at the huge calf muscles. One of the ettin's heads cast him a curious, even amused, glance.

The flat side of Bruenor's axe smashed in just as the second leg crossed into the main corridor. The dwarfs aim proved perfect, and the strength of his blow enough to shatter the ettin's kneecap.

The giant howled and lurched forward, suddenly not the least bit amused.

And as it stumbled past, Bruenor completed the deft maneuver. He reversed his grip, spinning a full circle, and knifed the razored edge of his axe into the back of the giant's leg, just where the hamstring joined the knee. The leg buckled and the ettin fell forward, burying Toadface beneath it.

Then came a second stinging volley as Feldegar fired another quarrel and Sniglet threw one of his spears.

But the ettin was far from finished, and its howls were more of rage than pain as it hoisted itself up on its huge arms.

Not to be left out, Yorik sprang out from his concealment, rushing past Bruenor and swinging his hammer as he came. But his leg buckled under him before he was close enough for an effective strike, and the ettin, looking around for the source of its broken knee, saw him coming. With a single movement, the giant slapped Yorik's small hammer harmlessly aside and poised its wicked club for a blow that certainly would have crushed the prostrate dwarf.

Had it not been for Bruenor.

True to his brave and noble heritage, the mighty young Battlehammer didn't hesitate. He ran up the back of the prone giant and, with every ounce of power he could muster, with every muscle snapping in accord, drove his axe into the back of the ettin's left head. The weapon shivered as it smashed through the thick skull, 'Bruenor's arms tingled and went numb, and the horrid "CRACK!" re-sounded through the tunnels.

Yorik let out an audible sigh of relief as the giant's eyes criss-crossed and its tongue flopped limply out of its mouth.

Half of the thing was dead.

But the other half fought on with fury, and the ettin finally managed its first strike. Coiling its good leg under it (and scraping poor Toadface into the stone), it lunged forward wildly and swung its club in a wide arc at Feldegar and Sniglet.

The dwarf actually saved the little goblin's life (though Feldegar would deny it to the end of his days), for he grabbed Sniglet's shoulder and threw him forward, toward the ettin and within the angle of the blow. Then Feldegar dove sidelong, taking the ettin's club in the shoulder but rolling with its momentum.

Helpless on his back, Sniglet closed his eyes and planted the butt of his spear against the floor. But the ettin hardly noticed the little goblin. Its concentration was squarely on Feldegar. The dwarf had rolled right to his knees, his crossbow levelled for another shot. At the "twang" of the release, the ettin reflexively ducked its head—

—Impaling itself, through the eye, upon Sniglet's spear.

Sniglet squealed in terror and scrambled away, but the battle was over. With a final shudder, the ettin lay dead.

Bruised and battered, Toadface finally managed to push out from under the giant's leg. Feldegar rushed over to Yorik. And Bruenor, who had clung to the giant's back throughout, now stood atop the dead ettin's back, amazed at the sheer force of his blow and staring incredulously at the first notch he had put into the blade of his new axe.

Finally they regrouped, dwarves on one side of the ettin and goblins on the other. "Wicked dwarves!" Sniglet hissed, erroneously believing that Feldegar had thrown him in as a sacrifice to the ettin. He quieted and slumped to the side of his boss when Feldegar's crossbow came up level with his nose.

Bruenor glared at his companion. "The truce," he reminded Feldegar sternly.

Feldegar dearly wanted to finish his business with the wretched goblins, but he conceded the point. He had witnessed Bruenor's awesome strike and had no desire to cross the young heir to Mithril Hall's throne.

Bruenor and Toadface stared at each other with uncertainty. They had been allies out of necessity, but the hatred between dwarves and goblins was a basic tenet of their very existence. Certainly, no trust or friendship would grow out of this joining.

"We lets yous leave," Toadface said at length, trying to regain a measure of his dignity. But Toadface wanted no part of the dwarves. He was outnumbered three to two, and he, too, now understood the strength of the beardless dwarf.

Bruenor's smile promised death, and at that moment he wanted nothing more than to spring over the ettin and silence the filthy goblin forever. But he was to rule Clan Battlehammer one day, and his father had taught him well the order of duties.

Honor above anger.

"Split the trophy and leave?" he said to Toadface.

Toadface considered the proposition, thinking an ettin's head and news of the dwarves a wonderful gift for the goblin king. (He didn't know, however, that the goblin king already knew all about the dwarves and thought it grand to have an ettin keeping unwitting guard.)

"Left head, right head?" Bruenor offered.

Toadface nodded, though he still hadn't figured out which was which.

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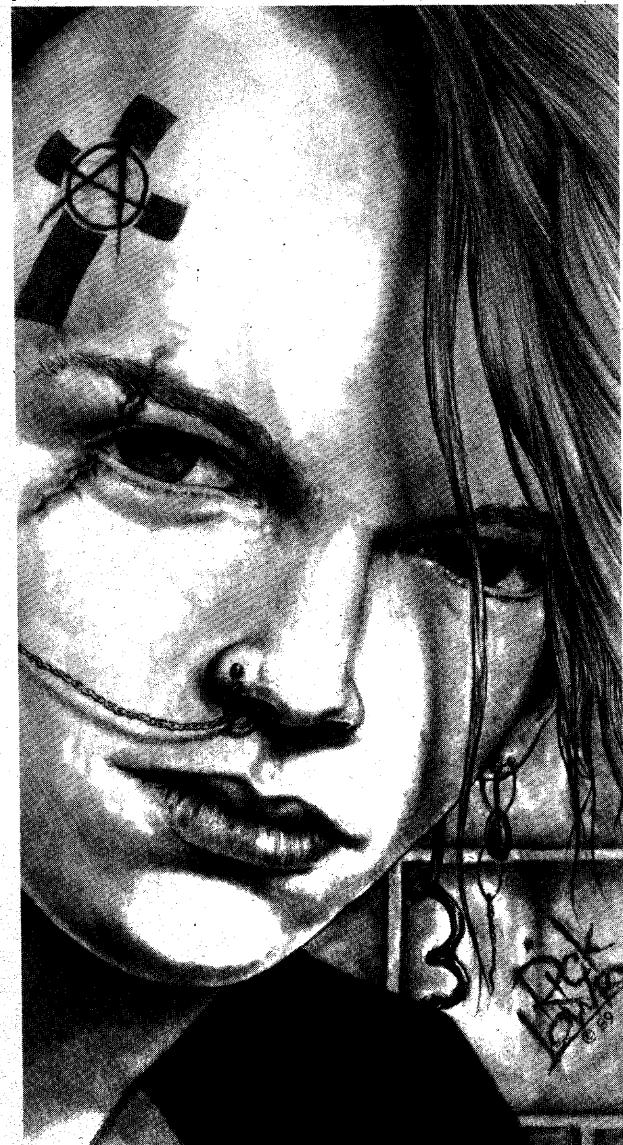
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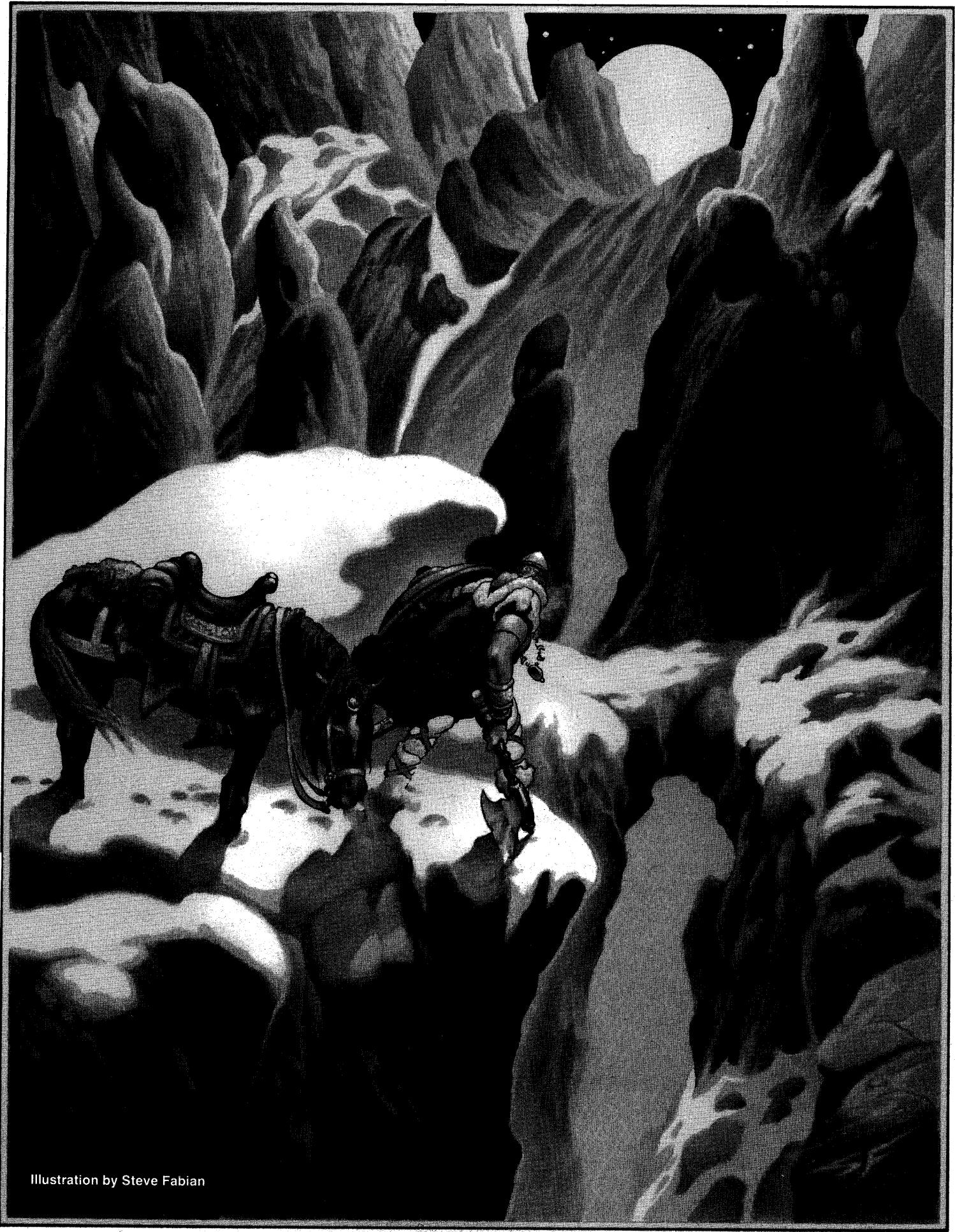


Illustration by Steve Fabian

# In Quest of Adventure

## Missions that serve higher goals and greater powers

by Greg Minter

Mata peered into the void. His heart was pounding, his legs were weary, and his breath came in short, laborious gulps. For three days, he had chased Falurka the ogre through the snow-covered peaks. Now he found himself in unfamiliar territory. He was sure he had crossed the northern border into the Death Realm, a land into which wise men did not travel. Still, he could have sworn the image of the smiling goddess on his shield had darkened the one time he had contemplated turning back.

Yesterday he had managed to land an arrow in the beast, and from the spotty trail of blood across the snow, it appeared to have been a good shot. Now he shivered as he stepped into the cave. The ogre had scaled the steep hill as if it were a well-made stairway; Mata had struggled for every handhold. A faint roar of cascading water echoed from some distant source. Suddenly, Mata heard footsteps. The young warrior hefted his axe.

But the shape that stepped forth was no ogre. Its canine face and swept-back horns were clearly visible. A deep chill ran through Mata. A servant of the dark god! The grip on his axe loosened as the form lifted a wickedly clawed hand and pointed toward his shield.

"You serve the smiling one?" it hissed.

Mata felt a sudden flash of cold as the monster's eyes flared with a blue light. He hesitated—and shook his head.

"How, then, came you by this shield?" it whispered once more.

"I . . . I found it," Mata stammered, "in one of the caves below." For a moment, the infernal beast stood its ground. Then, with a sudden blow, it knocked the axe from Mata's hand.

"Leave here, manchild!" it screamed.

Mata did not hesitate. He scrambled out of the cave, sliding down the cliffs until he reached the valley floor below. When his nerves calmed, he offered a short prayer of thanks to the smiling goddess. But when he looked at his shield, he gasped in horror. The image of the goddess was gone.

In a situation like this, most DMs can see that Mata has committed a grievous sin by denying his faith in the smiling goddess. What options are open to a DM for correcting such behavior? What prohibits Mata from simply shrugging off his momentary lapse and returning to his village as if nothing had happened?

One option useful for correcting these

situations is to set up a special adventure for that character: a quest. In historical references and as defined by Webster's *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, a quest is "a chivalrous enterprise in medieval romance usually involving an adventurous journey." In the AD&D® game, quests are more strictly defined for game purposes as the result of a *quest* spell. As described on page 224 of the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, this spell "enables the priest to require the affected creature to perform a service and return to the priest with proof that the deed was accomplished."

Quests are religious in nature; they allow the DM to form bonds between player characters and their deities based on real experience rather than on abstract principles. They are solitary adventures as well, and promote resourcefulness and ingenuity even more than a group adventure. When run skillfully, quests make players more aware of the deities' presences in the game world and breathe life into the PCs' chosen religions.

Quests allow DMs to avoid the "all play, no pay" syndrome. If a character does something that radically deviates from his alignment, it is the DM's duty to steer the character onto the right track. A quest is just the tool to help the DM do that.

In practical terms, quests have two advantages. First, to run a quest requires only one player and the DM, which means that a quest can take place almost anytime, anywhere. Second, these one-on-one adventures allow the DM to really get to know a player and his character. Other players may be involved in one person's quest by taking the roles of major NPCs and monsters that the PC must cooperate with or overcome.

### The medieval Romance

Where did the concept of the quest come from? Most people first think of King Arthur and his knights' quest for the Holy Grail. The tales of Arthur, however, are really the crowning glory to an entire body of tales, called romances, that developed and flourished in medieval Europe.

These tales spread throughout Europe first in oral form, through bards and storytellers who traveled from court to court entertaining for room and board. Events were often twisted to ensure that the night's audience was well pleased—details such as the winner of a battle or the victor at a tourney, which could be altered on a whim to guarantee a good meal.

The romance contained a series of set elements. In many of them, a determined young man ventures forth into the world, usually to prove his worth. He engages in a series of violent, often brutal and bloody clashes with both human and supernatural foes. He encounters a beautiful woman who is often in distress. After defeating all opponents and rescuing the woman, he returns to his sovereign with his honor fully restored.

These stories reached their height of popularity in France in the 12th and 13th century. That period produced many great works, including the famous *Song of Roland*. Eventually, these tales made their way into English literature through translations such as Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and Layamon's *Brut*. Often, these romances were mistakenly taken as historical accounts of events that had actually occurred. In fact, much of Geoffrey of Monmouth's then-definitive history of England was based on these tales.

These romances were popular for a number of reasons, but perhaps most of all because their tales of service to God and country, and the sense of "honor" to which each adventurer was sworn, reaffirmed the beliefs of the medieval court.

### Quests in AD&D® games

In the AD&D game, the duty of assigning a quest has been given to the priest in the form of a fifth-level spell. Since a spell of such high level may only be granted directly by the cleric's deity, a quest is not to be taken lightly by either the cleric assigning it or the character receiving it.

Although *quest* can be used as an attack form (forcing a foe to retrieve an object from a distant land), a cleric may also assign a quest to a member of his own church or alignment. The *PHB* tells us that a character who agrees to a quest is automatically bound to its terms, even if such an agreement was gained "by force or trickery." A character of the same religion as the cleric cannot avoid a "just and deserved" quest (he gets no saving throw), and characters of different religions but having the same alignment save at -4 if they try to resist. This is perhaps the only spell for which a PC's own saving throw may be worse than the enemy's.

This article presents ideas on how to design such "just and deserved" quests for your own game world, primarily for good or neutral characters. Although quests require some additional preparation on

the part of the DM, the advantages of such well-run, one-on-one adventures outweigh the extra effort spent in preparation. Quests allow players to steer characters into directions that large parties might find inappropriate or even trivial, thus filling their characters' off time in unique and interesting ways. These excursions for individual characters can help flesh out a campaign, filling it with NPCs who can return to haunt the entire party. (And, as noted earlier, other players may help out by taking unique roles.)

Perhaps most importantly, quests allow the DM to spend some quality time with individual players. Individual characters can easily get lost in large campaigns. Nothing discourages a player more than the feeling that his character's wishes are being ignored. In a quest, the character *is* the party!

## Preparing for quests

To effectively incorporate quests into a campaign, the most important thing by far is to make it clear to the players what their characters' deities expect from them. If you haven't already done so, write a brief synopsis of what each deity in your game world's pantheon expects of his followers—a record to which both you and your players can refer. You may wish to use one of the more detailed descriptions in the *Legends & Lore* volume when compiling these synopses. The detailed accounts for the various deities will give you a good idea of what should go into codes you develop on your own. A sample code might look something like this:

**Ramat Gan, "Light Bringer"** (lawful good): The followers of Ramat Gan must act under these basic guidelines:

1. Selfishness and greed are the greatest sins and should be avoided at all costs.
2. Never hide allegiance to Ramat Gan.
3. Show fearlessness in-battle; to die in such a manner ensures reincarnation in a higher form.
4. Distribute excess wealth directly to the needy or to the church to spread the teachings of Ramat Gan.

If there are particular offenses or types of behavior that the deity finds offensive, write them down in their order of importance. This will help later when you must decide on the level of difficulty of the quest. Make sure each player understands the code of behavior for the deity he has chosen to follow. The code must be clear enough for both the player and the DM to agree on when a character has done something that merits his being sent on a quest.

Initially, you may wish to limit the use of the *quest* spell to NPC clerics, which will allow you to control both the design and rewards for quests in your game world. Making a particular NPC both a religious figure and political sovereign dominant in the lives of the PCs usually works well; the combination of church and state is too

persuasive for most PCs to ignore.

Once your players have participated in several quests, you can let the players of priests' design quests for other characters in the party. As DM, you are acting the part of the deity and must reserve the right to approve any quest the players design. This prevents the assignment of unfair quests and regulates the level of reward granted.

Try to customize each quest to challenge the character's abilities. If the character is a fighter, it is a better adventure for him to meet an unknown warrior who defends a misty bridge than to battle an evil high priest's mummy in an ancient pyramid. For a questing cleric, the opposite might be true. Try to make the character use his abilities in creative and resourceful ways. Most importantly, reward such behavior.

Keep close track of a character's equipment. In a large party, it's reasonable to assume that someone has a grappling hook. In a solitary adventure, the chance of the character having this (or any obscure item) can no longer be relied upon.

If the quest is being carried out concurrently with an ongoing campaign, keep close track of how long the PC is gone. He may come back in several days, or he may come back in several years! The character could return to a countryside that has been ravaged or to a village whose inhabitants no longer recognize him.

If both the player and the DM are well prepared, it should be possible to complete a quest in a single evening. Give the player some background of the nature of the quest a few days in advance. In this case, give the character the same information he would normally receive from a cleric when the spell is cast upon him. This allows the player to develop some idea of how his character will deal with the problems he is about to face and allow him to prepare accordingly. There's no point in haggling over the price of supplies at the local outfitter.

## Designing quests

Generally, there are three major types of quests: quests of atonement, sanctioned quests, and voluntary quests. Each type of quest is further subdivided into three levels of difficulty: minor, major, and great.

The type of quest is determined primarily by the level of motivation or free will demonstrated by the character. (This idea is explained in more detail under the section describing each type of quest.) The level of difficulty is determined by the seriousness of the offense being rectified or by the reward being sought.

Suppose, for example, that Edmar, a paladin PC, has committed an offense against his deity's beliefs. You have decided that a quest is in order. Having given Edmar several opportunities to atone for his offense, you send a powerful priest to bind him to atonement with a *quest* spell.

Suppose you also know that the lich Feinjav is gathering an army of goblins on

the northern border of the PCs' principality, but that the PC party's attention is focused on a family of fire giants terrorizing the southern border. Depending on the seriousness of his offense, Edmar might be assigned one of the following quests of atonement:

If Edmar's offense were minor (he has neglected one of his religious duties), send him to spy on the goblin army, gather as much information about them as he can, and report back to the king.

If Edmar's offense were major (he has accidentally desecrated a holy object), send him to Feinjav's headquarters to steal the plans for the goblin attack.

If Edmar has committed a great offense (he has blasphemed in despair while captive in the fire giants' dungeon), send him to slay Feinjav and destroy the goblins.

Note that as the level of difficulty for a quest increases, so does the level of danger to the PC. Remember, however, that only one character is attempting this task. Usually, a deity will not send one of his followers on a mission for which there is no chance of success. To do so would lessen the number of followers the deity has and thereby diminish his strength on the Prime Material plane.

## Quests of atonement

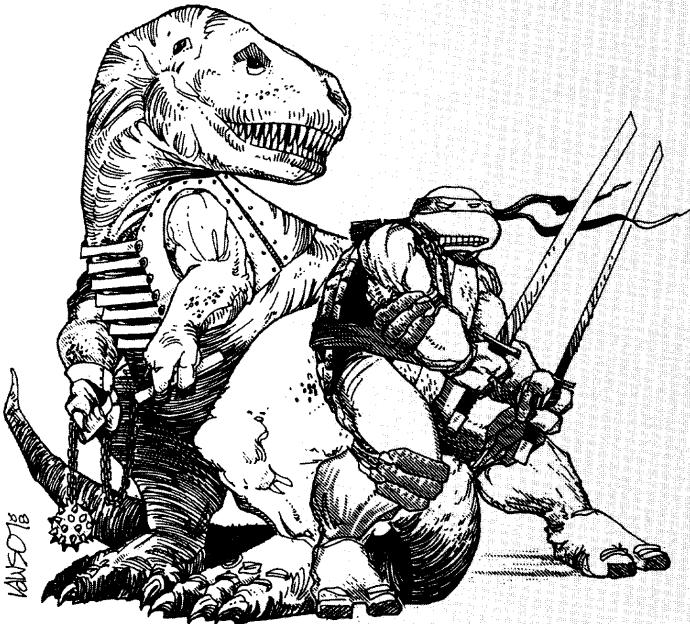
A quest of atonement is given as punishment to a character who has, in the eyes of a cleric, offended his deity and has failed to make a satisfactory act of repentance. This type of quest is simply meted out when the offending character has failed to use his free will to make amends with his deity. The character's motivation for carrying out such a quest is to prevent the continued loss of his attributes, such as the saving-throw loss given for the *quest* spell.

Although a quest of atonement is usually assigned by a cleric in the offending character's party, it is not unthinkable that an NPC cleric completely unknown to the character might assign the quest. As the DM, you can justify such a random act by having the NPC cleric claim divine inspiration: "I was told to watch for a paladin bearing an orange sun on his shield; the goddess instructed me to send him to the distant land of Olek, where he would meet a man of great power . . ."

Imposing a quest in the middle of an adventure can be very disruptive, particularly if the character is important to the party. As always, assign the quest only if the character has clearly broken the code of behavior established for followers of the deity. Make it clear that it is in the best interest of everyone for the character to follow, the code established by his deity and to seek help in atoning for his sins as soon as possible. Table 1 is an example of what you might want to construct for a deity in your own game world.

## Sanctioned quests

A sanctioned quest is undertaken by a



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character who belongs to a well-defined order or group that is somehow closely associated with a deity but is not part of the actual hierarchy of the church. An order of paladins or a monastery fits into this category.

Sanctioned quests are requested when a character of such an order has witnessed an act that violates not only the code of behavior for his deity but the code for his organization as well. Referring to such quests as "sanctioned" merely indicates that the character is voluntarily undertaking a quest that is in accordance with what both his deity and his order expect. The questing PC is essentially consulting with the hierarchy of his deity's church to ensure that his plans are in accordance with the church's views.

The degree of difficulty assigned to a sanctioned quest is determined by three major factors:

1. The object of the attack;
2. The perpetrator of the attack; and
3. The seriousness of the attack.

With sanctioned quests, the actions required are often clear to both the DM and the player. If an evil knight is wandering the countryside killing innocent villagers, only the death of the knight might be deemed sufficient punishment for such cowardly acts. For less-serious offenses, more lenient punishments are in order. Table 2 lists reasons for sanctioned quests.

Note that special consideration is made when the subject of an attack is an important member of the church or the organization to which the character belongs. Since it is generally in the deity's interest to promote the activities of groups loyal to him, attacks on members of these groups are looked upon with great interest.

Based on Table 2, if Edmar the paladin happened upon slavers abducting a woman and child, he would be assigned a major quest when he approached a cleric with a report of the crime. The abduction of the woman and child is considered an attack upon innocents. On a broader scale, the existence of a slaver ring could be considered an attack upon the character's order because the goals of the two organizations are directly opposed.

## Voluntary quests

A voluntary quest may be granted to a character who approaches a cleric seeking to further the cause of his deity through personal sacrifice. A voluntary quest may also be granted if the PC has witnessed an injustice he wishes to rectify but is not associated with an organization of the type indicated in the section on sanctioned quests listed earlier.

Many Arthurian tales not directly tied to the search for the Holy Grail may be classified as voluntary quests. In these instances, heroes left Camelot to seek out giants, dragons, or black knights ("for God and country") simply to drive evil forces from the young kingdom.

In any event, the major consideration

for voluntary quests is purity of motive. With such quests, the character usually has some idea of what he wants to accomplish. Table 3 provides examples of reasons for voluntary quests.

In the sections that follow, you will see that the rewards for quests increase as does the purity of the motives that promoted the character to undertake the quests.

## Just rewards

Edmar (the paladin used earlier) tracks down the leaders of the slavery ring, slays them in righteous indignation, and returns 20 abducted orphans to a nunnery. What happens then: bright lights and heavenly trumpets? Although heroes in medieval romances often refused fantastic treasures for their brave deeds, most AD&D game characters have at least some need for worldly wealth. [See "Glory, Danger and Wounds," in DRAGON® issue #125, for role-playing notes on this topic.]

Rewards for the successful completion of a quest may vary from deity to deity. In every case, however, the DM should determine what boon is to be granted before assigning the quest. By planning while you have time to think things through, you can avoid granting too much or too little when the time comes to mete out rewards.

Although regaining the good graces of a deity might be reward enough for a character performing a quest of atonement, the DM must also consider recompense for sanctioned and voluntary quests as well as the exceptional execution of quests of atonement. It is, after all, in the deity's interest to grant some sort of reward to a character who has served him well; the character becomes an example by which others may be persuaded to that deity's faith.

Determining the type of reward to be granted in a two-step process. First, based on the type and level of difficulty for the quest, you must first determine the reward level; second, based on the reward level calculated, you must determine how great a reward of the type sought should be granted.

**Reward level:** The reward level can be calculated quickly and easily if you know both the type and level of difficulty assigned to the quest. In this case, consult Table 4. First, read across until you reach the column for the type of quest completed. Second, read down until you find the level of difficulty. The intersection of the row and column indicate the suggested reward level for that type of quest. Thus, for a minor quest of atonement, a reward level of zero is granted. For a voluntary major quest, however, the reward level is three.

Note that the reward levels increase from atonement to sanctioned to voluntary, and from minor to major to great. This structure is designed to reward quests undertaken with the purest motives first and the greatest danger second. The

reward level for a voluntary minor quest is identical to that for a great quest of atonement—primarily because a deity has more reason to give favor to the character who undertakes a quest of his own volition rather than to the one who takes on a quest as punishment for an offense.

**Suggested rewards:** Once you have determined the reward level granted for the successful completion of the quest, refer to Table 5 to determine the suggested limitations for each type of reward. Each of the reward categories listed in the table are described hereafter.

**Treasure or magical items:** One medieval romance tells of the quest of Huon, one of the Twelve Peers of France. After killing a relative of the king who had provoked him into a duel, Huon is banished from the kingdom until he returns with a lock of the beard and the four back teeth of a nearby Saracen emperor. Along the way, Huon gathers a number of magical items which help him complete his quest: armor that helps him defeat a giant, a ring that gains him entry into a city, a goblet that fills for the pure of heart, and a horn that summons aid from the land of faerie.

Granting such magical items is the most appropriate reward for the character who does not have a specific return in mind but who deserves some sort of boon nonetheless. Use Table II.A, II.B, and II.C (page 120) in the AD&D 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide* to help determine the type of treasure or magical items granted for successful completion of a quest. (As indicated earlier in the article, you should probably do this before beginning the quest so that you have the option of giving the items rolled to the character as he performs the quest.)

**Gaining a special ability:** Sir Gawain, one of Arthur's nephews and second among his knights only to Sir Lancelot, had a strange enchantment placed upon him. Whenever in battle, his strength increased as the sun rose to its zenith until, as the noon hour approached, he became almost invincible. As the sun set, however, his strength waned and he became a "normal" man again.

Gawain's special ability is often the characteristic by which he is identified. Simulating such a special gift is difficult in the AD&D game world, but it can be done by granting the power of a wizard's or priest's spell as an innate ability to the character who has successfully completed the quest. A special ability such as this marks the character as favored by his deity, making him unique among his peers.

The reward level determines the maximum level of the spell to be granted as an ability, according to Table 5. Thus, if a reward level of 3 is calculated, a first-, second-, or third-level spell could be granted as an ability.

You may wish to limit the frequency with which this ability may be used by the character (e.g., three times a day) to prevent its abuse, or allow the character to

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call upon the ability only when in grave distress.

**Gaining attribute points:** If a character has lost attribute points due to some event in his past (e.g., he found a *cursed* item that drained his strength away), you may wish to allow the character to recover those points through the performance of a quest. If one of a character's attributes is particularly low or unfit for the character's chosen class (e.g., a wizard with a mediocre intelligence score), you may allow the character to raise that attribute as well.

Note that, according to Table 5, points may be recovered more easily than they may be gained. This seeming discrepancy reflects the idea that the deity may more easily restore lost attribute points than augment a character's natural attributes. Restoration merely gives back something the character once had. If the restoration of the number of attribute points listed under the reward would raise a character's attributes beyond their original levels, the DM should decide if the character's execution of the quest merits this bonus.

**Regaining life levels:** Suppose Belfin, a 9th-level ranger, has traveled deep into a vast wasteland with his companions to recover a relic that once belonged to his deity. Upon entering a seemingly abandoned temple, his party is attacked by a group of wraiths. Belfin loses two life levels in a desperate battle, but the others, including the party's cleric, are killed. Belfin finds himself in a desolate area with no possible chance of regaining his levels. What motivates him to undertake such tasks for his deity in the future?

Regaining life levels has always been a favorite reason for characters to seek out quests in campaigns. Note that levels may only be regained—not gained—through the performance of a quest, and that the reward level for the quest must be at least a two (see Table 5) for any recovery. A maximum of three lost life levels may be regained, and only for the completion of a voluntary great quest.

When life levels are regained, experience points are restored to the lowest experience-point value of the level to which the character is restored, regardless of his experience-point total at the time he originally lost the level.

Take the case of Belfin once again. Suppose at the time of the attack he had 375,000 xp. Also suppose he lost two levels, which dropped him to 75,000 xp. He undertakes a voluntary major quest, which allows him to recover those levels but only to the bottom of the 9th level for the ranger class (300,000 xp).

## Restrictions

If *quest* is used as an offensive spell, any type of character can be compelled to perform a quest. A cleric could, for instance, send a chaotic-evil thief on a quest to visit his deity's distant temple in an attempt to convert such a character.

Only characters who serve a deity, however, should be allowed to assume a sanctioned or voluntary quest, as these quests are undertaken in the spirit of service to that deity. This restriction prevents a character who proclaims no specific faith from seeking a quest merely to reap the rewards.

Certain classes (such as clerics and paladins) are likely to end up on quests more often than others. These characters' intimate knowledge of their chosen faiths should help them recognize any actions that are inappropriate for followers of their deity.

Allowing quests for other classes (such as thieves or fighters) is a decision the DM must make. A deity of thieves could demand that his followers execute his assignments well and demand recompense for a bungled caper in the form of a quest. Such cases are often interesting to play, they are usually highly workable, and they are challenging to design. However, rewards should be measured only in terms of treasure and status, not godlike gifts of per-

sonal power.

**Optional restrictions:** Since a character is expected to prove his worth by undertaking a quest, you may wish to restrict him in a unique way that really tests his mettle. Some of the following restrictions can be more trouble for a character than you might imagine:

1. Limit or prohibit his use of magic on a quest.
2. Limit or prohibit his use of magical weapons, or give him some other class-related handicap.
3. Prohibit the character from revealing his name, origin, or alignment.
4. Prohibit the character from speaking.
5. Prohibit the character from performing some common task, such as washing (to mortify the character's flesh).
6. Place a time frame on the quest (e.g., return within one week).

Small touches such as these give a quest that extra dimension that makes it special. If you do limit the character while he is on a quest, make sure that the punishment fits the crime. Mata, who lied about his

**Table 1**  
**Reasons For Quests of Atonement**

### Minor quests

- Lack of fervor in faith.
- Poor performance of a duty required by the deity.
- Neglect of a religious duty.

### Major quests

- Violation of a deity's code due to special circumstances.
- Accidental desecration of a holy object or holy site.
- Continued neglect of one or more religious duties.
- Neglect of duty resulting in harm to others.
- Blasphemy in the heat of battle.

### Great quests

- Intended desecration of a holy object or holy site.
- Knowing violation of a deity's code with no extenuating circumstances.
- Blasphemy in despair.
- Denial of faith.
- Blasphemy in pride.

**Table 2**  
**Reasons For Sanctioned Quests**

### Minor quests

- An attack upon one's own person by a member of an opposing sanctioned order.

### Major quests

- Attack upon a member of the deity's church hierarchy.
- Attack upon a person unable to defend himself.
- Intentional desecration of an object or site holy to the deity.
- Attack upon the order itself by another organized force. (The mere act of organizing an order whose goals directly conflict with the goals of the PC's order could be considered an attack.)
- Attack upon the order's sovereign.
- Attack upon the order's leader.

### Great quests

- Attack resulting in the death of the order's leader.
- Attack resulting in the death of the order's sovereign.
- Attack on the deity with which the group is aligned.

faith to the demon in the opening segment, might be compelled to claim affiliation with a deity offensive to him while performing his quest. This odious duty would point out to Mata the true nature of his denial in a way that a speech from a cleric never could.

In the end, the real purpose of the quest is to bring the character into closer spiritual alignment with his deity. Although quest has no doubt been used by many a character as a powerful offensive spell, remember that literature and history shows us many individuals who sought quests of their own volition. Once you have exposed your characters to the joys of questing, who knows what might happen? They, too, may join the ranks of Lancelot, Huon, and the rest. Ω

## Sage Advice

*Continued from page 14*

**My DM says that a specialist wizard gets one bonus first-level spell for each level of experience he has. Is this correct?**

No. A specialist wizard gets one bonus spell for each level of spells he can cast. For example, a 5th-level wizard can cast four first-, two second-, and one third-level spells; if he is a specialist, he gets three extra spells, one of each level.

**There seems to be an error in the description for the second-level wizard spell, *fool's gold*. Shouldn't the creature viewing the gold subtract one from its saving-throw roll for every level of the caster?**

Yes, but the creature's wisdom adjustment (if any) applies to the save.

**Do bards have to spend a proficiency slot on a musical instrument? What happens to their ability to influence reactions if they do not?**

That is entirely up to the DM. If the DM decides a musical instrument is necessary to influence reactions, I suggest bards either learn an instrument for "free" or that they be required to automatically spend a proficiency on an instrument. On the other hand, a bard might very well be able to sing or speak well enough to influence reactions without an instrument; this is a common practice in the real world.

**Can a ranger (or other character) who uses two weapons parry with one and attack with the other? Would the character get a better armor-class modifier if he parried with both weapons?**

The only way to parry in the AD&D game is to forfeit all attacks, whether the character is using two weapons or one.

**Table 3**  
**Reasons For Voluntary Quests**

**Minor quests**

- Any quest whose main objective is to prove oneself worthy of serving the deity.

**Major quests**

- Prompted by the desire for righteous vengeance; the PC is morally outraged by an act that is offensive to his deity and wishes to avenge it.

**Great quests**

- The purest form of quest; a difficult service undertaken by a PC in the spirit of service to his deity.

**Table 4**  
**Reward Level For Quests**

Quest	Atonement	Sanctioned	Voluntary
Minor	0	1	2
Major	1	2	3
Great	2	3	4

**Table 5**  
**Suggested Rewards for Quests**

Reward level	0	1	2	3	4
Treasure/magical items	-	Table II.A*	Table II.B*	Table II.C*	Table II.C* (+ 10 to roll)
Special ability gained	-	First-level spell	Second-level spell	Third-level spell	Fourth-level spell
Attribute points regained	-	1	2	3	4
Attribute points gained	-	-	1	2	3
Life levels regained**	-	-	1	2	3

\* Refers to tables in the AD&D 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 120.

\*\* Life levels are regained by restoration of experience points to the lowest experience-point value of the level regained.

**The description of the wizard spell, *animal growth*, suggests that a *tongues* spell can be used to converse with animals—but the description of the *tongues* spell says it cannot.**

A *tongues* spell allows the caster to communicate only with creatures that have language. The reference to the *tongues* spell in the description of the *animal growth* spell is an error.

**How close must a creature come to an object with an *attraction* spell (the reverse of an *avoidance* spell) cast on it before the object moves toward him? Does the object move quickly enough to inflict damage if it strikes the creature?**

The object moves when the creature comes within 1'. The object moves quickly but does not inflict damage when it strikes the creature.

**If a *light* spell is cast upon a piece of chalk, can the chalk be used to write glowing messages? If the spell is cast on a rock, can you break the rock in half and have two half-strength *light* effects? If the spell is cast on a vial of water, will the water glow?**

No, no, and no. A *light* spell illuminates a 20' radius. Casting it on an object simply makes the effect mobile. The spell has one and only one center of effect; if the object the spell has been cast upon is broken, spilled, or worn away, the spell stays with one portion of the object or becomes immobile, fixed in space. It might be possible to transfer the spell from one object to another by casting it on a mutable object. For example, if the spell is cast on an open vial of water, the spell will be transferred to the vial if the water is allowed to evaporate away. Ω

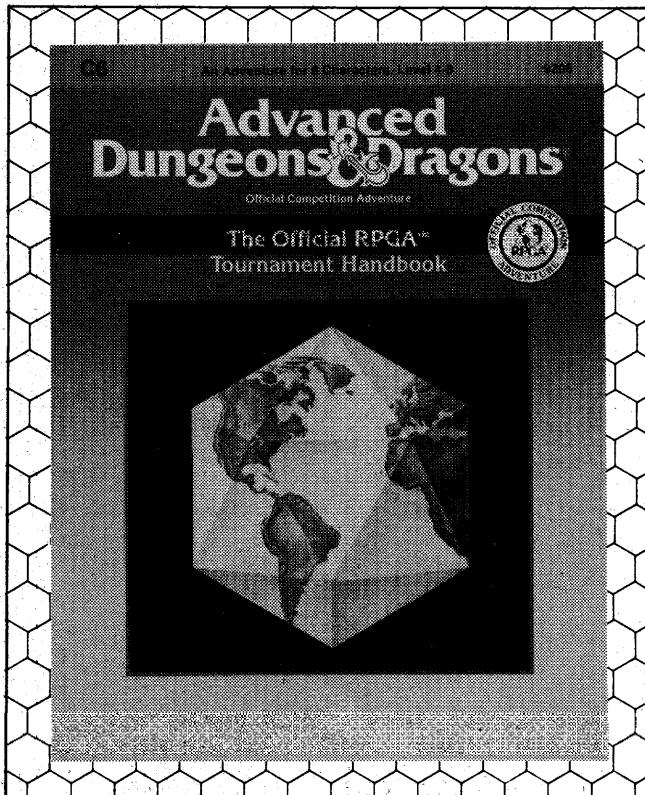
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# The Game Wizards

## What do the simple folk do?

by James M. Ward

Camelot, a wonderful Broadway play and motion picture, had a scene in which the royalty of the castle sat around the palace and wondered what the simple folk did. It turned out that simple folk did exactly what the royal folk did. Much to my horror, I have discovered the same thing: Being a TSR administrator is still much the same as being a simple game player.

I have proudly taken up the job of publisher for the TSR magazines. What does one do as publisher, you might ask? One works very hard at not rocking the boat. TSR has an excellent editorial staff, people who put out 110% all the time. You might not like everything you see in TSR's magazines, but you have to admire their success stories. The readership of these magazines has made them the best in their industry, and we are going to make them just a bit better.

So, I am looking at the most successful magazines of their type and wondering what can be done to improve them. I had a few thoughts—none of them were inexpensive, however. I got the staff together and talked about some ideas for improving things, and, wonder of wonders, the staff liked some of my plans. Wait till you see the good stuff that's going into these magazines in the months to come!

But, being a happy dictator, I also give you the chance to make your magazines better. I would like your constructive criticism of DRAGON® Magazine and DUNGEON® Adventures, with helpful suggestions to make them even better. Send all such letters (not expecting answers but expecting results) to:

Overworked James M. Ward  
TSR, Inc.  
P.O. Box 756  
Lake Geneva WI 53147  
U.S.A.

Why put U.S.A., you might ask? You would be amazed how much of TSR's mail goes to Geneva, Switzerland!

Now, let me wear two hats for a minute. I am also the director of TSR's Creative Services. There are thousands of you out there who want to become game designers and writers for our company. Although this is a noble ideal, the glory road is filled with rocks! If you are interested in writing for the magazines, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for their writer's guidelines. If you are interested in writing for the game department, you are probably

out of luck. If you aren't an already published game designer, it won't happen for sure. This isn't because you don't have wonderful ideas; it's because there are too many of you out there! TSR can't afford to train hundreds of new game designers with wonderful ideas. We have to use the best, we've found most of the experienced people we need, and TSR can only do so much product in a year. The bottom line on writing for TSR is: Get experience with other game companies or by writing for our magazines (or other gaming magazines), and you still have only a small chance of ever writing for TSR. Enough of that. On to nicer things.

The editor of this fine magazine has to let me say almost anything I want, so I thought I would tell you what the "royal" folk do at TSR. Right now, the creative staff is playing Games Workshop's SPACE HULK\* game quite a lot. This game's price is way too high, but it's fun, I never play the aliens because there is much more honor in winning as the Space Marines. Milton Bradley's FORTRESS AMERICA\* and AXIS & ALLIES\* games are also played frequently, and I am a great fan of GDW's IMPERIUM\* and HOUSE DIVIDED\* games. TSR is putting out a new BATTLE-SYSTEM™ booklet (available by the time of this issue), updated for AD&D® 2nd Edition game play, so many of us have been busy painting our miniatures. Ral Partha Enterprises has been producing wonderful AD&D metal miniatures, and its DRAGONLANCE® and FORGOTTEN REALMS™ boxed sets are all the rage among the painters here at the company.

On the computer-game front, I have lately been playing SSI's *Sword of Aragon*. SSI is the only computer-game company with the official AD&D game license. I have helped SSI put a few games together, and SSI's *Pool of Radiance* and *Curse of the Azure Bonds* games have been big successes. *Sword of Aragon* is a fantasy game not set in a TSR world, and it is interesting but unusually frustrating—frustrating in that I can't get my armies to win all their battles (sigh). I've played about 10 SSI games and haven't found a clunker yet.

As I look into the future at 1990, I see a lot of bright spots with astounding products. TSR is going to put out a new science-fiction role-playing game. The AD&D Horror boxed set will please everyone. The SPELLJAMMER™ boxed set will

be supported with great modules and accessories. The Horde is going to hit the Forgotten Realms, and boy, is somebody going to be sore!

Finally, we aren't whistling, twirling, or singing alone. Let me assure you that the creative staff and I listen to what you have to say about TSR products, and we react quickly to your criticisms. Your input is appreciated.

So, as I sit in my creative publishing palace, I already know what the simple folk do. I was one. Ω

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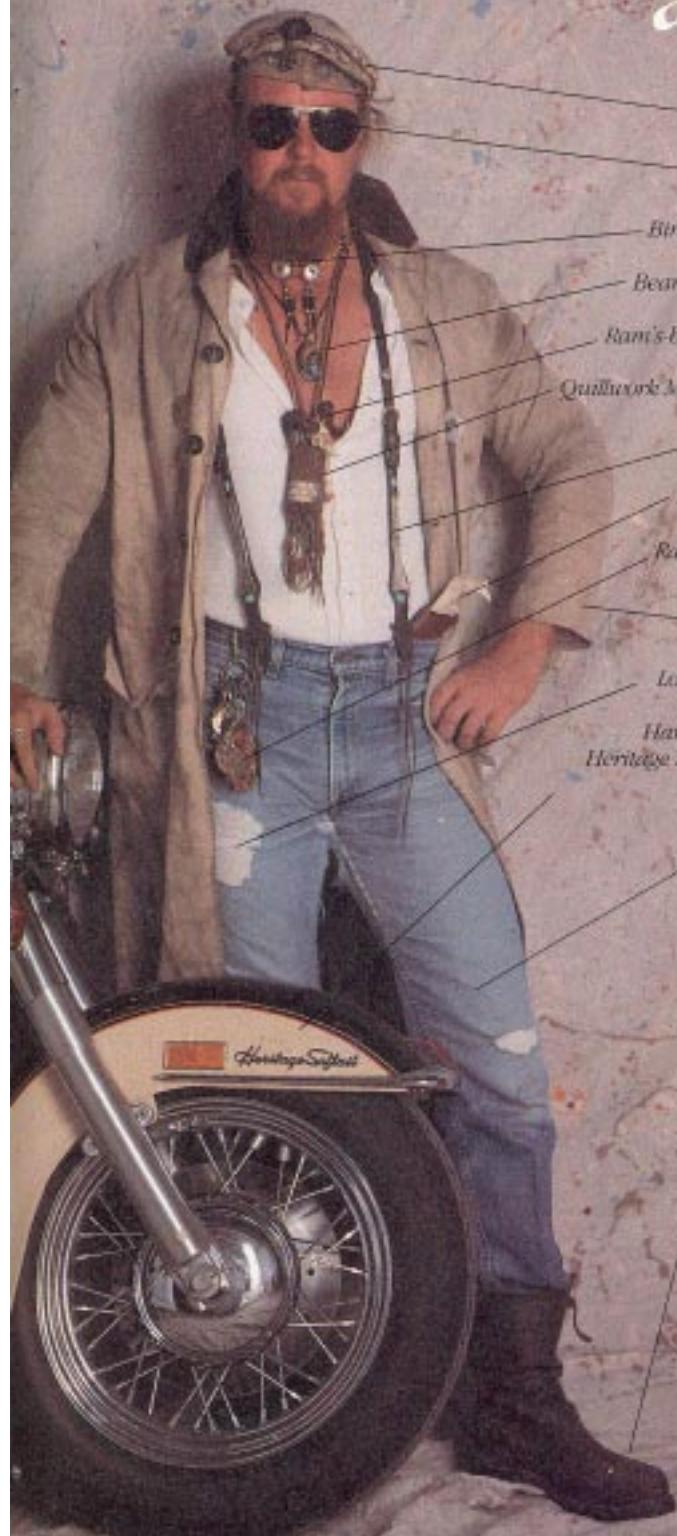
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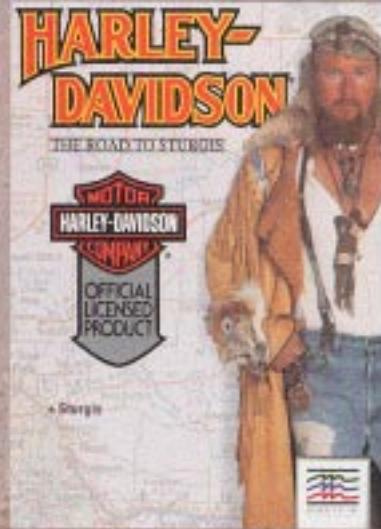
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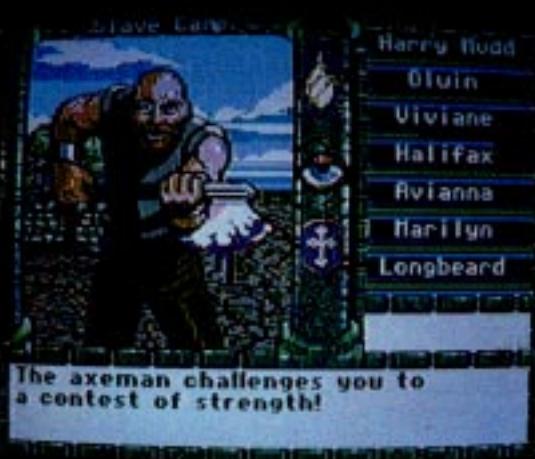
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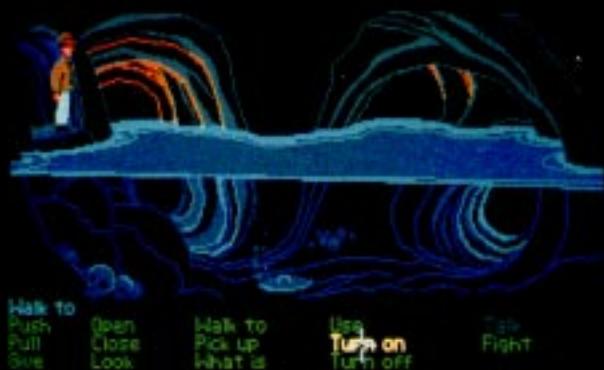
THE ROLE OF

# Computers

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Dragon Wars (Interplay)



Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—The Graphic Adventure (Lucasfilm)

Through Purgatory  
to the ends  
of the universe

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Patricia, and Kirk Lesser

We have made mention, on several occasions, about the illegality of copying software. It really shouldn't become a part of a true gamer's repertoire of skills. To further point out the futility of such dishonest work, remember when we stated that some publishers have rather unique methods by which they try to defeat illegal software duplication? We received an interesting letter from Marshall Vale of Pawtucket, R.I., in which he writes:

"While reading DRAGON® issue #141, I noticed a rather humorous letter about *Alternate Reality*. The writer complained about not being able to join unions or get any jobs. What the writer had was a pirated copy of *Alternate Reality*. When I bought my copy of *Alternate Reality* for the Atari ST, I attempted to make a backup for personal use. The backup copy seemed to work, but like the writer in issue #141 said, I couldn't get any jobs, let alone enter any of the taverns; join guilds, or even save the game. Frustrated, I tried my original copy and, lo and behold, every thing worked normally. Apparently, *Alternate Reality* uses copy protection in the form of a burned hole in a sector of the disk. If that hole isn't there, then the publisher gives you a taste of the game, but your character will eventually die of hunger. I find *Alternate Reality* to be a very enjoyable game and am sad that future versions will not be released."

We have a column full of top-rated (and nearly all five-star) products for you this month. These offerings will provide hours of entertaining challenge and adventure!

## Reviews

### Computer game ratings

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

### Interplay Productions

1575 Corporate Drive  
Costa Mesa CA 92626  
(714) 545-9001

### Dragon Wars

Apple II version \$49.95  
You can't do much more with graphics

on an 8-bit system than Brian Fargo and his fellow geniuses have managed to code into their new fantasy role-playing adventure, *Dragon Wars*. Gamers will be amazed at the high-quality, on-screen graphics presented throughout the adventure.

On an island-dotted world called Oceana is an island, Dilmun, which is said to be populated with dragons. Your party of adventurers sets out to find this fabled island; unfortunately, Purgatory is in the way. Your party is imprisoned by Purgatory's officials who follow the dictates of Namtar, their ruler, otherwise known as the Beast from the Pit.

Here you are: naked, without weaponry, and forced to scrape whatever living is possible from the streets of Purgatory. This slum is a dangerous area, and you must live by your wits if you are ever going escape. Believe us, escape is foremost in your mind, because your quest is now to depose Namtar and protect Oceana from falling beneath the heels of this dictator.

Your first goal in Purgatory must be to find weaponry. You'll probably also find a disreputable inn where tidbits of information can be gleaned from the bartender. Weapons can be found at the black market, northwest of an area where blood-sport is practiced for important papers. To acquire sharpened steel, one must have money. Successful encounters usually reward the victor with a coin or two, but don't expect to become rich at the start of the game through combat.

Even though the game possesses a "Where am I?" feature that allows you to see, on-screen, your current location, we advise thoroughly mapping every step you take in Purgatory. Eventually you'll come to the realization that there are a couple of ways to escape this dreadful place. These exits can be found by listening and by use of each of your party members' skills. A rather unique exit can be tried by using the wall around Purgatory as your guide—but don't get claustrophobia and panic. If you are injured, there is a healer within Purgatory, but rest assured that healing costs money.

One location within Purgatory seems to garner use in many FRPG systems these days, and that's the arena. There, combat is offered and rewards are given. It seems as though many game designers came up with this idea simultaneously as one method of allowing novice adventurers to obtain something valuable without requiring massive amounts of experience to complete. With *Dragon Wars*, the arena combats are quite interesting and, thanks to the save-game feature that should be accessed prior to combat, there is little risk to your party.

Beyond Purgatory, the encounters become more difficult, but there are many areas where wonders await you. Wander through the Mystic Woods and map carefully. Get tossed into jail in Phoebus. These are part of your quest to take care of

Namtar's crooked business.

Your party consists of four characters, with room allowed for as many as three nonplayer characters (NPCs). The NPCs are met in the streets and other locations throughout the game, and you have to decide whether an individual is worthy of joining your group. You can create your own PCs or import them from another game. If you manage the latter, be advised that none of their magical items and only a few of their most minor spells will make it through the transfer process.

Characters possess numeric representations of strength, dexterity, intelligence, experience, skill levels, and the like. Points

are spent to create your characters, and it is best to concentrate on a specific skill set rather than to generalize. Most skills don't have to be above level one to be of use to you. Skills can be increased through play or purchased during the adventure. Characters you designate as spell-casters must master Low Magic before they can learn the other magic skills. Fortunately for all, there is someone within Purgatory who can assist in that regard.

Now we get to the magic employed in Oceana. The evil Namtar has banned all magic (except for his use—we never said Namtar was stupid!) and enforces this law using the anti-magic police known as the



The Krystal (Cinemaware)



The Krystal (Cinemaware)

# Before they were heroes...



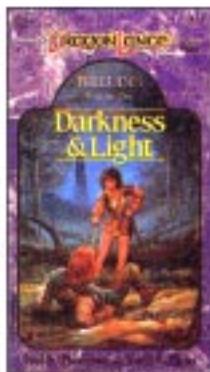
DragonLance®

Saga

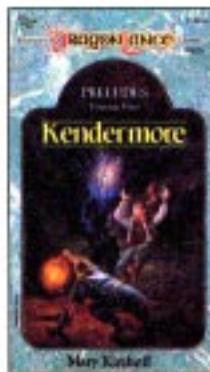
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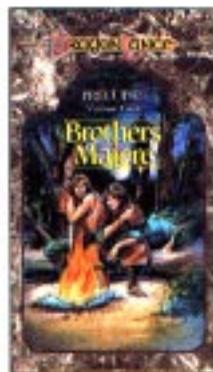
In *Darkness and Light*, the enigmatic warrior woman, Kitiara, and the moody knight, Sturm, set off for Solamnia and end up on the red moon, Lunitari.



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Caramon's and Raistlin's search for a village's missing cats leads to murder, a thief who is not all he appears, and a foe who is not what they expect in *Brothers Majere*.

The *Preludes* Trilogy is a must for DRAGONLANCE saga fans everywhere. Pick up your copy today at your local book or hobby shop!!



Stosstrupen. In order for a character to acquire a spell, he must possess a scroll that imparts the information for the casting of that spell. Once used, the scroll disappears, but the knowledge of that spell remains with the PC for life (which in some cases can be rather short). If one of your PCs finds a Dragon Stone, have him seize it; these stones reenergize a character's magical capabilities. You cannot win this quest unless your PCs use their spells creatively (but not all spells will be understood when discovered).

You start out with Low Magic, which includes mundane but highly effective magics such as Mage Fire, Charm, Luck, Lesser Heal, Mage Light, and Bedazzlement. We recommend you immediately get your mitts on Mage Fire and Lesser Heal, as you'll need them.

High Magic is a much more powerful group of spells, and there is a rumor that a teacher of this skill lives somewhere in the Eastern Isles; getting there could be interesting! Such spells as Poog's Vortex and Ice Chill are among High Magic's 20 various, potent magics.

Druid Magic is for use by those in tune with animals and the world's elements, but it is not as powerful as High Magic. Druid Magic users can use such spells as Death Curse, Fire Blast, Insect Plague, Whirlwind, Scare, Brambles, Greater Healing, Poison Cure, Create Wall, Soften Stone (a neat way to leave certain places), Invoke Spirit, Beast Call, and Wood Spirit.

Another magic class is Sun Magic, the only legal magic remaining in the land and the most potent of all magics. There are 20 Sun Magic spells, but not all of them have known effects. Such goodies as Radiance and Mithra's Bless are in this spell group. Sun Magic spells are hard to locate.

There are three miscellaneous spells: Zak's Speed for increasing your party's dexterity; Kill Ray, which annihilates anything within its beam (perhaps even destroying the caster); and Prison, which dumps weight on your opponents and pins them down.

But let there be no doubt that fighting is important to this game. You have many options in combat situations, involving either quick combat or else deciding every move for each of your characters. You can try to disarm an attacker, cast a spell, dodge an incoming blow, or run away. Those in your group behind your lead fighters should be armed with missile weapons to help the cause.

Movement is accomplished by using your Apple II's cursor keys or the mouse. You can always tell on-screen what your direction is, thanks to a compass arrow—that is, unless you happen to run into a spinner or teleporter. Secret doors are all over the place; all you have to do is to bump into a wall and suddenly you end up, in a strange location. There is said to be a location, in the depths of the Magan Underworld, known as the Well of Souls,

where a dead adventurer might be resurrected.

With *Dragon Wars* comes a manual containing more than 160 text descriptions. As you journey through Oceana to such exciting places as Forlorn, Phoebus on the Isle of the Sun, Lansk, Rustic, and the legendary Isle of the Damned, you'll run into on-screen messages advising you to read a certain paragraph in the manual. Some paragraphs simply offer information about your current location or give an encounter that you can file away in your notebook. Others impart important data that require you to take an action that affects the way the game is played. Each query should be thought about before you answer the computerized game master.

*Dragon Wars* may not present a new inroad to playing a computerized FRP game, but it does present the gamer with an exciting quest, superb 8-bit graphics, animated characters, puzzles, mapping, hack-and-slash, new magics, and an opportunity to explore a world of fresh encounters. The enemy is truly evil, and you'll enjoy taking on his army of nasties.

*Dragon Wars* holds up extremely well when viewed in comparison with 16- and 32-bit adventure games on more sophisticated systems. It's thanks to the likes of Interplay and Origin that 8-bit gamers haven't been ignored, but their gaming systems haven't remained static. Companies like these progress onward with better games and richer environments. If you're an Apple II gamer, buy *Dragon Wars*!

#### Cinemaware Corporation

4165 Thousand Oaks Boulevard  
Westlake Village CA 91362  
(805) 495-6515

#### The Kristal

Commodore Amiga version      \* \* \* \*%

*The Kristal* is awesome. The game's graphics are stunning, the level of player interaction with the program itself is state-of-the-art, and it is probably one of the most frustrating games at an arcade level we've ever played. As a member of Cinemaware's Interactive Movie series, *The*

*Kristal* is actually based on a stage play entitled *The Kristal of Kronos*. The game is space adventure at its best, where the quest revolves around your attempt, as the space pirate Dancis Frake, to find the Kristal. You've got to be brave, with a good heart and noble spirit (and also darned adept at handling your joystick) if you wish to succeed.

The graphic interface is quite advanced and, given practice, quite intuitive. Your screen has a main view window, with either a personal status or "objects collected" window at the bottom of the screen. In the main view window are seen all your activities, from walking to and fro to piloting your spaceship. The status window consists of five information areas, which reveal (among other things) your possessions, the number of skringles you have earned (skringles being the money used in this galaxy), your strength and psychic values, and which of four 3.5" game disks you need to insert.

Your spaceship is a wonder of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells science fiction, with a few ultrasophisticated objects thrown in. You pilot your craft using a pilot's wheel reminiscent of those from galleons and trimasted ships of old. Two antiquated cannons appear on either side of your navigation station; they fire shot that is effective against an odd and dangerous array of hostile aliens. A navigation chart appears on your ship's view screen when it's time for you to select a destination planet. Inside the ship, pay attention to the destination distance meter, the ship's shield-strength meter, the destination alert meter, and the ship's speed meter.

When you arrive at your planet, you've still got a bit of maneuvering and battle action to survive before you can orbit and land. (If all it took was some simple maneuvering to get to the planet, gamers would be disappointed.) The denizens of space take great pains to defeat your plans. They'll come at you from all sides, firing their weapons as soon as they are within range of your ship. These energy bursts deplete your shield strength rather quickly if you aren't careful. Through

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Farnham 722269 (Other Times)

judicious control of your ship's speed, you can hang back enough to allow the aliens to come into view; then you can carefully duck-shoot them from a distance. As these nasties come in waves from the planet, you can quickly speed forward for a short period of time after the first attack, then wait for the second wave. Shoot, move forward, wait, shoot, then move to the planet.

Above all, save your game often. We advise saving your game each time you wipe out a wave of angry aliens.

You'll also find yourself engaged in sword fights with other space pirates. They are quite good with their weapons, so become proficient in this art as quickly as possible. Your joystick affords 16 different movements, depending upon whether the fire button is held down or not when you move your joystick.

Collect everything you can, learn how to destroy aliens, improve your sword-fighting skill, and most of all, be patient. One especially kind feature of this game is that should you be destroyed in space or die because you neglected to bring aboard items that would have allowed you to live (such as life-support systems), the game restarts from the point where you board your ship. You'll save a lot of games in progress before you defeat the powers of Chaos.

In our copy of this game, we had a slight problem at the start of the adventure when the program began to switch scenes on us. We'd walk to a new section of a planet, but the next scene loaded wouldn't be the proper one. Usually, the scene repeated the last one shown, and our character would bump into nonexistent walls, unable to move in directions that seemed open on-screen. By backtracking and reentering the scene, the program usually sorted out the problem but only after several attempts to locate the correct scene.

Other than this minor annoyance, *The Kristal* is a fantastic offering that Amiga gamers should gobble up!

#### Lucasfilm Games.

P.O. Box 2009  
San Rafael CA 94912  
(415) 662-1800  
(415) 662-1902 (consumer support)

*Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—The Graphic Adventure* \*\*\*\*\*  
PC/MS-DOS version \$49.95

Indiana Jones is back! This time he joins his father in a great adventure. Based on the film of the same name, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—The Graphic Adventure* (herein called *IJ-GA*) allows you to become Indiana Jones and search for the Holy Grail. Indy faces many obstacles as he navigates through sewers and castles, and he needs cunning and wit to get past German soldiers and others who cross his path.

*IJ-GA* has excellent graphics and anima-

tion. The game arrives on eight 5.25" disks and provides the player with many hours of enjoyment and adventure. The game requires no typing at all. All of the commands and inventory are presented in the lower portion of the screen. Those who have enjoyed Lucasfilm's other adventures, such as *Maniac Mansion*, will find the player-interface most comforting; those who haven't are in for a treat.

The top three-fourths of the screen offers a graphic representation of Indy's current location. With everything presented on-screen for the user, there is minimal difficulty in performing tasks. For example, to open a door, the player clicks on the "open" command, then double clicks on the door to be opened. The on-screen Indy then proceeds to open the door, if it isn't secured.

Another on-screen menu selection is the "What is" feature. To use it, you click on the "What is" command, then move your cursor into the graphics screen and onto different important items there. You then find out what each item is and know what requires further investigation.

The game follows the adventures of the Jones boys as depicted in the movie. However, there are some plot differences. The game's creators watched both the filming and editing of the movie, which allowed them to write into the game some places and people that weren't included in the movie but were in the original script.

Players can actually be smarter than the movie's Indiana Jones by performing actions different from those seen in the movie. Cleverness is measured by two numbers called the Indy Quotient (IQ). One number shows how well the player has been doing on the current game. The second number reveals how well the user has done in all the situations he has played to that point in time. IQ points are scored when solving puzzles, getting past obstacles, or finding key objects.

There are several ways to solve problems, which are known as episodes. You can only score once for solving an episode. Once the game is completed, gamers can go back to the same puzzle and solve it in

a different way to receive additional IQ points, which are added to the overall game score. The maximum possible points for a series is 800.

During the game, Indy will find himself in caverns or mazes. The screen changes to a distant, top-down perspective and reveals only those parts of the maze that Indiana Jones can actually see from his location. By using the mouse and clicking, the on-screen Jones moves to the location the player designated as his destination with another mouse click.

Indiana Jones can converse with on-screen figures. As a person talks with Jones, you select Indy's answers from four on-screen responses. Some conversations take quite some time to complete, but all are important to the game as additional information can be revealed thereby.

Indiana can also start a fight with a character. The screen shows Indy and his opponent confronting one another. At the bottom of the screen is a power bar that shows the potential power behind Indy's punches. When the punch bar is at its maximum, it's time to let the fists fly. After throwing a punch, the power bar disappears and takes a few seconds to recover if Indy doesn't punch again right away. Thus, Indiana Jones can hit for maximum damage, or he can throw several punches of low power to keep his enemy off-balance. Either combatant can block portions of his body from attacks. The winner is easily determined by a knockout.

Included in the game box is a diary written by Indiana Jones' father. The diary includes descriptions of the various Grails as well as offering hints to players in tough situations.

This game has many tricky puzzles. Should you get stuck, the consumer-support section at Lucasfilm is always happy to help anyone who is in a tight spot and can't figure out what to do. Lucasfilm is to be commended for this support. We'd like to offer one important hint for those starting out: Be certain to shuffle the letters on the desk in your office! What you don't see is a critical key to a tome of data.

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**IJ-GA** is definitely worth the money and is heartily recommended. It is the best of the Lucasfilm adventure offerings and once again establishes the company as a high-quality publisher of superbly crafted games. This game is also available for the Amiga and Atari ST for \$49.95 each.

### The Software Toolworks

19808 Nordhoff Place  
Chatsworth CA 91311  
(818) 885-9000

**Beyond the Black Hole**  
PC/MS-DOS version

\*\*\*\*\*  
\$49.95

We don't even want to know how they created this game, because it is so enjoyable that it goes beyond addiction. It's like the first time you ever played *Pong* on your video game system over a decade ago. You knew something outstanding was taking place, but how it was done was secondary. **Beyond the Black Hole (BBH)** presents the first true stereoscopic game ever designed to run on a PC/MS-DOS computer. The result is an outstanding 3-D arcade game that'll have you wearing this game's 3-D glasses for hours!

Supporting CGA/EGA/VGA graphic boards, **BBH** presents the best display in its full 16-color mode. Not copy protected, the game is easily installed on your hard disk. Plus, you can command your "craft" through space using the keyboard, a joystick, or a mouse.

You are a scientific officer sent to investigate some strange phenomena. Using cartography orbs, you must check out a variety of objects in space. Two rebound fields are located on the left and right side of your screen (remember *Pong*?). These simply make certain your cartography orb is reflected back into the middle of the screen when it reaches the outermost edges of the current screen.

The orbs require fuel, especially as you quite literally dive from the peak of your orbit into the objects center-screen. The 3-D perspective has your orb flying above, below, and to the sides of these objects. Strike an object with the orb and you garner points. Watch out for fuel pirates, and be certain to maneuver your orb through the fueling pods to reach the service center itself.

There are other surprises in store for any lucky person playing this offering. **BBH** not only presents new programming technology for games but also an exciting arcade platform that would be fun even without the 3-D environment. However, with the 3-D environment and the included glasses, **BBH** is more than a treat: **BBH** is fantastic.

### News and new releases

Capcom USA (408-727-0400) will donate \$50,000 worth of video games and hardware to 10 hospitals and pediatric wings in

California. The games will enliven the lives of hospitalized children. Each hospital will receive two Nintendo systems with monitors, plus a Commodore Amiga and C64/128 computer with TV monitors, and approximately 20 video games for each system. Once this California project is completed, Capcom will consider a national program as well. Capcom should be highly commended for its commitment to normalizing the lives of children in an atmosphere that can be intimidating.

Epyx (415-368-3200) has released a high-action adventure game entitled *Project Neptune*. Set 150' deep in the North Sea, this is a top-secret, covert operation in which you become Rip Steel, special agent. Allied Intelligence reports indicate that the Yellow Shadow is mining uranium through a network of undersea bases to build a nuclear stockpile for sale to the highest bidder. His network of bases must be destroyed. You'll be airlifted to the North Sea drop site, then travel by power ski to a rendezvous with a one-man attack sub specially fitted with two miniature torpedo launchers, starboard chambers for underwater concussion devices, and a port chamber for acoustic decoys. You'll also have scuba gear, a spear gun, and a propeller-driven platform. Add sharks and a need for speed, and the adventure becomes more exciting with each new screen. *Project Neptune* is for the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST for \$34.95. Versions for PC/MS-DOS, Macintosh, and Apple IIgs computers are coming.

Interstel (713-486-4163) has now released its sequel to the smash science-fiction adventure hit, *Star Fleet I*. The new release, *Star Fleet II—Krellan Commander*, is for PC/MS-DOS micros. You are now a Commander in the evil Krellan Imperial Fleet. There are over 10 ship types, dozens of critical ship systems and advanced weapons to control, hundreds of star systems to conquer, and legions of elite warriors for planetary invasions. In ship-to-ship battles, you pit Krellan battle-cruisers against seven classes of Alliance vessels. You can send boarding parties to capture enemy ships and even take prisoners to interrogate, torture, or use as slaves. At higher ranks, you can personally command the invasion and conquest of planets. You are rated for each mission, and promotions and special honors are awarded. The game supports both EGA and CGA graphics modes and costs \$59.95. The game includes three 5.25" disks, with two 3.5" disks also available from the company.

Medalist International (301-771-1151) is going to release what it considers to be one of the strangest games ever produced for computer gamers. Called *Weird Dreams*, this offering is for PC/MS-DOS machines, the C64/128 and Commodore Amiga, and the Atari ST. This game places players into the subconscious mind of a hospital patient as he undergoes surgery. You'll encounter giant wasps, carnivorous

rose bushes, and a psychopathic lawn mower. Other bizarre screens show fish flying through the sky, a person trapped inside a cotton-candy machine, and a demonic soccer ball. How you confront the many unusual challenges affects the patient's health on the operating table!

Also from Medalist is *Xenophage*, a classic arcade game of alien extermination. With its combination of action, high-tech weaponry, and detailed graphics, the game lets you select two men from a squad of nine. These fighters must then face a continuous wave of strange creatures with names like Rollerbaby, Snotterpiller, and Tentacle, each with its own way of knocking human attackers out of action. The soldiers can fight back with a variety of weapons, including a smoke gun, laser pistol, lightning rifle, and hand grenades. The arcade game will be released in formats for the C64/128, PC/MS-DOS, Commodore Amiga, and Atari ST computers.

*Starglider II*, the third Medalist release, pits the player against the Egron Empire, which has plans for complete galactic domination. A peaceful planet, Novenia, thwarted the empire's earlier attempt. Now the Egrons want revenge and are building a space station with enough power to destroy Novenia instantly. The space station has been placed somewhere within a distant solar system known as Solice. To protect the station, the Emperor has placed devastating plasma beam projectors on each of seven nearby moons, which are additionally guarded by the Emperor's elite corps of starfighters. Guess what you've got to do? Piloting the most advanced starship in the galaxy, *Starglider II*, you must travel throughout the Solice system in search of more potent weaponry than the single laser cannon you start with. You'll have to defeat the fighters, the beam projectors, and the space station itself. The game is to be released for PC/MS-DOS and the Macintosh computer.

MicroSpeed Inc. (415-490-1403) has introduced the first precision trackball for the Commodore Amiga. Called the Am-TRAC, it uses fingertip control and a large tracking surface for exact on-screen cursor positioning. Standard features include a direct plug-in replacement for the mouse, less than 4.25" wide, and a cursor-drag lock button to eliminate the need to hold down the button to drag the cursor. There is also a three-button control. The price is \$99.

Mindscape (312-480-7667) has introduced *Shinobi* for the C64/128. You must wage war against a relentless army of terrorist attackers using Ninja might and magic. Deep in the caverns of the city roam members of an evil terrorist network who have kidnapped the children of the world's leaders. Dozens of beastly golden Buddhas, deadly flying fireballs, and an evil helicopter will try to stop you before your mission is a success. The price is \$34.95. Versions are coming for PC/MS-DOS, Commodore Amiga, and Atari ST.

computers.

Omnitrend (203-658-6917) has announced the Interlocking Game System (IGS). It allows multiple games to interact with one another and share data. This means that players can bring characters from one game into another game, play, and then return to the original game with their experienced retained. The first game to contain the IGS interface will be *Breach 2*, followed by *Rules of Engagement*. Once both titles are available, players can play these games individually or as one large game.

Origin (603-644-3360) has published *Quest for Clues II*. This is a compendium of clues and solutions for nearly 50 of the most popular text adventure and fantasy role-playing games. The publication includes an impressive collection of complete solutions, clues, and detailed maps. The price is \$24.99.

Also from Origin is *Space Rogue*, the first of its kind in science-fiction, 3-D spaceflight simulation. Available for PC/MS-DOS, Apple II, and C64/128 computers, this game costs \$49.95. This sophisticated simulation incorporates the best elements of role-playing and adventure. The player explores a realistic universe during the pursuit of a profitable career in space. The game is not a linear progression of quests but a novel story where combat, finance, politics, and reputation affect the course of events.

Premier Technology, Inc. (415-882-7766) has just signed an intent for *Maze Wars* from MacroMind and has acquired two other games from PBI Software: *NetTrek—The Real Version* and *Strategic Conquest Plus 2.0*. All are for the Apple Macintosh computer. *Maze Wars* will be updated (with color, improved game play, speed, graphics, and MultiFinder compatibility) for release soon.

Strategic Simulations, Inc. (408-737-6800) now lets you instantly generate AD&D® game characters with *Dungeon Master's Assistant, Volume II: Characters and Treasures*. This is a time-saving utility that enables Dungeon Masters to generate detailed player or NPCs and large treasure hordes in moments. The price, for C64/128 and Apple II computers, is \$29.95.

Another new SSI offering is *Sword of Aragon*. The Duke of Aladda has died and left his last will and testament to you, his only child and heir. It is your father's wish that you extend Aladda's dominion and eventually sit on the emperor's throne in the city of Tetrada. You must raise and equip an army of bowmen, cavalry, infantry, mages, and priests. Hire mercenaries if you must. Just remember that, even in a magical world, you still have to deal with the harsh realities of limited budgets and resources. You'll lead your armies against the demonic rulers of the Eastern Realms while defending Aladda against the plundering raids of goblin hordes. Move across the strategic map and zoom into the tacti-

cal map when you engage in battle against human or inhuman monsters. The price, for PC/MS-DOS computers, is \$39.95.

## Clue corner

### *The Bard's Tale III* (Interplay)

To create an archmage with ease, all you need is a medium-level adventuring party and a first-level conjuror or magician. Go to the Mad Gods temple in Skara Brae. Say to the priest, "Chaos." This sends you directly to Unterbrae. Now, remember the rhyming word is "blue," and a sword is your best friend. After you have reached the third level, kill Brilhasti ap tarj, and you will be automatically transported to the Old Man. After you have raised your characters, you may notice that your first-level mage is now a first-level archmage who knows all of the spells from the first four realms of magic.

Steve Moore  
Clarkston MN

### *Curse of the Azure Bonds* (SSI)

Dark elven weapons and armor dissolve in sunlight; even though they are magical, don't depend on them too much. I wouldn't bother weighing down your characters with this equipment.

Scott Stoecher  
Bath MI

### *Hillsfar* (SSI)

Never use the Detect Traps spells. Instead, always travel with Tasslehoff in front of the group because he, being a kender, is handy with gadgets and can see the traps and disarm them. Just don't run with him because he will sometimes miss traps.

When jumping over small holes, Sturm's dexterity helps a lot. Go back until you can't see the hole anymore. Then, run all the way back to the hole and jump it. Sturm is best for this because he is fast. If he gets killed, there is still a chance of winning the game.

To get to the lower levels of Xak Tsaroth, look for huge holes in the wall. These are sewers, and you can slide down them to the next level.

Matt Foy  
Sterling VA

### *Wizardry V* (Sir-Tech)

[Regarding a letter written by Amanda Gupta published in issue #148,] in the character roster, a mage named Jaana was overlooked. Jaana is a 2nd-level mage, and she can be found with the Resistance, below the city of Yew (there is an entrance through a fireplace). Although I don't quite agree with Ms. Gupta's recommendations as to which characters should be incorporated into your party (except in the case of Saduj), since any character can become powerful with training and time, I think it

would be safe to classify Jaana as an admirable addition to the party (furthermore, if you don't like her, you can leave her at an inn as you can any character).

Secondly, Ms. Gupta's letter gave me a unique perspective on *Ultima V* that I didn't have before. If the roster of characters (including Jaana) is counted, you will discover there are 12 names. One of those names, Saduj, has special significance. If you spell Saduj's name backward, you will find that it spells Judas, the traitor among Jesus' 12 apostles. Since the player assumes the role of the Avatar in *Ultima V*, a figure who is supposedly of the highest moral standing and, in a way, is a messenger of virtue to the land, the symbolic pattern falls into place. I offer this just as a little insight into Richard Garriot's thinking behind the game. Richard Garriot, to those not familiar with the name, is "Lord British," the father and creator of the Ultima adventure series.

David Beals  
Westport MA

Before you venture into the final dungeon of Doom (beneath the Mines of Shame), you must recover the three crown jewels of Lord British. The Amulet can be found at Lord British's final battleground in the Underworld. Follow the directions on the Journal of the Scribe Remoh, and you will not become lost. The Amulet is needed to guide your heroes through the darkness that surrounds Lord British's prison.

The second crown jewel is the Crown. It can be found in the highest tower of Blackthorn's castle. Beware of the stone monsters that guard it.

The last crown jewel is the Sceptre. One must traverse the mountains near Lost Hope Bay and enter the Shadowlord's castle itself: Stonegate. Answer well the Daemon's riddle, or die. Be aware also of the bottomless pit. The Sceptre is used to dispel magical fields that even the spell An Grav cannot dispel.

You'll find the Sandlewood Box of Lord British high in Castle Britannia. You must enter the chambers of the Lord. Behind a wall lies the Sandlewood Box, but the music of the harpsichord holds the key. Talk to Sir Kenneth of Lighthouse Greyhaven for insight.

Ian Smith  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

That's it for this issue. Please remember to honor the hard work of the programmers who write the code that brings the software to life on your computer. If you have some tips you would like to share with fellow gamers, please mail them to us at 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon CA 94583. Until next month, game on! Ω

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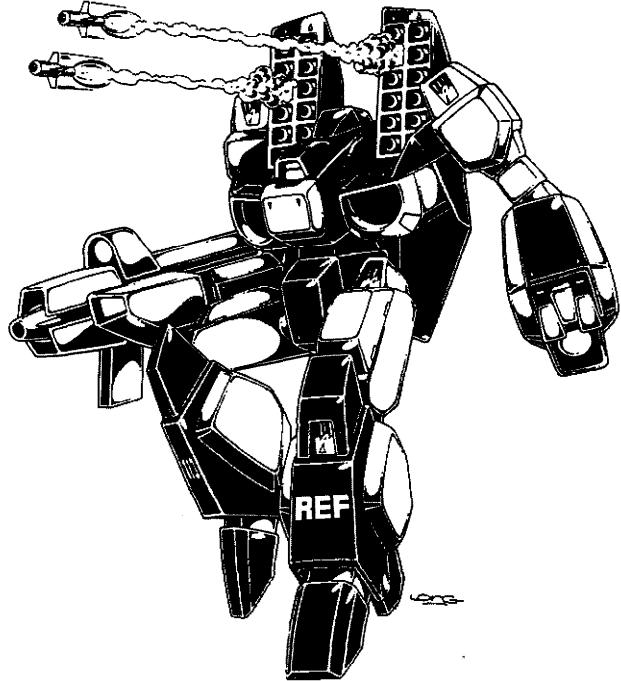
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*Continued on page 75*

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Want to get in touch with a favorite artist? Here's how!



We've received a large number of letters recently for some of the artists who have done work for DRAGON® Magazine. We normally forward mail to the artists from our offices, but we have obtained permission from some artists to publish their addresses so that you may contact them directly.

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Continued from page 72

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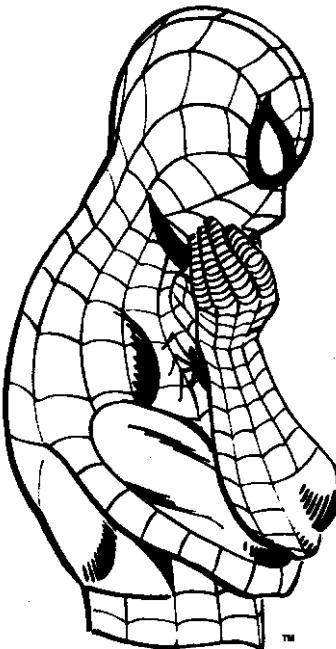
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# Spider-Man To Wed Vanna White!

The Marvel Universe™ meets . . . the real world

by Fraser Sherman

If that sounds like an improbable headline, how about:

"Marilyn Monroe Was a Skrull!"

"New York Housewife Bears Captain America's Love Child!"

"Elvis: Was He Reincarnated As the Hulk?"

You won't see those titles at the local newsstand, but in the Marvel Universe, it's another story. Newspapers like the *National Enquirer* probably run as many stories about the Fantastic Four as they do about Joan Collins.

What would the world be like if super heroes were real? How would America change if some Americans had the power to level entire cities? This article covers how the Marvel Universe (hereafter called the MU) has adapted to its many super beings, what things could happen in a GM-created super hero universe, and what might happen if super heroes turned up in your home town. Though this article is oriented toward the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, its ideas are applicable to other super hero RPGs.

## The Marvel Universe

In the MU, there have been super heroes as far back as World War I. The current heroic age, starting with the Fantastic Four, has lasted a little over 10 years (even though comic books about it have been appearing for nearly 30). Costumed heroes and villains are a fact of life.

That doesn't mean the public believes everything it hears. Outside New York City, few people have seen super heroes in action, and some suspect their powers and adventures are exaggerated, at least slightly, by the press. The weirder the news is, the more skeptical the public is. Iron Man is a lot easier to accept than Dr. Strange, let alone some blonde guy claiming to be the Norse god of thunder.

Not everyone likes super heroes, either. These heroes are very powerful, and power corrupts. Look at Iron Man's recent rampage against armored criminals; at Magneto, a former mutant terrorist; or at Daimon Hellstrom—would you trust someone once called the Son of Satan? Some super heroes aren't even human; there are mutants, synthozoids, androids, and aliens running around under those masks.

But the majority of people would admit that superheroes do a lot of good. Society needs them. That's why the law turns a blind eye (in the MU) to so many of their activities. It's understood that you don't make a fuss when super heroes commit breaking and entering, trespassing, assault and battery, and other illegal activities in the cause of justice. That's why so many people in comics say they don't like vigilantes. If they were in this world, taking the law in their own hands and answering to no one, I doubt I'd like them, either.

The "blind eye" helps some heroes more than others. Spider-Man has been harassed a lot by police over the years, largely due to *The Daily Bugle*'s campaigns against him. The Avengers, on the other hand, have enjoyed government backing for most of their existence. New PCs may find their situation closer to Spidey's; the police—perhaps even other heroes—are unlikely to trust masked strangers until the strangers prove themselves.

Then there are other problems. In real-world America, it's unconstitutional to imprison a man in a cardboard box. But in the MU, super heroes did it to the Absorbing Man once, as it was the only way to keep him from using his powers to escape. The law has had to change to deal with super villains; punishments like this are not considered unconstitutional if they're necessary to keep a villain in jail.

Another precedent was set a few years

ago, during the trial of the Wraith (*Marvel Team-Up* #51). Being mind-controlled is now a valid defense against criminal charges. (Professor X and Moondragon were called as expert witnesses; the Wraith, his father's mental puppet, was found not guilty.) No doubt other attorneys have used that defense since, even when it's not true. When it is true, it must be very difficult to prove.

The law appears to give nonhumans at least basic human rights. For all the hatred leveled at mutants, no one has ever argued that as non-*Homo sapiens* they aren't legally human (which would mean they had no rights whatsoever). Although he's a synthozoid, the Vision's marriage to Scarlet Witch has been accepted by everyone, a good precedent if people ever ask "Is artificial life really human?"

On the other hand, the new Mutant Registration Act requires mutants to register their names and whereabouts with the government. Although it hasn't been tested in court yet, the act strikes me as being unconstitutional. Nevertheless, the MU government is going ahead with it.

For more on the subject of super heroes and the law, I highly recommend Robert G. Ingersoll's "Law is an Ass" column in *The Comics Buyers Guide*. It is very informative on such questions as suing super heroes, what constitutes a legal arrest, and whether Matt Murdock knows anything about the law.

Of course, the government may step in as well. The American government has wanted its own super heroes since the 1940s, when FDR commissioned a project to create an army of super-soldiers (the project was sabotaged after it created Captain America). Today, Marvel America employs the mutant group Freedom Force. Super agents are certainly useful, but they aren't necessarily reliable. Many militant

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**Ninjas & Superspies™** also includes rules for creating secret spy agencies, secret agents, bionic implants, cybernetic disguises, and other spy stuff.

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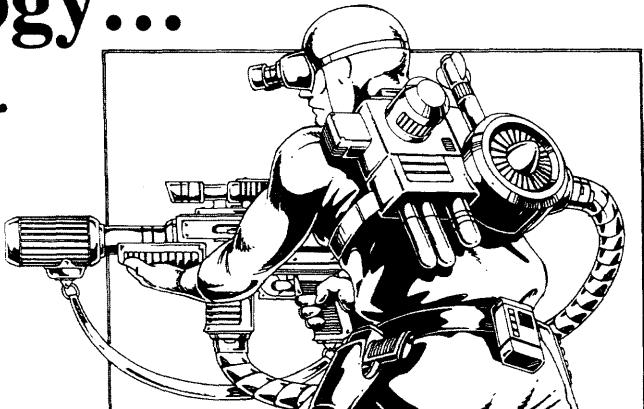
Syd of **G.M. magazine**, in England writes, "I must say I'm impressed, this is the first time, no pun intended, that I've seen a sourcebook that deals with transdimensional and time travel in such an original and practical way."

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Unfortunately, the mystic emanations attract all manner of supernatural beings. Our ancient ancestors called these monsters, ghosts and demons.

**Beyond The Supernatural™** presents a modern world rich in supernatural history and pseudo-science far too detailed to begin to explain here. The following are just highlights found in the pages of this 255 page voyage into the unknown.

Characters include the *arcanist/mage*, spell weaver and scholar in the mystic arts. The *parapsychologist*, the pioneers of a new science that will explain the seemingly unexplainable. The *psi-mechanic*, a psychic whose knack is to create machines that defy the laws of science. The *psychic healer*, who can cure with a touch and a soothing word. The *psychic sensitive*, the clairvoyant who sees into the future or senses the presence of evil, because he/she is given the gift (or curse) of being attuned to the forces of the paranormal. The *physical psychic*, whose powers enable him/her to affect the physical world; telekinesis, ectoplasm, bio-manipulation, etc. The *nega-psychic*, a character who draws upon supernatural energies that makes him/her resistant to magic.

**And there's more:** over 50 psychic powers, over 120 spells, places of mystic power (ley lines, nexus points, rips of magic, power triads, and others), global hot spots of magic like Stonehenge and the pyramids, dozens of supernatural creatures, and much more.

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Resisters, who oppose the Mutant Registration Act, used to work for the government as the Mutant Force. S.H.I.E.L.D. tried to develop a super team, but half its recruits turned out to be traitors. And the U.S.S.R. has developed many super heroes (Crimson Dynamo, Black Widow, the Unicorn, etc.), but many of them have rebelled or defected.

Would the situation be the same in the real world? Would you accept Captain America as your President? Or would you fear that a super police force become as bad as the Sentinels in the MX Future in Flames module series? Look at the way people in the real world resist or succumb to the temptations of power, and decide for yourself. Loyalty might be a hero's most valuable trait.

Business will be affected by super heroes, too. In the MU, property can be insured against damages caused by super humans (I imagine there are personal injury policies, too). "Super hero insurance" is probably pretty cheap in most parts of the country; how many people in Milwaukee are likely to claim damages? But in New York, where buildings are leveled almost daily, premiums must be tremendous.

There will be clauses and exemptions, too. Insurance companies don't pay for damages caused by acts of war, so anyone who lost his house during the Wraithwar in the Rom comics is out of luck. And, contrary to a recent issue of *Avengers*, the companies probably didn't pay when Namor lead an Atlantean invasion of America, either. There may be other, special exemptions that may be fairly obvious ("Read the fine print. We don't pay for damages caused by Galactus").

Super heroes haven't affected the rest of the business world much, but at least two new businesses have developed involving super humans. One supports the super-powered mercenary—people like Luke Cage, Paladin, or Silver Sable, who operate as heroes for hire. On the other side of the law, we have Justin Hammer and the Tinkerer, who create and repair the sophisticated equipment today's high-tech villains need.

Surprisingly, there has been little effort to merchandise super heroes except in comic books. When the Fantastic Four appeared, they were contacted by the MU versions of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, who suggested adapting the FF's adventures into a comic book. The heroes agreed, and the book was such a success that Marvel has been signing up heroes ever since (*Nova #5* shows how Marvel goes about it). Steve Rogers once drew for his own *Captain America* comic.

## New worlds

So far we've covered how super beings have affected the MU. A new world, in which your PCs are the world's first heroes, would be another story.

To start off, the PCs have got to get

people to believe in them. If they're the very first super beings, people are going to be skeptical ("Special effects can do anything! Didn't David Copperfield make the Statue of Liberty disappear?"). There may even have been fake super humans trying to cash in with trickery ("Give me all your money! You can see by my costume that I'm a powerful super villain!").

Also, people won't be as nice about heroes bending the law as they are in the MU. It'd be one thing to stop a crime in progress, but assaulting suspected felons and breaking into alleged hideouts won't go over well with the American Civil Liberties Union. The heroes might even find themselves on the wrong end of a lawsuit. Before long, the "heroes" may run whenever the police appear, the way Spider-Man has done so many times.

The government may finally decide to accept this sort of unique law-enforcing activity. Then again, it might require super heroes to register with the police, as well as slap umpteen regulations on them. The government might even forbid super heroes to operate unless they work for the police, the FBI, the CIA, or some other official organization (or have them do it for at least a couple of years to prove themselves, then let them free-lance). On a local level, towns might want resident heroes to carry a bond against property damage or perform 20 (or 30, or 50) hours of community service a month as a goodwill gesture.

On the bright side, a nation that idolizes Vanna White ought to be *really* impressed with people who can fly. Super heroes could become the hottest celebrities around—invited to be on the "Tonight Show," begged to endorse politicians and products, become the stars of movies, TV, comic books, or even role-playing games. A starstruck America might forget any fears they had of these heroes, so long as the heroes don't get beaten or fail too often. PCs may meet or become heroes more concerned with saving their careers than saving lives. Or heroes could become so popular the public will let them get away with almost anything.

Then there are the super villains. How would a world like ours keep them imprisoned? If a PC captures a super-powered cyborg, would it be cruel and unusual punishment to remove or deactivate the foe's bionic limbs? If it were possible to take away criminals' super powers, would it be legal? And what about insurance? In a new world, insurance companies wouldn't be prepared to pay for the kind of damage super humans can do. Whenever your PCs start operating, insurance rates will skyrocket—if the companies don't just cancel everyone's policies. The current malpractice insurance crisis would be small potatoes by comparison.

## Getting started

To show some of the real-world situations that can affect any universe, ask

yourself what would really happen if super heroes turned up in your home town—or, say, my home town.

Ft Walton Beach sits next to a major military installation, a center for nonnuclear weapons research. That makes the town a natural source for PC or NPC origins ("The laser cannon imploded, and Sgt. Farren's glowing with energy!") and provides plenty of classified secrets for criminals to steal. And if the military ever decides to create its own super heroes, the research and development will probably be done here.

The military would take a keen interest in any super heroes who appear in town, monitoring or spying on them to learn whose side they're really on. Perhaps the military would even try to learn the heroes identities—in the interest of national security, of course.

Ft. Walton Beach is also a tourist town. Tourism-related business might be divided on the PCs' presence, both pro ("Think how safe they'll feel with the Protectors watching over them.") and con ("Everyone's afraid Wolverine'll be in the condo next door"). And there's a conservative religious faction here, the kind that finds D&D® games to be "satanic." I doubt it'd be pleased if real magic-using super heroes appeared (or worse, a "false god" like Hercules or Thor).

Not everyone in the area with super powers will become a super hero. A cop who gets powers might decide to use them but as a cop ("This badge means more than any stupid costume!"). What about an IRS agent who reads minds? Or a salesman who mentally compels people to meet his prices? Or a farmer who grows super plants? ("Just got a green thumb, I guess.")

Do your players have any political views? Perhaps they'd like to have their PCs act on them (comic-book heroes seem to have no politics beyond upholding the cause of Good, but we're talking reality here). A new, hazardous landfill has become big news in this area; perhaps the heroes would like to crusade against it. But what if the landfill's backers are threatened by an eco-terrorist and the PCs have to protect the backers? What if the local KKK head is targeted by an assassin, and a black PC is asked to help save him? Suppose the PCs meet a hero who is ideal in every way except for being an outspoken bigot?

If one of the PCs is a mutant (and lives in the MU), would he protest the Mutant Registration Act or sign up? Perhaps he'd want to be a test case that a civil-rights groups could use to challenge the law in the courts. Or what if a mutant equivalent of Martin Luther King appears, urging nonviolent protest in the name of mutant rights? What would happen if he came to Ft. Walton? Would the PCs want to get involved? This sort of politics might not be to everyone's taste, but players with

*Continued on page 91*

# DECEMBER 21, 1989

Dark clouds gathered over the earth,  
blocking out all light.  
There was a storm on the horizon.  
A terrible, evil storm ...

"I was fighting the crowds on Fifth Avenue, battling for that last-minute gift. I guess I should have enjoyed it, because there was another battle coming. In less than six months I'd be fighting for my life."

— Andrew Jackson "Ace" Decker  
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## Terrain makers and terrain destroyers

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Most countries in which this column is read have a special day of gift-giving during December. With this in mind, this month's column will focus on figures and accessories that you can put on your wish list or give to your friends.

Before we dig into the grab bag of products, I want to issue a very special thanks to all the judges who did such a fantastic job at filling the Strategic and Miniatures gaming areas at the 1989 GEN CON® game fair. I have been remiss in not thanking everyone before now. We exceeded the goals set for the number of games in almost all areas of play.

### Reviews

#### Miniatures' product ratings

*	Poor
**	Below average
***	Average
****	Above average
*****	Excellent

The first two reviews go together under the heading of scenery and landscaping. Scenery is one of the most important parts of a well-balanced miniatures game. It allows you to hide figures, set up realistic ambushes, impede movement, and provide defense points for troop protection. Scenery, in the form of buildings or natural features, allows you to plan the best possible ways to use your troops.

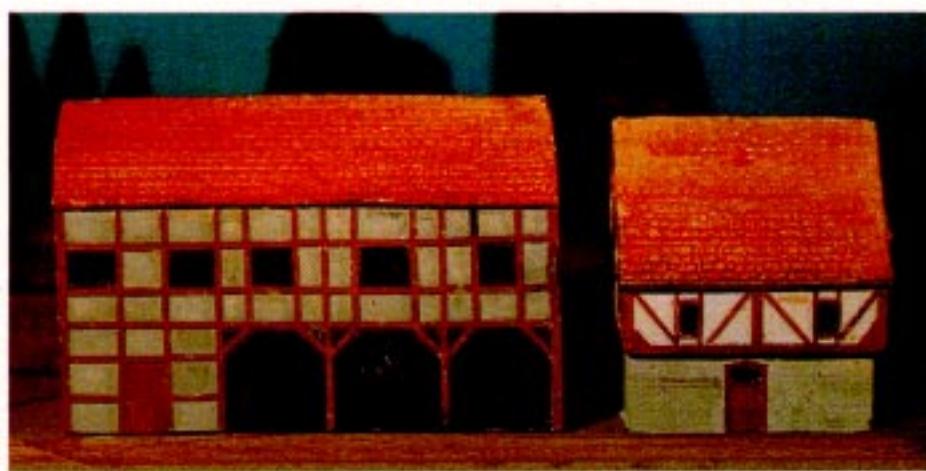
To this end, miniatures gamers use many objects to represent terrain features. Some objects require much work to even vaguely resemble what they are supposed to represent, but some require almost no work at all. The following are included for your inspection.

**G H Q**  
2634 Bryant Avenue South  
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#### Terrain Maker: $\frac{1}{4}$ " Gaming Hexes (TM2, Streams and Shores) \*\*\* $\frac{1}{2}$

GHQ has long been a major force in the production of armor miniatures in 1/285th scale, both for World War II and modern scenarios, and it has high-quality 1/2400th ship reproductions suitable for either gaming or display. Now GHQ has entered the scenery market.

The stream-and-shore hex set contains 48 hexes, material to make either eight or 16 pine trees, a color illustration that also acts as a package front, and a set of instructions on how to arrange the hexes into the desired shapes. These items come in a tubular plastic bag with no real pro-



Inn with stables and half-timber house (Greenfield Garrisons)

Photos by Mike Bethke; painting by Ann Smolinski

tection for its contents, so be sure you get a set that is free of injury.

The hexes are made out of hard styrofoam with slightly rounded edges. Each hex is  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick,  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " long, and  $3\frac{15}{16}$ " wide, with each hex face being  $2\frac{1}{4}$ " long. The tree-making material comes in two pieces, each about 1' long. The scenery-making system is based on the use of hexes  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick (one hex piece stacked on another), and there is enough material to build anything from a stream to a small river across the width of a 4' x 8' table. The directions show you how to work with the material and plan the layout that you want to build. Read the directions carefully, especially the part on how to plan for banks.

This system is not for beginners who expect everything to come out perfectly the first time. It is going to require real planning, especially if you want to use the hexes for anything more than one particular scenario. You will have to take a hex sheet and work out a universal hex pattern, which will be difficult because of the small hexes. You can probably count on ruining some hexes in the cutting-and-shaping phase until you learn to do it correctly. You will also have to provide a safe, ventilated painting area to apply a permanent finish to the hexes. Remember that this is a Styrofoam product and you can use only latex paints; oil-based paints will melt the hexes.

This is a good scenery source for experienced modelers but cannot be recommended for novices. It can be mated with other products to provide transition pieces or used to turn out very nice dioramas, but it takes a lot of time to prepare this product for use, time that could also be used for figure painting. The cost is high for the area covered, but it is reasonable for small projects at \$6.95 per package. The base-unit pack, which consists of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " - thick hexes (12 to a package), costs \$6.95.

#### TSR, Inc.

P.O. Box 756  
Lake Geneva WI 53147

#### Cities of Mystery (TSR #9262) \*\*\*\* $\frac{1}{2}$

*Cities of Mystery* was produced as accessory for TSR's AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMSTM campaign setting. Although it serves well in this regard, it also is a boon for the miniatures player.

*Cities of Mystery* comes in a flat box that can also be used as a storage box if you do not assemble the buildings permanently. It contains four accordion sections, each section containing the punch-out sheets needed to assemble 7-9 buildings. The buildings are printed in color on heavy construction paper. The house pieces needed for construction are pre-cut, so a simple punch of the finger is all that's required to remove the buildings from their sheet.

The buildings depicted on the sheets represent a good cross section of the

buildings available during the Middle Ages. Building materials then were mostly clay, wood, plaster, or straw, and roofs were usually made from straw or slate. Stone buildings were most often reserved for wealthy churches, defensive structures, or other multistory buildings. The buildings included in the kit are not as representative as a historically accurate mix might have been. There are no all-straw or all-wood buildings with little or no plaster; the majority of these buildings have finished plaster-type walls with stone bases. The only all-stone buildings are churches. The buildings in this set do represent dwellings in a fairly old and established heart of a city.

The kit also contains two large mats with different floor and street plans. Each layout mat actually has three different floor plans that should be separated at the not-always-obvious marking lines (look closely along

the edges for the scissors, which show the cutting line). The mats represent well-developed urban areas with buildings and stone avenues, courtyards with wells and fountains, and palace grounds with more open area than buildings.

Last but not least is the 64-page booklet of urban background and adventures, which is excellent for those unused to city adventures or unsure of how to use this set to best advantage. The book does not really help when the buildings and mats are used to fight siege battles or large-scale wars.

This set has a couple of small problems. The directions for assembling the buildings are not as clear as they should be and can give fits to people who have never done paper assembly before. In particular, there are two buildings that do not appear to fit together until you put the walls of one at an angle; this at least should be



Pursuit lance (Ral Partha Enterprises)



The Joker and Batman (Grenadier Models)

marked. The second problem concerns the method of assembly; as there are no inserts for tab construction, you usually have to use tape. If the tape is removed, the building backs will tear.

This set is highly recommended. Two of the floor plans fit in Games Workshop's *Mighty Fortress* set, and Greenfield Garrison's "Wall Sections" can be modified to fit around the floor-plan sheets. The \$15.00 retail price is good for just the scenario book alone.

### **Greenfield Garrisons**

2814 Inman  
Ferndale MI 48220

**GG 2104 European Half-Timber House** \*\*\*\*

**GG 2119 European Inn with Stables** \*\*\*\*

The village inn was a center of life in medieval times. There, townsfolk would drink and gossip, and travelers would rest, safe from outside perils. The inn from Greenfield Garrison accurately portrays an average hostel from this period. The miniature is 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ " long, and 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ " high. It is made of a blown plasticlike foam that will accept any type of paint. The building is solid throughout, but the material used is fairly workable and can be hollowed out with care.

The inn itself is a two-story structure with wooden bracing over wood-and-plaster construction. The bottom half of the inn consists of an entryway and a large three-bayed stable, a normal construction of the times. The traveler's rooms are on the second floor and loft. The angled roof has molded shakes in place of shingles (shakes are wooden shingles split from logs).

Greenfield Garrison has also produced a half-timbered house having three stories, including the loft rooms. It is much like the inn, but the house's first story is of brick and stone. The second floor and loft extend beyond the first floor, overhanging streets and alleys around it. Traditionally, this house would be owned by a rich man or have a store in the bottom half with the family living above. It could, if used with the inn, be where the innkeeper and his family and helpers live.

There are some disadvantages to these structures. The buildings are 15mm scale, but their size lends to their use with 25mm figures. You'll occasionally find some pitting, spots that did not fill all the way; these can be filled with putty. The buildings are easy to prime with any paint.

I highly recommend these buildings in spite of the time you might take in painting and minor fixing. They are lightweight, easy to store and transport though they can be a bit bulky. The house is \$5.49 and the inn is \$5.89.

### **M-3 Miniatures**

33 Mario Court  
Plymouth MI 48170

### **1003 Command Support Group**

\*\*\*\* $\frac{1}{2}$

### **1005 Recovery Unit**

\*\*\*\*

### **1010 Assault Tanks**

\*\*\*\* $\frac{1}{2}$

The Little Wars convention this year had a treasure trove of new miniatures and new miniatures companies. One such company at the convention was M-3 Miniatures, which playtested a new rules set and vehicles. These vehicles have grand possibilities for use with FASA's BATTLETECH® and RENEGADE LEGION™ games, as well as with Steve Jackson Games' CAR WARS® and OGRE®/GEV® systems.

Each of the three M-3 samples submitted for review this month contains several miniatures and has multiple uses. Sufficient vehicles are given with each packet to form either a lance or a stand-apart unit, and all are 1/300th scale.

Set 1003 is a command support group. Included are an eight-wheeled truck with a satellite dish and either a spotlight or radar unit, a tank trailer with a weapon mounted on the front, a wheeled cab tractor, a tracked heavy-duty tractor, and a heavy tracked trailer that measures just over 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " long. The detailing on these units is good, with clear and well-done tracks, bogey wheels, doors, windows, and grill work. The wheels and tires on those vehicles having them are a little more oval than circular, but this does not detract from the models. According to the package label, these vehicles can be used as a group, forming a mobile command post with satellite receiver, a MASH unit, and a cooling truck (which can also be a fuel truck). These figures are well molded for these purposes.

Set 1005, the recovery unit, consists of five vehicles. One is a large flatbed trailer with a crane attachment, having a cabin at its front. The trailer is supported by four sets of tracks and is 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long and 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. The tractor to pull this trailer is a massive, armored, tanklike vehicle with a tow wheel on the rear deck. The third vehicle is a four-wheeled, flat-topped vehicle with missile launchers mounted on the rear. The fourth is a large vanlike repair vehicle with wheels in front and tracks in the rear. Its nose is rounded, and it has several observation windows. The fifth is a repair vehicle with a flatbed, mounted on a 12-wheeled chassis, with a tubular holder mounted on the rear and a series of cabin and tool holders on both sides. This can be a field repair and recovery unit for 'Mechs in BATTLETECH games. The detail on these units is good but not quite as good as that on the command pack. Tread detail is good, but a couple of links are badly formed and the treads seem to be slightly angled. The edges are slightly ragged on the flatbed but can be fixed easily. The wheel detail is very good, but the windows lack shape and appear to have been added as an afterthought. As a whole unit, this is good.

Set 1010 is said to contain assault tanks, and the figures are definitely that. No

matter what set of rules you use, these tanks should be feared by their opponents. Each vehicle body measures over 7/8" wide and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long. A turret is roughly half the size of its vehicle, not counting its massive gun or rocket arrays. Each vehicle's motive power is provided by four treads spread equally under the body, protected by side skirts and armor. The vehicles are said to weigh 100 tons each, and their weapons' arrays are awesome. Detail on the vehicles is crisp, with excellent grates and individual rockets shown in their launchers. The only disappointments are that the middle two tracks go only halfway under each vehicle, and a little flash is on each vehicle's rear.

These vehicles are excellent and can be used with many games. While the statistics given for them on their packages ease their use for BATTLETECH games, stats for other games should be easy to create. These vehicles will extend the number of miniatures scenarios you can play, allowing you to attack an enemy command center or recover valuable fighting units. These figures are \$4.75 per package.

### **Scotia Micro Models**

32 West Hemming Street  
Letham, Angus  
Scotland DD8 2PU

### **Simtac, Inc.**

20 Attawan Road  
Niantic CT 06357

**F6B-8 Goblin Cavalry with Spears** \*\*\*

**F6B-10 Goblin Cavalry Command** \*\*\* $\frac{1}{2}$

In previous columns, you've seen several examples of 15mm figures suitable for use with TSR's BATTLESYSTEM™ game or Ral Partha's RULES ACCORDING TO RAL system. The advantages of 15mm scale over 25mm scale are many, with lower prices being just one. But one of the problems with 15mm figures is the limited number of figures available (most are from Alliance).

Scotia now introduces its fairly extensive Jacobite Fantasy line. This series closes many of the gaps in the Alliance line and offers you more reasons to "go smaller."

The two samples submitted to me are both goblin cavalry. The first set consists of five goblins riding wolves. The goblins are armed with spears and short swords, and they wear caps that look like cornucopias. They are also outfitted with packs, sleeping bags, and canteens, and are wearing clothes over chain mail armor. They have stubby legs and long noses, and their faces are wrinkled up so they appear to be wearing riding goggles. Their wolves are of two distinct types, both having exaggerated facial expressions, ribs sticking out, manes, and overly bushy tails. One type of wolf is merrily trotting along, while the other has his ears back and is leaning forward in an attack position.

The command set contains three goblins and their mounts, with the same types of wolf castings as the cavalry set (two wolves trotting and one attacking). The goblin commanders all have shields but lack sleeping gear or packs. Two are carrying staves with long flags furled and heads mounted on the ends. The third goblin is blowing a bugle.

Most of the figures are of good quality. Since they are 15mm (even though they are a little big for that scale), they lack the detail usually found on 25mm figures. Some of the different castings' ends are not as well defined as they should be. The wolves' manes and tails are slightly exaggerated. You can also see several mold lines on the figures.

These are, however, good multiple-use purchases. The figures are just large enough that they can be used as nuisance monsters in 25mm scale or very effective goblins in 15mm scale.

#### **Grenadier Models, Inc.**

P.O. Box 305  
Springfield PA 19064

#### **Grenadier Models UK Ltd.**

19 Babage Road, Deeside  
Clwyd, Wales  
United Kingdom CH5 2QB

#### **6506 Batman Metal Figure Set \*\*\*\*\***

People in the United States have had a 50-year love affair with Batman. The Caped Crusader has had his own comic, spin-offs galore, his own TV series, and recently a major motion picture. His fans read about his duels with legendary villains and see him grow through the years.

The set submitted for review contained two figures in 58mm scale. Both figures are cast more as display miniatures than as action or game-use miniatures. The figures are Batman and his most famous arch-rival, the Joker.

The Batman figure seems to be facing off an adversary and daring him to do his worst. He stands with feet apart, legs straight, chest thrown out, and shoulders back. His belt with all its many compartments is well done but lacks the bat symbol from the older comics, having just a simple buckle.

Batman's familiar cowl masks a face set in stern determination. The bat symbol, raised slightly, stands out on his chest. The figure gives off an aura of strength. The only failing this figure has is the blending and lack of definition between the left side of the face and the cowl.

The Joker figure captures the essence of the clown prince of crime. His famous shoes with spats and striped cuffed pants are clearly noticeable; the stripes are lightly etched on the trouser legs. His vest, string tie, and tuxedo jacket with its wide lapels and long tails are depicted as if windblown. His gloves and cuffs are also well done. Perhaps the most telling features are the look on the Joker's face and

the actions of the figure. His long jaw juts forward, and his face is twisted in maniacal laughter as he tears at his hair.

These are excellent figures; I could find little wrong with them. I highly recommend these as Christmas gifts to anyone who is a fan of this legendary figure. The set's price is \$8.95.

#### **Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.**

5938 Carthage Court  
Cincinnati OH 45212

#### **10-808 Pursuit Lance**

FASA's BATTLETECH game remains one of the hottest ones going, and the demand for figures increases as its popularity grows. Ral Partha has responded in part with its lance packs. The pursuit lance pack is the newest issue.

The pursuit lance contains four 'Mechs: two Commandos, a Jenner, and a Vulcan. It also contains the large hexes that act as stabilizers and prevent damage to each completed 'Mech. A small piece of wire completes the package. All the 'Mechs have been released previously as single figures.

A Commando is a 25-ton 'Mech armed with wrist- and chest-mounted short-range missiles (SRMs) and a medium laser. This 'Mech is designed as a stealth-type scout and, as per *BATTLETECH Technical Read-*

*out 3025*, is not designed for toe-to-toe slugging. Each Commando miniature has its right arm extended as if to fire. The detail is good with joints and panel lines clearly marked, but there is flash under the arms and along the middle of each 'Mech at the waistline. Both 'Mechs had almost identical flash, so it may be time to remake the mold.

The Jenner is a 35-ton, fast-moving 'Mech armed with SRMs and lasers; it has fair armor and jump capacity. The miniature is excellent with no flash and very clear lines and engraving. The only problem encountered with this 'Mech was that the back of its "head" did not completely fill, and it came out at an angle.

The last 'Mech is the Vulcan. This 40-ton anti-infantry unit is armed with a flamer, medium laser, machine gun, and an autocannon. It also has the advantage of more armor than either of the other 'Mechs herein, and has almost as small a target front as the Jenner. The model is excellent with no flash, good engraving, and well-done holes.

I'm not really sure what this "pursuit lance" is supposed to pursue. If it's chasing undamaged medium 'Mechs, I would rather be at HQ than leading the chase. If it's chasing infantry, that's overkill. I'm not sure that I would have made the same choices for 'Mechs in this package.



Detail on Draconian priest (Ral Partha)

Photo by Ral Partha Enterprises

I do recommend this unit as a purchase if you need these 'Mechs for other units. They're less expensive in packs than having to buy them as singles. This pack is \$12.00.

#### 10-501 Draconians

\*\*\*\*\*

Draconians are the harbingers of evil in TSR's AD&D DRAGONLANCE® saga. These dragonlike humanoids cannot be confused with reptile men or a host of similar creatures: They stand alone!

The Draconians box set submitted for review held 10 of these scaly terrors. All are excellently cast, with some light flash on the priest figure and no deformities noted. Three of the figures are larger than the rest (which are obviously fighters). The three large figures are a priest, a Draconian champion, and a leader.

The priest wears robes and a breast plate. The robes are bordered by a very detailed scarf that falls to the ankles. This figure has impressive amounts of detail on its belt and breast plate, and the entire figure shows meticulous care in sculpting. The talons, the sharp teeth, and the well-done nose, eyes, and crest all speak of power and leadership.

The leader figure wears chain mail and a breast plate. Designs appear on the breast plate, shoulder protectors, and back plates. The foot coverings that wrap around the feet appear to be cloth and allow the talons to protrude. The gloves

are bulky, metallic in looks, and again only expose the talons. Even the head is armored, with only the muzzle, teeth, nose, and eyes exposed. The only unarmored parts of its body are the large leathery wings extending from its back. The leader's sword is sheathed; the only weapon it seems to have is its meanness.

But the leader doesn't need weapons with the champion handy. This huge figure is even more heavily armored than the leader, having overlapping armor plates held up by a large belt. It is hunched forward in a menacing pose, as if looking for trouble (the huge serrated sword that it

holds shows it knows what to do with trouble when it finds it). On this figure, even the muzzle is armored and only the wings remain unprotected.

The individual fighting troops are armed with a variety of weapons, including bows, flails, a smaller serrated sword, and a halberd. Most of the troops carry shields of varying designs and sizes; armor ranges from none to plate. The chain mail that some of the troops wear is somewhat ragged (by design), and some is well fitted. The facial features are excellent, with horns and armored heads. These figures are very well sculpted.



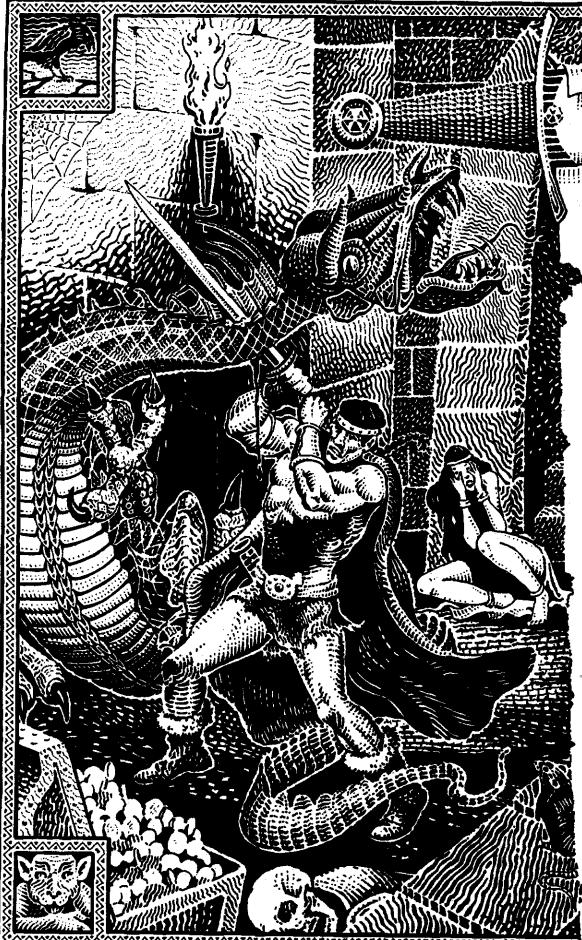
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This is an excellent set and is highly recommended to anyone who wants to throw a serious obstacle into a party's path. The figures can also be used as display pieces with equal ease. The set is \$12.95.

### Game Designers' Workshop

P.O. Box 1646

Bloomington IL 61702-1646

### Soldiers of the Queen

The British colonial period during the 1800s is one of the most interesting parts of English history. It was said that "the sun never sets on the British Empire," and the various uniforms worn by troops on colonial duty were known throughout the world. Now GDW has extended the British Empire by adding Mars to its sphere of influence in the SPACE: 1889™ game.

The figures in the set submitted for review have uniforms representative of this period, with the piping and belts pictured so often in movies and books. The back of the box shows a representative selection of unpainted figures and lists the types and numbers of soldiers included. (This box back also includes a confusing mistake. The box says that there are 20 figures included, but if you add up the list you'll find only 18. This was a printing error, as two "soldiers advancing" were neglected.)

The enlisted troops have basically identical equipment and differ primarily in posture. The troops all have pith helmets wrapped with the cloth or mosquito netting standard for that time. They have well-detailed tunics with prominent raised piping on the sleeve and epaulets on the shoulders. The pockets and buttons are clearly seen, and the belts and suspenders are nicely done. Canteens are detailed even to their cloth covers. Ammo pouches and bayonet sheaths are also evident. The pants have wrinkles from the well-detailed boots. However, on my figures and on some figures purchased at my shop, the rifle butts were not totally filled in. The rifle barrels and bayonets are slightly too large, and an occasional off-center mold line appears, with features not quite lined up on either side.

The officer figures have the same good detailing for tunics, boots, and trousers as their troops but lack some of the latter's equipment. Officers do have well-done pistols with evident cylinders, swords with the proper hand guards, and excellent holsters and map or ration bags.

The major and his horse are stand-alone figures. While the major has all the equipment of the other officers, he also has a set of binoculars, including the case. The binoculars are almost perfect in detail, with adjustment knobs and clasps on the carrying case. The horse is excellent with exceptional equine detail including teeth and well-detailed eyes. The saddle, mane, and harness details are somewhat exaggerated but can be painted perfectly.

These figures are excellent and can be used for colonial wargaming or for SPACE: 1889 role-playing. The book enclosed with the set gives detailed painting instructions for many other countries' soldiers as well as for Great Britain. This unit also lends itself well to expansion with colonial figures from RAFM Miniatures or Ral Partha. All you need to get started in historical war games are a set of miniatures rules (or the SPACE: 1889 *Soldier's Companion*) and a pack of plastic Zulus. This package is highly recommended, even at \$20.00 retail.

With these trinkets, we close the reviews for this month. If you have any questions or comments, send them to me at: Friends' Hobby Shop, 1411 East Washington, Waukegan IL 60085. I can't promise to get right back to you, as this is my busiest time of year. Until next month, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Ω

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# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

**WARNING:** We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the last Monday of October. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

❖ indicates an Australian convention.

✳ indicates a Canadian convention.

● indicates a European convention.

\* indicates a product produced by a company other than TSR Inc. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. The use of the name of any product without mention of its trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

## GAMEFEST '90, December 8-10

The Gamemasters Guild of Waukegan, Ill., is hosting this event. RPGA™ sanctioned events are scheduled, as well as D&D®, STARFLEET BATTLES\*, and BATTLETECH\* games. Other events include historical and fantasy miniatures and board games. Call: (312) 336-0790.

## MACQUARIECON '89, December 8-10 ❖

The Macquarie University Role-Playing Society will host Australia's largest role-playing convention at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Events will include AD&D® PARANOIA\*, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, JAMES BOND\*, TRAVELLER\*, STAR WARS\*, MERP\*, WARHAMMER\*, SPACE: 1899\*, JUDGE DREDD\*, and board games and freeforms. Registration is \$30 Australian for the weekend or \$3 Australian per session with a \$7 registration fee. Write to: M.U.R.P.S., P.O. Box 1577, Macquarie Centre, North Ryde NSW 2113, AUSTRALIA.

## TRITICON I, December 8-11

Students Tempted by Adventure, Fame, and Fortune (S.T.A.F.F.) will host their first convention at the Price Center on the University of California—San Diego campus. Events will include AD&D®, BATTLETECH\*, CAR WARS\*, and COSMIC ENCOUNTERS\* tournaments; DIPLOMACY\*, HOW TO HOST A MURDER\*, GAMMA WORLD®, TRAVELLER\*, and WARHAMMER\* games, and a live dungeon. Prizes will be awarded to tournament winners. Other events include open gaming, SCA demonstrations, a figure painting contest, a dealers room, and a flea market. Registration is \$12 (\$10) at the door for the weekend, and \$5 (\$4) each day at the door (UCSD students receive the discounted rates in parentheses; include ID number when registering). Write to: TRITICON I Price Center, E-30, UCSD, La Jolla CA 91093.

## WINTER FANTASY, January 5-7, 1990

The RPGA™ Network will sponsor WINTER FANTASY at the Ramada Inn Airport at Milwaukee, Wis. Special room rates are available by contacting the hotel at (414) 764-5300. Sanctioned events include AD&D® Grand Masters, AD&D® Masters, AD&D® Feature, AD&D® Benefit, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™, TOP SECRET/S.I.™, PARANOIA\*, and other tournaments. Other activities include a writers seminar, Saturday morning breakfast, Sunday brunch, open gaming, and a dealers' area. All gaming is free except for the benefit tournament. Limited preregistration is available to RPGA Network members: contact Network HQ

for a form. Registration fees for the entire weekend are \$15. Send a SASE to RPGA™ Network, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

## WOTTACON '90, January 6 \*

The Guild of Melee and Magic's second convention will be held at Goldsmiths' College, New Cross, London SE14. Wottacon will have live-action, tabletop, and PBM role-playing, as well as war gaming and board games. There will be competitions, demonstrations, a large number of trade stands and rooms in which to game. Write to: Alan Bishop 127 Queen Adelaide Ct., Penge, London SE20 7EB, UNITED KINGDOM; or call: 01-659-4857.

## CHATTACON XV, January 12-14

CHATTACON XV will be held at The Chattanooga Choo-Choo, Chattanooga, Tenn. Accommodations are \$60 flat, \$85 for sleeper car suites. Guests will include Michael P. Kube-McDowell, Robert E. Vardeman, David Cherry, Danny Gill, Wilson "Bob" Tucker, Stan Bruns, and Dick and Nicki Lynch. Registration is \$25 by mail or at the door. Send an SASE to: CHATTACON XV, Box 23908, Chattanooga TN 37422; or call: (404) 591-9322 (no collect calls, please).

## NEW MEXICON I, January 12-14

This science-fiction/science-fact convention will be held at the Las Cruces Hilton Inn. In addition to gaming, featured are a variety of people from science and the arts to hold panel discussions and give demonstrations and lectures. Confirmed guests are G. Harry Stein as scientist guest of honor; Real Musgrave as artist guest of honor; James P. Hogan as author guest of honor; and Jim Davidson, Laurie Wiggins, Dr. Mike Hyson, and Greg Kennedy as scientist guests. Author guest speakers will be Walter John Williams, George Alex Effinger, Sonni Cooper, and James Theisen. Write to: NEW MEXICON I, Box 3836, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces NM 88003-3836; or call Lew Maestas evenings at: (505) 522-0115, or Gaylord Teague at: (505) 521-3828.

## GAME-A-THON 7, January 14-15

This 24-hour convention will be held at the Town Center Hall, 11740 E. Telegraph Road, Santa Fe Springs, Calif. A variety of role-playing games, board game tournaments, and miniature events will be featured, including AD&D®, CHAMPIONS\*, PARANOIA\*, SHADOWRUN\*, STAR WARS\*, GURPS\*, AXIS & ALLIES\*, CIVILIZATION\*, EMPIRE BUILDER\*, WARHAMMER FANTASY BATTLES\*, WARHAMMER 40,000\*, BATTLETECH\*, and ADEPTUS TITANICUS\* games. There will also be computer games, continuous movies, seminars, demonstrations, a figure painting contest, and a hucksters' room. Advance registration is \$5 until January 8. Registration at the door is \$7.50. Write to: GAME-A-THON 7, c/o Santa Fe Springs Gamers' Assn, P.O. Box 2434, Santa Fe Springs CA 90670; or call Callahan at: (213) 863-7893.

#### **PROJECT GENESIS '90, January 14-15**

Project Genesis is expanding to two days! It will be held at the Ramada Inn, 324 E. Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA. Tournament and open events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, STAR WARS®, TOON®, and other games. Also scheduled are computer gaming, Japanimation, a miniatures contest, and a swap meet. Preregistration is \$6 for both days before Jan. 2; after that, all registrations are \$10. Dealers, swappers, and judges are wanted. Write to: PATCO, c/o Phillip S. Pittz, 5415 E. Washington, Fresno CA, or call (209) 255-4682. Make checks payable to Phillip S. Pittz.

#### **PANDEMONIUM VII, January 20-21 \***

The General Staff is pleased to announce that Pandemonium VII will be held at the Ryerson Hub Cafeteria, Jorgenson Hall, Ryerson Polytechnic Institute, 300 Victoria St., Toronto, Ontario. Highlights include two game auctions, over 50 tournaments, a miniatures contest, and many local dealers. Prizes will be awarded to tournament winners. Registration at the door is \$10 Canadian per day. Write to: Pandemonium VII, c/o 17b Wales Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA M5T 1J2; or call: (416) 597-1934.

#### **CANCON '90, January 26-28 ♦**

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Box 1016, Canberra, ACT, AUSTRALIA, 2601 (non-Australian residents should send International Reply Coupons, not SASEs); or call: +61-62-54-9926.

#### **GENERICON VI, January 26-28**

Sponsored by the Rensselear Science Fiction Assoc., it will take place on the campus of the Rensselear Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. Guests of Honor are Barry B. Longyear and Pat Morrisey. Other guests include Chuck and Sue Rothman, Jeff Carver, David Kyle and Esther Friesner. Events include numerous panels, story circles, an art show, a hucksters' room, a video room, and a Japanimation room. Games include AD&D®, CHAMPIONS®, CLAY-O-RAMA, BATTLETECH®, and STAR FLEET BATTLES® games. Memberships are \$12 before Jan. 19; after that, they're \$15. Write to: Genericon VI RSFA, c/o Rensselear Union, Troy NY 12180.

#### **WARCON '90, February 2-4**

Texas' oldest gaming convention will be held at Texas A&M University in College Station, Tex. Featured events include an RPGA™ AD&D® and CHAMPIONS® Open Team Tournaments. Other events include a variety of board games, RPGs, miniatures, a dealers' room, and 24-hour open gaming. Registration is \$8 before the convention, and \$11 at the door. Write to: MSCNOVA, P.O. Box J-1, Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77844; or call: (409) 845-1515.

#### **CONTINUITY 1990, February 9-11**

This convention will be held at the Parliament House at 20th St., and 4th Avenue South, Bir-

mingham, Ala. (formerly the Holiday Inn—Medical Center). The guests of honor will be Robert R. McCammon and Jennifer Roberson. Other guests include Buck and Juanita Coulson and Bill Bryer as well as guest artists Larry Elmore, Doug Chaffee, Ruth Thompson, and Craig Brasfield. Events include an art show, a short fiction contest, miniatures contests, a suite with gaming, a masquerade, a video room, a dance, and Southern hospitality! Registration is \$15 until Jan. 15, \$20 thereafter. Write to: CONTINUITY '90, c/o P.O. Box 55302, Birmingham AL 35255-0302.

#### **JACKSONVILLE SKIRMISHES 'SO February 9-11**

SKIRMISHES presents this role-playing and war gaming convention at the Jacksonville Motel on the Riverwalk, 565 South Main Street, in Jacksonville, Fla. Room rates are \$52 for one to four persons. Events will include AD&D® game features, along with TRAVELLER®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, CAR WARS®, and SEEKRIEG® games. Other events will include board gaming, a KILLER® tournament, dealers, a miniatures-painting contest, demonstrations by the SCA, and many other role-playing and historical events. Hotel reservations may be made by calling: (904) 398-8800. Registration is \$18 for the entire weekend. Send your registration fee to receive a program booklet. Write to: SKIRMISHES, P.O. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 293-7983.

#### **DUNDRACON XIV, February 16-18**

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#### GENGHIS CON XI, February 16-18

Staged by the Denver Gamers Assoc., this convention's activities include board games, role-playing, computer games, miniatures, auctions, and a miniatures-painting competition. Events include AD&D®, VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC\*, CIVILIZATION\*, KINGMAKER\*, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER\*, BATTLETECH\*, JOHNNY REB\*, NAPOLEONICS\*, COMBINED ARMS\*, EMPIRE\*, and PARANOIA\* games, with RPGATM tournaments, and the nationally known PUFFING BILLY\* tournament, a railroad game competition. Registration is \$15 for the weekend until January 31, \$20 after that. Write to: Denver Gamers' Assoc., P.O. Box 11369, Denver CO 80211; or call: (303) 443-3849.

#### NOT-A-CON, TOO, February 23-25

"Too" is the second of its kind to be held by the Clemson University Adventurers' Guild.

There will be a two-round AD&D® 2nd Edition tournament, a two-round CHAMPIONS® tournament, and a STAR WARS® tournament, with open gaming and (we hope) an organized fantasy art show. Costumes are encouraged. Registration is \$15 for the weekend, or \$10 per day. The preregistration deadline is Jan. 20. Write to: Adventurers' Guild, Box 7979, Clemson University, Clemson SC 29632; or call John Jay Jacobs or Mark Stofega at: (803) 654-2103.

#### CHIMERA CON VI, March 2-4

After a year's absence, CHIMERA CON returns to the University of North Carolina's Carolina Union. Among the many guests are Paul B. Thompson and Tonya R. Carter. Gaming guest of honor is Rob Bell. An expanded gaming area will be open all weekend, along with Japanimation films/videos, an art show, comics, dealers, a computer room, the Outer Limits Cantina, panels and demonstrations, writers' workshops, and a costume contest. Special lodging rates are available. Registration is \$9 for one day, \$12 for two days, or \$15 for the entire weekend. Preregistration is \$12 for the weekend. Write to: CHIMERA CON VI, 625 Hinton James, UNC-CH, Chapel Hill NC 27514; or call: (919) 933-4703.

#### LEHICON II, March 2-4

The Lehigh Valley Gamers Assoc., will sponsor this convention at the Sheraton in Easton, Pa. Special room rates are available by mentioning the sponsors. A wide variety of RPGs, war

games, and board games are planned, including AD&D®, D&D®, CAR WARS®, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, TRAVELLER\*, BATTLETECH\*, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, CHAMPIONS\*, and HARPOON® games. Many of the events will be tournaments with prizes for top players. Preregistration is \$15 for the weekend, or \$10 per day. Registration at the door is \$20 for the weekend, or \$12 per day. Gamers under 17 are free if accompanied by an adult. All who attend will be eligible for door prizes. Write to: LEHICON II, P.O. Box 1864, Bethlehem PA 18016-1864.

#### WOLFCON III, March 2-4 \*

WOLFCON is back for its third year in Arcadia University's Beveridge Arts Centre. Some of the participants are: the Fantasy Field Trip Society, the Dr. Who Society Prydonian Academy, the Monty Python Appreciation Society, and The Stranger the Better club. There will also be two movie rooms, work-shops, lectures and open gaming, along with movie, short story, costume and art competitions. Preregistration: \$10 Canadian until March 1, \$12 Canadian at the door. Write to: WOLFCON, Wolfville, N.S., CANADA B0P 1X0; or call: (902) 542-7133.

#### OWLCON XI, March 9-11

Rice University's WARP and RSFAFA will hold this convention at Rice University. Tournaments will be held for RUNEQUEST\*, PARANOIA\*, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, TRAVELLER\*, DIPLOMACY\*, ILLUMINATI\*, CIVILIZATION\*,



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### SCRYCON '90, March 10

Sponsored by the Seekers of the Crystal Monolith Gaming Club, this eighth annual one-day tournament will be held at Oakwood School, 515 South Road, Poughkeepsie NY. There will be AD&D® and other games, a miniatures contest, and a flea market. Preregistration is \$6, or \$8 at the door. Write to: SCRYCON '90, P.O. Box 896, Pleasant Valley NY 12569. Space is limited, so please preregister!

### ABBYTHON 8, March 24-25

The Community Center in Abbyville, Kans., once again becomes the Guild Hall for the Abbython Adventure Guild's eighth annual 24-hour RPG marathon. New members are welcome, and the best players will be awarded prizes for their efforts. Admission is \$7. Write to: ABBYTHON, Box 96, Abbyville KS 67510.

### Egyptian Campaign '90, March 24-25

This convention will be held at the Student Center of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. A wide variety of events are offered, including an RPGATM AD&D® tournament, miniatures judging, and a games auction. Preregistration is \$8 for both days; one- and two-day passes are \$5 and \$10 at the door. Send a SASE to: S.I.U. Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, Southern Illinois University Carbondale IL 62901-4425; or call: John P. Hults at (618) 457-8846.

### KETTERING GAME CONVENTION

#### March 24-25

This convention will be held at the Rose E. Miller Recreation Center in Kettering, Ohio. Events include extensive board gaming, FRPGs, miniatures, a dealers' area, and a game auction. Admission is 50 cents per day for those 12 and under, \$2 per day for those 13 and over, or \$3 for both days. Write to: Bob Von Gruenigen, 2013 Gay Dr., Kettering OH 45420.

### COASTCON XIII, March 30-April 1

This convention will be held at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum and Convention Center in Biloxi, Miss. Guests include Joe W. Lansdale, Sandy Peterson, Robert Petitt, Walter Irwin, George Alec Effinger, Gregory Nicholl, and Sidney Williams. Events include gaming tournaments, a dance, an art show, an auction, filksinging, a dealers' room, movies, a costume contest, a live-action RPG, and a charity auction. Registration is \$15 until Feb. 1; or \$20 at the door. Write to: COASTCON XIII, P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533-1423.

### I-CON IX, March 30-April 1

The East Coast's largest convention of sci-fi, fantasy, and science fact will be held on the campus of the State University of New York at Stony Brook on Long Island. Scheduled guests are Steve Jackson, Alan Dean Foster, Robert Bloch, C. J. Cherryh, David Kyle, Timothy Zahn, Patricia McKillip, and Sam Moskowitz. Events include an art show, print shop, dealers' room, two movie tracks, a writers' workshop, gaming,

Japanimation, comics, media guests, science and tech speakers, artists, authors and editors, two video rooms, film previews, and slideshows! Registration: \$16 until December 31, \$18 until March 15, or \$20 at the door. One-day passes are available at the door. Send a SASE to: I-CON IX, P.O. Box 550, New York NY 11790.

### PENTECON '90, March 30-April 1

The Cornell Strategic Simulations Society! is sponsoring the 2nd annual PENTECON to be held at the Cornell campus in Ithaca, N.Y. Events include TITAN\*, DIPLOMACY\*, CAR WARS\*, and AD&D® games, as well as many other RPGs and war games; a dealers' room, open gaming, and bridge are also offered. Preregistration is \$8. Write to: Cornell Strategic Simulations Society, c/o Peace Studies Program, 180 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853.

### STELLARCON XV, April 6-8

This sci-fi/fantasy/horror convention will be held at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Featured are guest speakers, panels, discussions, and writers' workshops. Tentative guests are Marion Zimmer Bradley, Hal Clement, Dennis and Kristina Etchison, Sam Grainger, Joe Lansdale, Frederick Pohl, Richard and Janice Preston, and Allen Wold. Other activities include a dealers' room, art and costume contests, SCA, Japanimation, schlock theater, fan clubs, model displays, a cabaret, open gaming, and films. Registration before January 31 is \$8 per day, or \$20 for the weekend; after January 31, it's \$10 per day, or \$25 for the weekend. Inquiries are now being accepted for the dealers' room, advertising in the convention program, and for additional sponsors. Write to: STELLARCON XV, Science Fiction Fantasy Society, P.O. Box 4, Elliott University Center, UNCG, Greensboro NC 27412.

### JAXCON SOUTH '90, April 20-22

Jacksonville's Cowford Dragoons are hosting the South's oldest full-service gaming convention at Jacksonville Florida's Civic Auditorium. Featured are: RPGATM AD&D® adventures, with AD&D®, SNIPERTM, CIVILIZATION\*, GHOST-BUSTERS\*, SEEKRIEG\*, NAPOLEONICS\*, BATTLETECH\*, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, WRG\*, ILLUMINATI\*, SPACE 1889\*, TRAVELLER\*, ELEMENT MASTERS\*, WARHAMMER\*, ROBO-TECH\*, STAR WARS\*, and microarmor games. There will also be computer and board gaming, a swap/flea market, a dealers' area, and movies. Write to: JAXCON SOUTH '90, P.O. Box 4423, Jacksonville FL 32201.

### OURCON II, April 20-22

This year's convention will be held on the campus of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. There will be three RPGATM AD&D® tournaments, as well as open gaming, board games, miniatures, and CLAY-O-RAMA. Write to: OURCON II, 605 Jonesberry Road, Box SS-7, Carrboro NC 27510.

### ORIGINS/DRAGON CON '90, June 28-July 1

The 1990 National Gaming Exposition and Trade Show will be held at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers, Atlanta, Ga. Guests of honor are Tom Clancy and Doug Niles, with more guests to be announced. Role-playing, strategic, miniatures, and computer game tournaments will be held around the clock. Other activities include panels and workshops, game and consignment auctions, a masquerade, an art show and print shop, and video rooms! Write to: ORIGINS '90, Box 47696, Atlanta GA 30362.

### **CONJUNCTION, July 27-29**

This convention will take place at New Hall College, Cambridge, England. The guest of honor will be Gregory Stafford. Events include numerous RPGs, panels, a masquerade, and a dealers' area. Membership is £12 for those over 18. Write to: CONJUNCTION, 25 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge CB1 3JD, UNITED KINGDOM.

### **1990 GEN CON® Game Fair, August 9-12**

Make your plans *now* to attend the biggest and best game convention of them all, at the MECCA Convention Center, Milwaukee, Wis.! An "Early Bird" registration form is located within this issue. Be one of the first to reserve your spot for this incredible game fair. We've pulled in over 10,000 people for two years running! Write to: 1990 GEN CON® Game Fair, PO. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

### **GEORGIA FANTASY CON '90**

**September 28-30**

This celebration of fantasy and horror is going to be held at the OMNI International Hotel and Convention Center, Atlanta, Ga. The guest of honor is Michael Moorcock, with many more guests to be announced. Events include four tracks of panels and workshops, a masquerade, an art show and print shop, video rooms, art, and consignment auctions! Write to: GEORGIA FANTASY CON, Box 148, Clarkston GA 30021.



## **Editorial**

*Continued from page 5*

Other conventions have done similar things (and I would love to hear from their organizers to find out how they did it).

The RPGA Network offered one piece of advice to me on this topic. If you want to donate some of your convention's proceeds to a helpful organization, contact several such organizations long beforehand and let them know what you are planning. Get them to respond and explain how they will use your donation, then choose the one that you feel will do the best job. If you are going to help others, help them wisely.

A convention may even support several different organizations and causes, if donations are made from different events. These events could be made regular convention features, offering the most challenging tournaments or entertaining auctions.

If you do nothing else, you can always set up a secure box for voluntary contributions, advertising its presence to all gamers and staff. At the end of the con, let everyone know how much was collected—and keep a year-by-year track of your donations (that seems to encourage better donations over time).

**At Home:** Okay, so you aren't a convention organizer or even a convention goer. But you have meetings with your fellow gamers at your home. You can still help.

Set up a voluntary tithe system for your campaign. Does your paladin have to make his monthly donation to his church? Toss a quarter into a piggy bank each time he does so. Does your thief have to give the guild a cut of his weekly profits? Drop a dime into a jar after you cross off his gold pieces. Is it time for your warrior to build a castle? Toss a dollar into the kitty. After three months, add it all up and send it off—with everyone's contribution going to his or her favorite real-world cause—and start over again. Even dumping pocket change into your "savings" can add up over the weeks.

And what if you live alone and play solo games? Toss a quarter into the pot every time you play out an adventure on paper or on your computer, and see it add up.

Picking a cause is easy, and every player can have a different cause. What worries you most: disaster relief? educational quality? pollution control? medical advancement? Does your local library, school, or hospital need a new wing? Do you have brothers, sisters, cousins, or friends who live in areas hard-hit by disaster or poverty? Have you had enough of sitting around and listening to the news rather than making the news yourself? Then do something about it!

**The Bottom Line:** It is a fact that 99% of all player characters do not care about anyone else but themselves. That's the way things are in most role-playing games. But that does NOT have to be the way things are in real life. You are greater than that, and you can make a difference in the lives of thousands, if not millions, of people in any part of the world you choose.

And all you have to do is play games. Hell of a system, isn't it?

For the good of our world, give it your best.

## **Spider-man**

*Continued from page 78*

strong views might enjoy putting them to the test.

### **A final thought**

You don't have to make your game "realistic" if you don't want to. Realism is not an end in itself. If you think the real world would hate, fear, and outlaw super heroes, but you and your players don't like that idea, don't use it. The purpose of realism in gaming is simply to make the game more enjoyable. RPGs are meant to be fun, after all.

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## Forum *Continued from page 7*

Slipping down behind the altar, the mage gulped down three *potions of extra-healing*, then cast an *invisibility* spell and fell asleep. Tymora was with him, and he was not discovered. Memorizing a few spells when he awoke, he recast the *invisibility* spell and continued on. He went into another room, this time the sleeping quarters of the monsters. Still *invisible*, he backed into a far corner and waited. Inside the room were three orcs, one being extremely large. One orc left just as the mage completed a web spell over the doorway. Facing the two other orcs, he cast a *flaming sphere* spell and killed one orc instantly. The second, while wounded, charged the mage with his *bastard sword +1* raised; the blade bit deep. The mage dispatched the orc with a series of *magic missile* attacks, then searched the bodies. On the larger one, he discovered a brass key. There was only one way to go, so he continued on.

Coming to a large iron door, he placed the key into the lock. When he entered the room, the remaining orc was at the other end of the room, preparing for battle. He wore full plate mail and wielded a *two-handed sword +1*, with a brooch of *absorption* pinned to his breast. When the mage entered, he cast a *magic missile* spell. The orc survived and gulped down a *potion of super-heroism*. With a wild battle cry, he lunged forward. The mage then cast a *lightning bolt* spell that was promptly absorbed by the *brooch*. The orc swung wildly and hit the mage twice. The mage then cast a *burning hands* spell at the orc and destroyed it. Exhausted, he flopped down and sighed. He had faced a handful of "wimpy" monsters and barely survived. The adventure was finally over!

In the above example, some simple humanoids were made more powerful and challenging by a few simple one-shot or weak magical items. It also made the mage think about what he should do when encountering lesser humanoids, and what defenses they might have up their sleeve.

Jason Dunn  
Calgary, Alberta

I am writing in response to David Howery's article, "The Corrected Cavalier" (DRAGON issue #148). That is a somewhat facetious title since the AD&D cavalier class was fine long before Mr. Howery "corrected" it. I will respond to each of his arguments or changes in order.

First of all, Mr. Howery claims the zero-level Horseman and Lancer levels are "weak and unnecessary." This restriction was put into the rules to make the cavalier class a bit weaker, which Mr. Howery seems to want in the first place. A cavalier not of the appropriate social class should have to go through those levels as a substitute for the training that an upper-class cavalier has received all of his life. These zero levels also serve another function: that of keeping the cavalier field from getting overcrowded. These levels provide role-playing opportunities, with the reward of the enhanced abilities of the cavalier if the Horseman/Lancer survives.

The +3 hp bonus at 1st level is justified if you figure the possible number of hit points if the cavalier had proceeded through the zero levels. To compensate for the difference, a character starting at 1st level should be awarded these. Also consider the fact that a cavalier has been training for the better part of his life, and 3 hp don't seem so "unfair."

The biggest gripe I have with Mr. Howery's article concerns the *protection from fear* aura of the cavalier, which he describes as "a semimagical power that is completely beyond a cavalier's training." Paining has nothing to do with it. In any combat situation in which a combatant displays fearlessness in the face of danger, that fearlessness is contagious and instills courage in those allies nearby. A cavalier is the living definition of fearlessness, and anyone subjected to that aura should be similarly affected.

The cavalier's training is pure discipline. This discipline includes the mind as well as the body, and when combined with a cavalier's firm and singular determination to fight and dominate, it makes the cavalier's 90% resistance to mind attacks easy to justify. In battle it is even easier. Consider the cavalier's battle lust as something approaching insanity. Against an insane character, mind attacks are similarly useless.

Mr. Howery states that "a cavalier is trained in combat, not magic"; thus they should be more, not less, susceptible to illusions. On the contrary, the cavalier is trained every day in combat with that which is real and can be killed. The discipline of the mind comes into play again. [The saving-throw bonus vs. all illusions is] not so much an ability to resist them as it is, because of a cavalier's firm base in reality, an inability to believe.

In the next paragraph, Mr. Howery kills the idea of cavalier's functioning at negative hit-point totals. Once again, it goes back to the cavalier's training. The cavalier is probably in the best physical condition of any class. Combine this fact with the aforementioned cavalier mind-set, and it's not hard to see how a cavalier would find the willpower to remain conscious after reaching or surpassing zero hit points. However, I do agree with Mr. Howery that this should not be restricted by alignment.

While I agree that a cavalier will not foolishly charge into a very obvious defeat, if there is any chance at all for even a marginal victory or for a chance to gain great honor, the cavalier will do just as the book [*Unearthed Arcana*] says. In any case, a cavalier will never retreat.

Now we're into the modifications.

Cavaliers are a class of their own, not a subclass of fighters, and should remain such. Since the cavalier already uses the combat and saving throw tables for fighters, there is no need for this modification.

The rules concerning social class, horsemanship, proficiencies, and starting money should remain as per *Unearthed Arcana*, because they were obviously correct to the cavalier class. Mr. Howery gives no reason or explanation as to why the changes are made or even needed.

Mr. Howery's argument against drow cavaliers is absurd ("Drow cannot become cavaliers, since horses are not used underground."). Even if a drow was raised most of his life underground, as a member of the upper class he would have ample opportunity to ride many beasts, not necessarily horses. The skill is transferable—thus the rule that drow must be sponsored so they can receive the proper training. Who's to say, however, that a drow was born underground? And how many of those drow adventurers still live underground? There are many opportunities for a character that is a drow to become a cavalier.

As to armor, a cavalier's armor is, as *Unearthed Arcana* states, a "badge of station." Thus a cavalier will wear nothing but the best armor, no matter where that cavalier may be. If a cavalier cannot endure hardship, he should hand in his weapons and retire.

There is no reason to change training rules or follower tables, as they are quite adequate the way they are.

The cavalier should be able to expect hospitality from any like-aligned cavalier, being that a cavalier is a noble from another kingdom. Restricting hospitality to those cavaliers who own castles is off the wall. Also, a cavalier does serve a lord; he is not self-serving. Just as a paladin serves his god with all his heart, so does a cavalier serve his liege.

Mr. Howery creates a cavalier class with a balance similar to the original, but it is much less original and fun. If one cannot live with the power of a cavalier, or the problems that one must endure to remain a living cavalier, one should play a fighter.

Daniel J. Stephans II  
Winona MN

I am writing in response to David Howery's article, "The Corrected Cavalier," that appeared in issue #148. I believe this article—for the most part—deprived the cavalier of all his uniqueness and credibility. In the AD&D game, in which wizards and dragons run rampant, cavaliers should be the stuff of legends. Look at St. George, King Arthur, and Sir Lancelot du Lake and the other Knights of the Round Table. It is obvious that Mr. Howery is seeking to bring the cavalier down to a more balanced level, essentially becoming an ordinary fighter.

The alignment restrictions I agree with totally, but I would add that a lawful cavalier should be a rarity due to the reckless and chaotic behavior associated with the cavalier's desire for combat. The zero-level Horseman and Lancer levels are necessary. Why? Because you can't transform a squire into an above-average jousting overnight. The +3 hp bonus at 1st level is justifiable. Cavaliers are supposed to be the toughest people around. Isn't it logical that "tough" would equate to "more hit points" in AD&D game terms? The ability to increase strength, dexterity, and constitution scores may seem unfair, but look at how a cavalier must accomplish his levels; he must be trained by another cavalier at least two levels higher than himself. This training comes from an established hero, a knight who is highly skilled and a superb warrior. Any Joe Schmuck can be a fighter, but a cavalier has many more requirements to meet in order to become a knight (e.g., higher ability scores, social class status, and racial limitations.)

The **protection from fear** aura should not be allowed; that is unfair. However, the cavalier himself should be immune to fear, regardless of its origin. I think this because knights shouldn't have to back away from a fight or have to surrender unwillingly. "Cavalier" is not synonymous with "coward"; the two words are antonyms. This is the same reason why a cavalier should be 90% resistant to mind attacks. Picture this: A brave and bold knight, known throughout the land for his heroics, engages a mummy in combat; he fails his save and goes running home, a whimpering and sniveling coward, to face his people.

The +2 bonus to saves vs. illusions is very important to the cavalier's sense of pride. How would you feel if you attacked something that wasn't real? Though the cavalier knows nothing of magic, he is trained for reality. He knows the effects a crucial blow from his long sword would have on an ogre and how that ogre should react to the blow. An illusionist controlling an illusory ogre might not know this. Furthermore, that illusionist may be unfamiliar with the fatigue associated with five rounds of

melee combat. Therein lies the reason for the bonus to his saves vs. illusions. The cavalier is accustomed to sweat, blood, pain, and exhaustion, especially if he is a veteran of some war.

The ability to function at negative hit points is easy to justify. Cavaliers are excellent warriors, used to sparring with fellow knights or engaged in lethal combat with some foe. Shouldn't that mean that they are less susceptible to the damage they might have sustained from being hit, bruised, beaten, and bloodied for most of their lives? Mr. Howery is right about this power being linked to alignment. It should be open to all alignments. Healing rates should be at normal rates.

Charging at all opponents in sight is definitely a foolish idea. Cavaliers may be gutsy and brave, but they are not stupid. Would a 3rd-level cavalier charge a type III demon? There is a correction to be made here in the article, however: Cavaliers are always reckless. It's their nature. After many dungeon adventures, perhaps a certain cavalier would tone down his reckless nature. Maybe he had run into too many pit traps earlier in his career, and now he checks floors for stability where he thinks there is reason to do so.

Cavaliers should not be a subclass of anything. They are separate because this is a highly skilled profession. Mounted combat is a cavalier's specialty; he is born to the saddle. All the rules from *Unearthed Arcana* on this should stick.

Most of the other changes made to the class I can live with, except for the note on paladins. Paladins are the epitome of knighthood, the purest and most noble cavaliers. "Sub"-class seems to make this class appear less important than the cavalier; it is the other way around. But it is accurate as far as gaming terminology is concerned.

Knights are what AD&D game heroes should be. You must take into consideration the aspect of pure fantasy. Any poor peasant boy playing in the cobblestone streets of some large city might happen to see a muscular and grim-faced knight ride by, decked out in a shiny suit of plate mail, sitting atop the largest horse the boy has ever seen. This sight might inspire the boy to become a swordsman of some type later in his life, in order to become a great hero like that knight. Perhaps he would only receive a weapon-specialized fighter status due to his social class, but being a knight would always be his dream.

So, one can easily see why the cavalier class should remain unchanged (save for a few things) and stay as powerful as it is. Taking some of the class's powers takes away from its reputation. Cavaliers should be looked upon as the medieval, superpatriotic, gung-ho Marines. They are meant to be the finest warriors of the land because they are men who dedicate their lives to a military lifestyle. A cavalier knows swords, armor, shields, heraldry, strategy, pride, glory, courtesy, and service to either a cause, person, or an order of knighthood. Above all else, though, the cavalier knows how to fight! That is what he lives for and dies (gloriously) for.

Jeff Cliber  
Emmitsburg MD

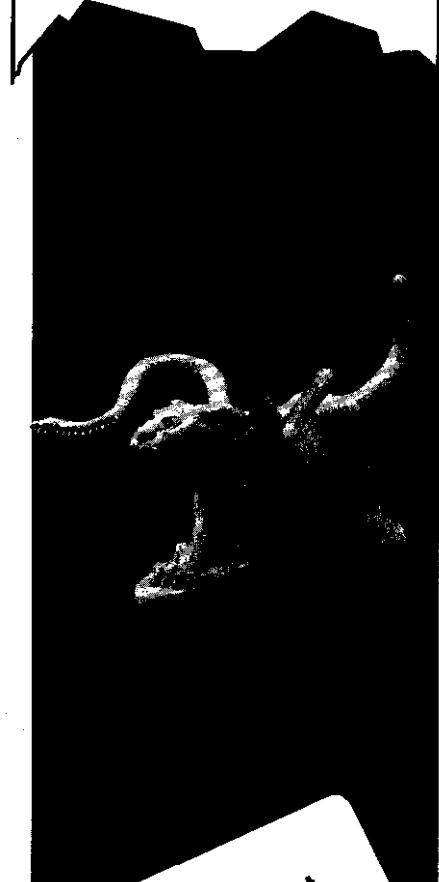
I am writing in response to two commentaries made in issue #145. I've been involved in AD&D role-playing for almost 10 years now, and I've learned a few things that can improve the role-playing image and gain players (and possibly

Continued on page 108

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# Make the Most of Your Missions



Illustration by Larry Elmore

## Mission starters for TOP SECRET/S.I.<sup>TM</sup> games

by Merle and Jackie Rasmussen

Agent Thompson, codenamed Pong, was slumped in his deck chair on the bridge of his yacht. His back ached from the strain of too many hours standing at the wheel avoiding Hawaiian Coast Guard vessels. He had successfully thwarted smugglers from reaching their conspirators off the coast of Oahu. Now the yacht's holds were filled with contraband to be delivered to the shipyards in San Diego. There would be no publicity for this job—just the usual payoff in some obscure location.

*Wonder where I'll be sent next time? he wondered. This mission was a lot like my first—what is it now—ten years ago. How many different missions could there be?*

Pong checked his fuel gauges and plotted a course to Point Loma. *The missions I get are different, yet they have some uncanny similarities. If I condensed, all the missions I've taken to their essences, without the different faces, places, and twists, I wonder if I'd find that I've been having the*

*same adventure for the last decade. . . .*

The thought was too depressing. He sighed, stood, and called down to the next deck. "Colleen, could you come up and take the wheel?"

"Yes, captain," came a musical voice. "I'm on my way up."

Pong looked again at the sea. "Remember to keep a lookout for the usual submarine and airborne counterattacks. I'll check for mutineers among the crew."

"Aye-aye, captain." Flame-haired Colleen appeared on deck. Pong had never heard her climb the stairs.

"Has the contraband been searched for explosives, listening devices, and location-finders?" Pong recited from long habit. Even as Colleen gave her reply, Pong's mind wandered elsewhere. He glanced toward the setting sun behind the stern and felt the ache in his bones. *These sorts of things are becoming old hat to me. I'd better make sure the lifeboat is well provi-*

*sioned. Did I reload my pistol after that stowaway was discovered? And we might have a typhoon or shark attack. . . .*

What does an Administrator do when the players have sent their characters on every published TOP SECRET/S.I.<sup>TM</sup> adventure available? He must think up all-new adventures, of course. But what does an Administrator do when the agents have completed every mission he can think of? The Administrator could disguise old plots with new settings, tougher bad guys, and deadlier weapons, but this leads to character-trait inflation, device hoarding, price increases, and more violence.

The Administrator could also twist and combine a multitude of old plots into a confusing mass of mystery and complications. Some players may enjoy this, but players lacking the patience or role-playing skills to unravel such Gordian knots will react by having their agents

shoot at everything that moves. The players will miss valuable clues and plot subtleties painstakingly arranged by the already weary and frustrated Administrator. What can be done?

This article is an aid for the Administrator who is caught in a war of escalating firepower or is frustrated with player apathy. Herein are "mission starters."

Mission starters are short (in some cases, extremely short) Administrator's briefings giving the background of each mission and details on "what's really going on." Mission starters allow each Administrator to detail the subsequent events in the adventure to suit his gaming style. These adventure introductions are spark plugs to ignite the imagination, springboards to launch new campaigns, breaths of fresh air to enliven stale gaming sessions. Mission starters are sources of new ideas to help an Administrator create a full-fledged espionage campaign or a "quick" one-night mission with little preparation required.

### **Breaking the mold**

An Administrator who wishes to breathe new life into a stale espionage campaign must be prepared to break the mold from which his previous adventures have been cast. There is no reason why one or more

missions cannot be set in atypical time periods or settings in the 20th century. Adventures could be set in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, or the Arab-Israeli Wars, or built on any other modern historical event, such as the capture of Gary Powers by the U.S.S.R., the Bay of Pigs invasion, or attacks by the PLO. The names of real people or organizations could be incorporated into your adventures, or the adventures could be based on spy novels and movies with espionage and antiterrorist themes.

An old set of DRAGON® Magazine writers' guidelines gave some module-design tips to explore, focusing on the need for new, exciting, and exotic settings, which are expected in espionage-style RPGs. As the guidelines noted, environments like the Peruvian Andes, the steaming jungles of Thailand, the outback of Australia, and the inner cities of the American east coast are as different as can be, and are all worthy of consideration. Adventures can occur aboard submarines, supersonic jet liners, and anywhere else that a secret agent might face death for high stakes.

When creating adventures, I often pick an interesting setting first and design the mission second. DRAGON Magazine modules "Dr. Yes," "Mad Merc," and "Operation:

"Whiteout" were all designed in this manner, as were *Operation: Sprechenthalstelle*, the adventure that came inside the boxed 1st-edition TOP SECRET® game, and TS006 *Ace of Clubs*, another early TOP SECRET module. Then, too, I was asked to do a series of mission starters for Orion's Taurus Bureau in TS3 *Orion Rising*. All of these missions had to occur within a specific geographic area. I guess I'm not the only one who thinks location first and mission second.

Location need not come first in mission design. In "Operation: Meltdown," which appeared in the TOP SECRET Companion, I picked nonplayer character types before the setting. I wanted ninjas, neo-Nazis, organized crime figures, and terrorists to populate the module. Next, I had to figure out where each of these NPC types would be found, and so I chose Japan, the Amazon rain forest, Sicily, and the Middle East for the locales. Finally, I created a plot combining all of these diverse characters and locales (including the Concorde) into a cohesive whole. If you try this, use care to avoid having the resulting plot seem contrived, overly complex, and unrealistic.

Relationships between well-developed player characters and NPCs create interesting and rewarding role-playing experi-

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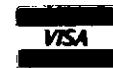
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ences. Interactions based on these relationships enhance the plot by adding depth, reality, and complications, but missions should not be based solely upon them. An exception to this might be in an advanced role-playing campaign where allegiance to the agency is being tested by the infiltration of an "enemy" agent in the party. Emotional relationships among characters and between characters and NPCs can also be tested during a mission, but such testing itself should not be the reason for having the mission.

Beyond changes in settings and characters, there are other areas on which you can focus your attention when designing unique missions for your players' agents. For example, according to Raymond Benson's *The James Bond Bedside Companion*, certain elements commonly appear in Ian Fleming's James Bond books. These recurring elements, which Fleming combined so successfully in each of his novels, are: Places, Girls, Villains, Villain's Employers, Villain's Projects, Minor Villains, Bond's Friends, and Highlights. The Highlights included gadgets, violence, gambling, exciting discoveries or meetings, and usually include the climax of the story.

These same elements appear in the Bond films by Eon Productions and also include a new element: the Obligatory Sacrificial Lamb. Some character we are meant to

like is threatened or killed in each film. The films also rely far more on gadgets as plot devices than do the books. If you include each of these elements in your mission, you have a good start.

But though these elements make each such book and film interesting and entertaining, it is the plotline that turns these elements into a good story. The settings are where the action in each story happens. The characters make the plot happen through their actions and thoughts. An espionage story in your own backyard with next-door neighbors as NPCs could be extremely thrilling if the plot connecting these two elements is well conceived and well written.

For Administrators, who are storytellers after all, these plots are the PCs' adventures. An Administrator may have prepared the required locations and NPCs, but the players provide most of the action. Therefore, an adventure doesn't always go as the Administrator plans.

### The plot's afoot

Georges Polti, in his book, *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, proposes that all fiction stories can be distilled to three dozen basic plot situations. Each of these basic situations has several subdivisions that can be considered variations on a theme. Each situations can be combined

with one or more others to create a complex plotline. The skill with which these situations are developed, combined, and written is what makes the difference between a good and a bad storyteller—or Administrator.

Each plot situation given in Polti's book contains several essential elements, with lists of items that can be used as these elements. Any item on an element list can be interchanged with any other item on the list within a story. For example, the elements of the situation "Madness" are Madman and Victim. Under the element "Madman" are listed: Mad Scientist, Religious Leader, Military Leader, Politician, and Terrorist. Under the element "Victim" are listed Captive Subject, Unquestioning Followers, Ordinary Citizens, Opposition Party Members, and Innocent Bystanders. A plot can be constructed in which a Mad Scientist (Dr. Frankenstein) interacts with a Captive Subject (the Monster), an Unquestioning Follower (Igor), Ordinary Citizens (Frankenstein's fiancee), Opposition Party Members (the town's burgomaster), and Innocent Bystanders (the townspeople). Another series of plots can be constructed in which a Religious Leader interacts with all the listed Victims, as in a situation like that involving the Reverend Jim Jones a few years ago.

Eric Heath, in *Story Plotting Simplified*,

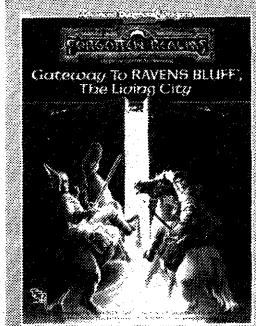
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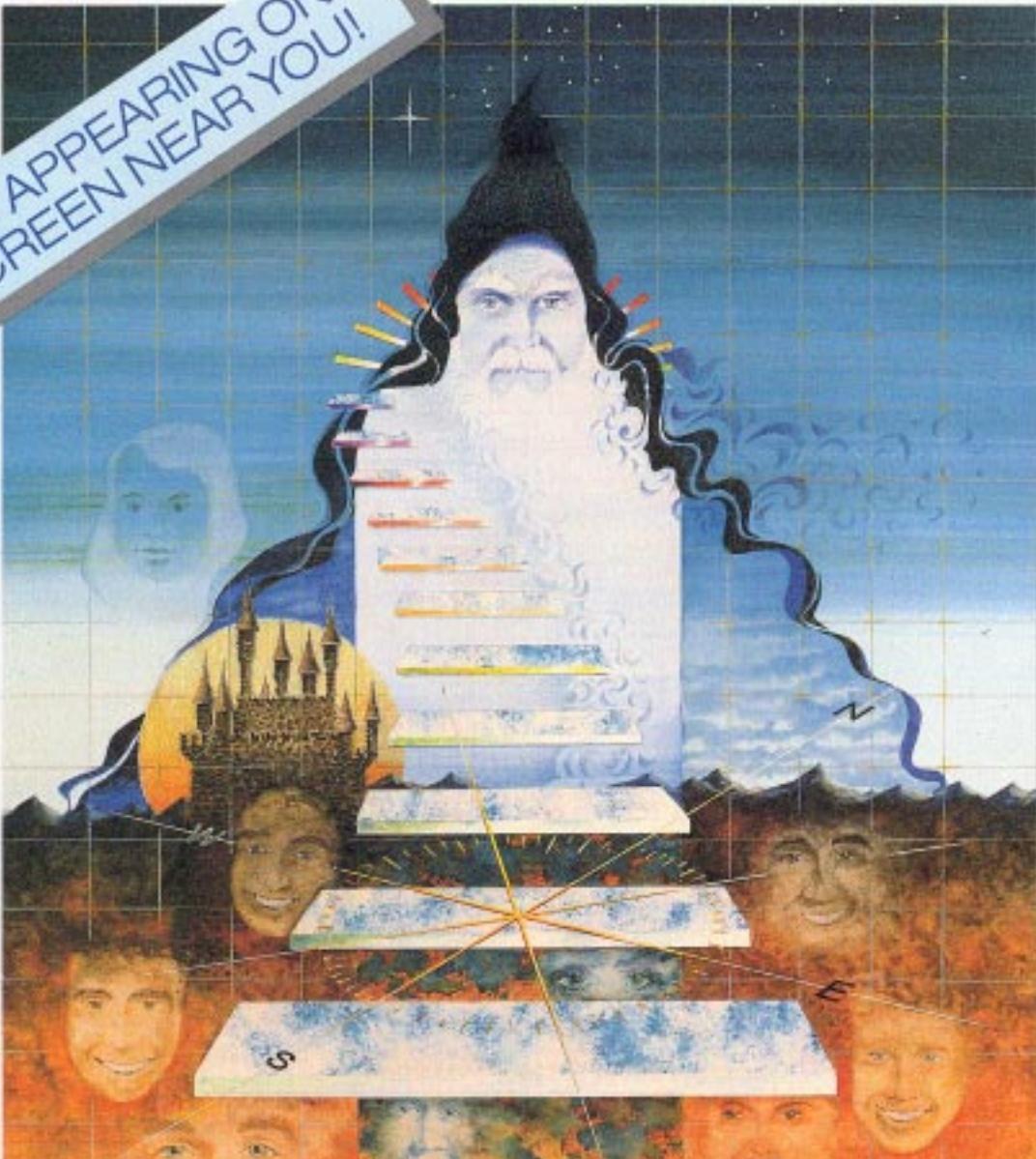
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adds a third element to Madness: Cause. In many espionage plots, the Cause is World Control by some devious and devastating means invented by a master criminal. Smaller-scale Causes by less-powerful antagonists lend themselves to more believable plotlines. A small-time arms smuggler trying to make an excessive profit by selling obsolete weapons to Afghan rebels is a more likely real-world story. A well-developed Third World mission may be more satisfying than saving the world.

### Making a mission

To create your own mission starter, you must first choose a dramatic situation. I've made your job a little easier by reducing Polti's 36 situations to six that deal primarily with espionage role-playing. These are: Deliverance, Revolt, Daring Enterprise, Abduction, Obtaining, and Madness, as given in the tables in this article.

Under each situation are listed essential elements. Pick an item from each element list or add your own items. Using these chosen items, compose your own mission starter. Keep in mind that items on the element list need not be individual human beings or concrete items. Abstract ideas such as liberty, national security, allegiance, and love can also be at stake.

For example, under the situation Deliverance are listed these elements: an Unfortunate, a Threatener, and a Rescuer. You choose a fellow agent, a secret police force, and the PC agent team to fill these respective slots. You decide to set the action somewhere in Latin America. The

fellow agent was working under the cover of journalist when she disappeared during a period of martial law in a capital city. Your agency believes she is being held in a cell in a country jail outside the city limits. This little example was made up and typed out on the spot. Imagine what you can create with some time, research, and a knowledge of your players' characters.

After each element list are the types of jobs that agents in this situation are likely to perform. Most of these jobs were taken from the Table of Missions in the original TOP SECRET rule book (page 12) and Table 12: Additional Jobs in the TOP SECRET Companion (page 19).

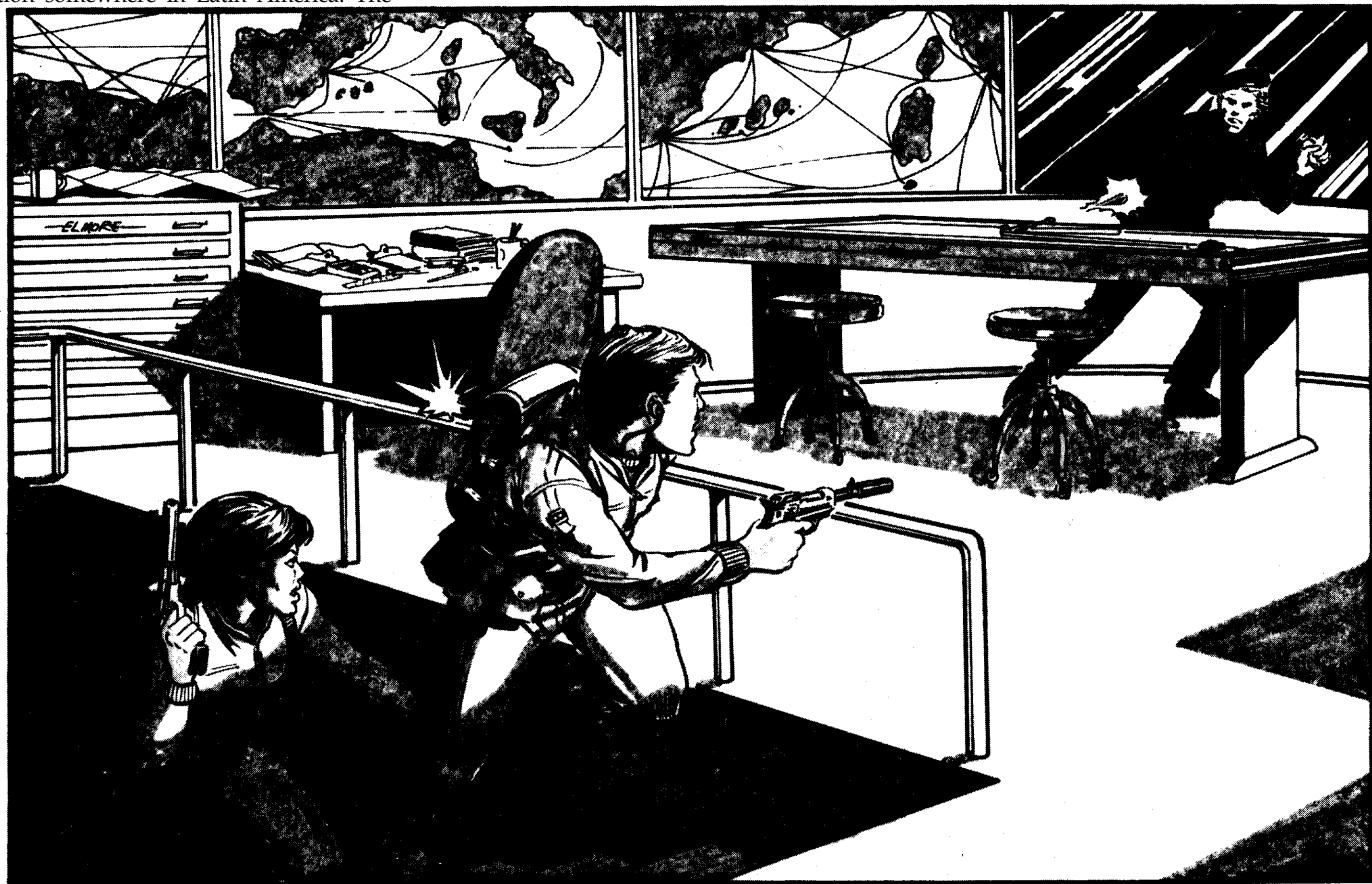
### Sample mission starters

**Cold Wars:** Cryolite, used in the manufacture of aluminum, is found only in Greenland. Someone is smuggling it off the island. Agents are to find out who the smugglers are and how the smuggling is being done. (Instead of cryolite, you could use cocoa from Ghana or sables from Siberia.)

**Spear of the Gods:** Web has developed a land-based energy weapon that can track and damage aircraft and space vehicles in low earth orbit, such as the Space Shuttle. Agents are to confiscate the weapon plans and destroy the device.

**High Jacks:** Suborbital supersonic aircraft developed by several countries are now believed to be the chosen targets of

*Continued on page 102*



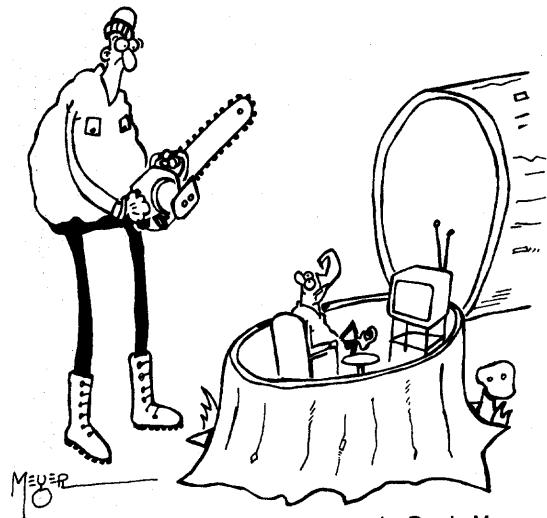


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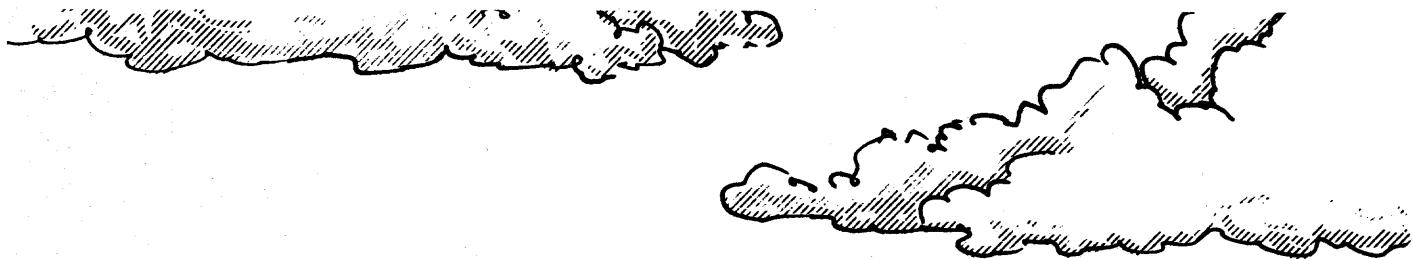


by Dwain Meyer



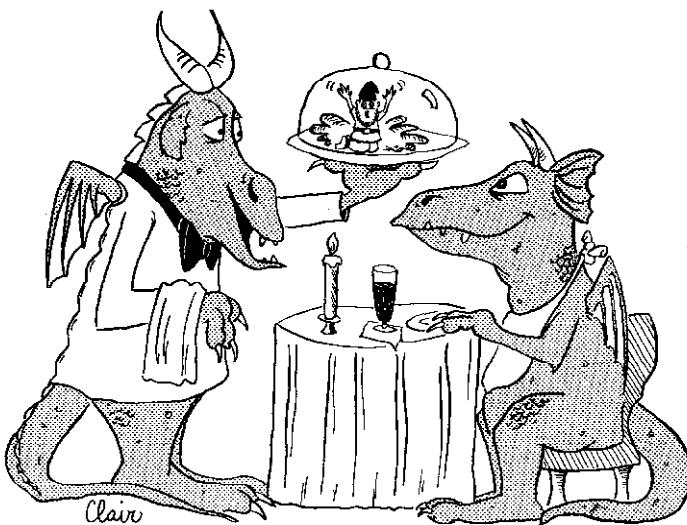
by Pete Longmeier

"I'm sorry, Mr. Quickfingers, but it seems you're covered for every kind of dragon except the red variety."



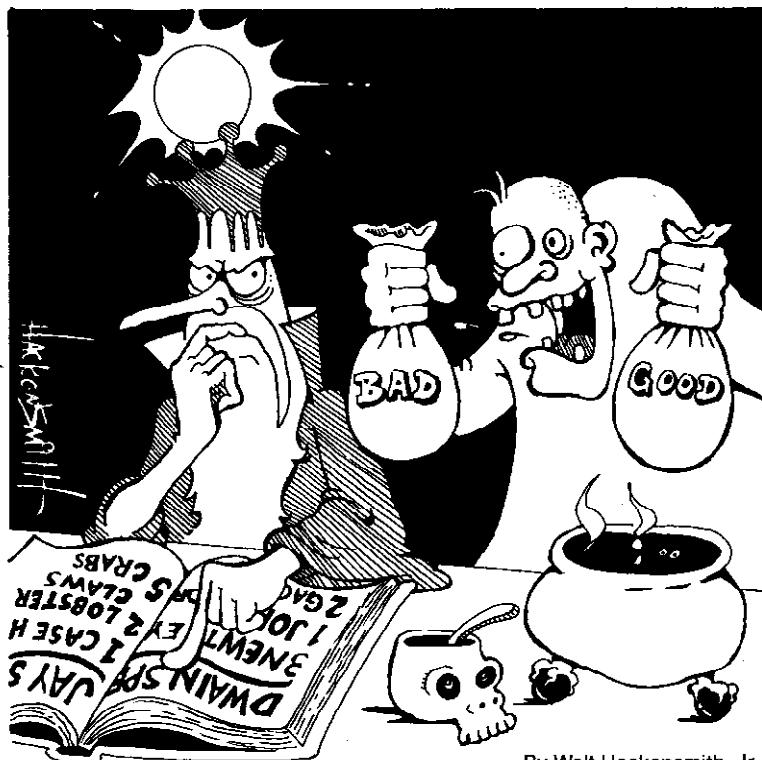
By Jerry Fuchs

"Yeah . . . She's got a great body, but she won't give you the time of day."



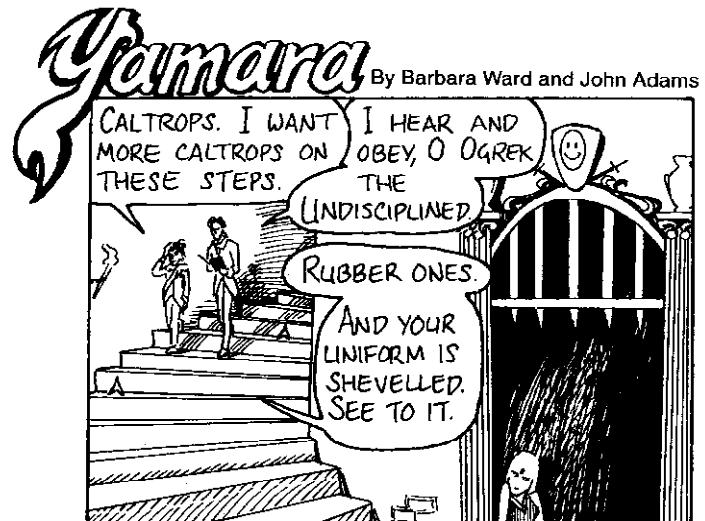
by Doug Clair

"And our special tonight is peasant under glass."



By Walt Hackensmith, Jr.

"Master! Do you want the Good Newts or the Bad Newts?"



## Make the Most

Continued from page 99

European terrorists sponsored by Web. Agents are to prevent a suborbital skyjacking by a crewman in the pay of a West German radical group—but which crewman is the ringer?

**Channel Changers:** France and England decide to build an English Channel tunnel connecting the two countries. Terrorist action and sabotage at the opening ceremonies in the tunnel must be prevented.

**Oops! Our Mistake!** The Agency accidentally supplied a very important operative with the wrong briefcase. She is assigned to a difficult mission deep inside foreign territory. Instead of a standard agency briefcase, she was issued a "reduced efficiency" briefcase, commonly known in the business as a "slow death special." The inside of the case is radioactive, and the handle is permeated with contact poison. The agency regrets the blunder and wants the briefcase back. The unsuspecting agent's delicate mission is not to be jeopardized. The PC team is assigned to recover the briefcase, replace it with the proper variety, and return without alerting the enemy—and, if possible, without alerting the agent.

**Higrise Hijinks:** A skyscraper becomes the site for industrial espionage. A newly developed electronic device shields computer keyboards from emitting electromagnetic signals that can be picked up by sensitive surveillance devices. Agents are assigned to pursue rival company thieves who break into offices and attempt to steal the device prototype or its plans.

**More Than You Bargain For:** The nerve center of a vast arms-dealing and terrorism empire is headquartered within the confines of a Middle Eastern open-air market populated with cutpurses, cut-throats, and cut-outs. The agents must shut this operation down—permanently.

**Rumble in the Jungle:** A secret Nazi stronghold deep in the Amazon rain forest is camouflaged as a solar energy research station, including natives, piranha, machine guns, and quicksand. Agents must investigate the stronghold but must not disturb it or its inhabitants (a later mission will do that).

**Mine for Keeps:** Radioactive material are being mined and smuggled out of the Old West. A treacherous mining zone, secretly buried beneath a tourist-filled ghost town, becomes a site for dynamite, disappearances, and daring deeds.

**You Must Sea To Be Shore:** A modern pirating operation is based several fathoms below the ocean's surface at the site of a crumbling shipwreck. The area is in a national historical site protected by the local government. The agents must gather evidence to show that the operation exists and must be shut down, but they cannot damage the site in any way.

**Safari Sogood:** An isolated animal compound for zoo specimens, situated on the African plains, turns out to be a plush, well-concealed, and well-protected hideaway for a fabulously wealthy master criminal who runs a pan-African poaching cartel. The agents discover this by accident while on a different mission—and the master criminal wants them dead.

**It's Dr. Jekyll—You'd Better Hyde!** A diabolical mad scientist tries to scare captive Orion agents to death in his labyrinthine lair of physiological and psychological endurance tests. Agents must escape from his guarded castle laboratory compound in a mountainous wilderness region. Mountain climbing and wilderness survival skills are necessary.

**Squeaky Wheels Get the Grease:** Mercenaries and Arab extremists believed to be working for an oil cartel begin destroying oil drilling platforms in the North Sea, Venezuela, and in the Orient. It is believed that terrorist activity will decrease world oil production and increase oil prices among oil-producing nations. It is feared that attacks will occur on the Siberian and

Alaskan pipelines. The agents must put a stop to the sabotage.

## Agents on Ice

This mission starter is presented as an example of a more elaborate backdrop for a series of adventures, possibly a small campaign.

**Background:** A wealthy, pro-Western Arab country is in desperate need of water, and it will pay any price to get it. American aid is sought and soon given, and a bizarre plan is hatched. In November, a massive iceberg is located by satellite just east of the Antarctic Peninsula, north of the Weddell Sea or Queen Maude Land. Why not take the iceberg to the Middle East?

The iceberg is quickly streamlined with demolition charges, then lassoed by surface and submarine tugs using harpoon cannons to shoot cables into the ice; the cables have tension-release connectors that snap if the iceberg suddenly rolls due to melting. The abovewater surface of the iceberg is covered with a heat-reflective material, and motion detectors are planted to predict rolling. The most economical vessels to serve as tugs are nuclear-powered ships and submarines. Three surface vessels steer the iceberg and pro-

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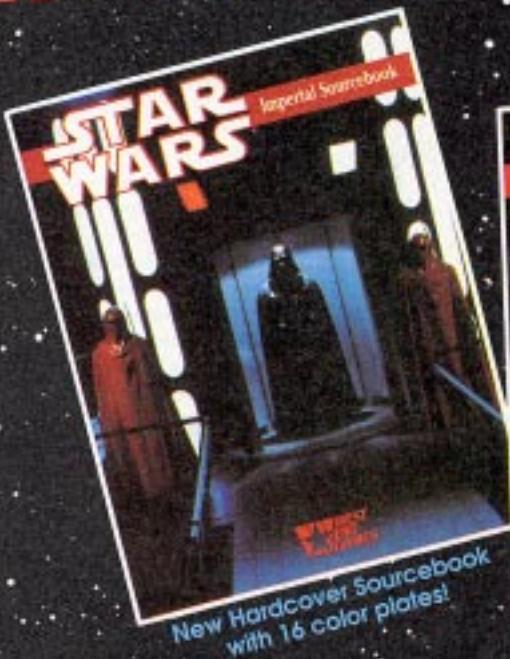
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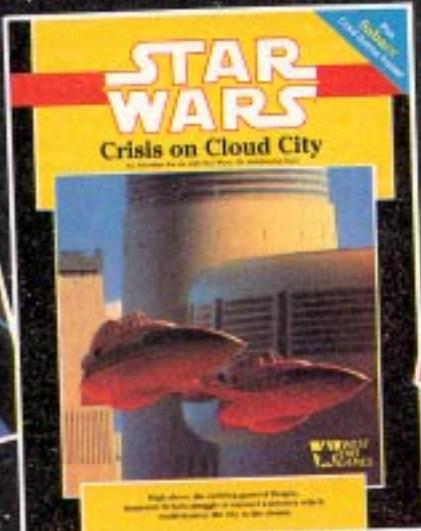
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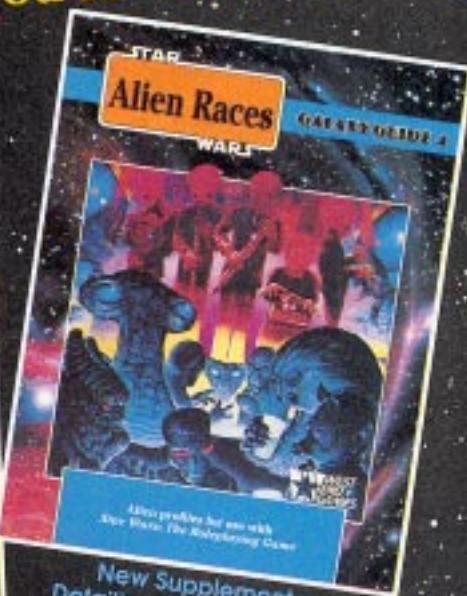
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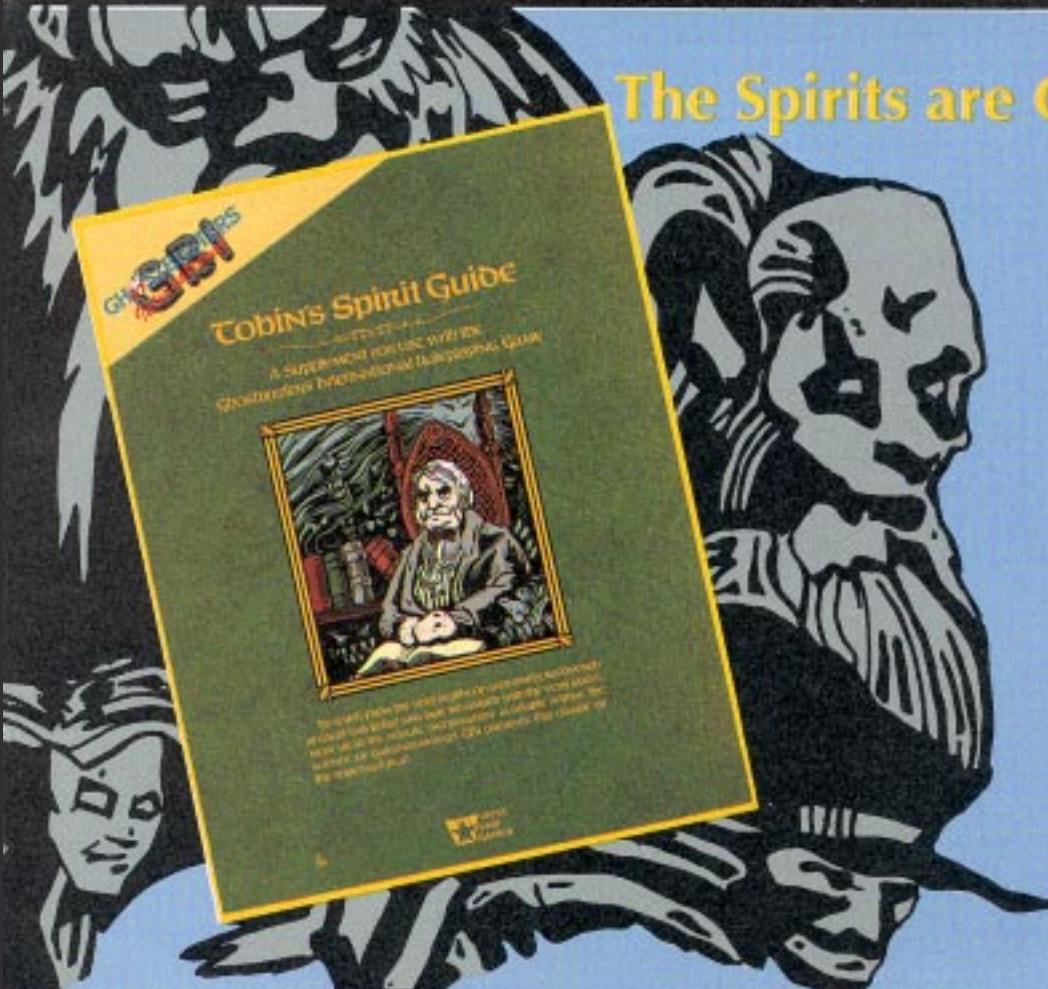
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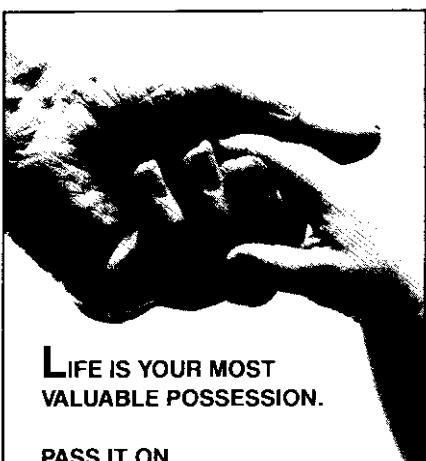
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vide some pull. Submarine vessels provide the major muscle to move the iceberg's enormous mass below the water's surface. One surface tender and one submersible tender supply crew changes, food, oxygen, and other supplies to the tug vessels. To conserve momentum, the vessels never stop towing. Smaller vessels and aircraft serve as current finders and weather patrols. Security and rescue craft protect vessels in intersecting shipping lanes.

The best route to haul the iceberg back to the Arab country lies in the direction of the Antarctic circumpolar current known as the West Wind Drift toward Australia. The iceberg will then be pulled northward across the Indian Ocean into the West Australian Current, then must travel along the South Equatorial Current until near the East African coastline, where it will travel north to the Middle East. The iceberg must hug the coastline so it will not be carried back out to sea by the Equatorial Counter Current. The iceberg should cross the equator in July, August, or September during the wet monsoon season, before the dry monsoon season of winter starts to blow against the ice.

The entire trip is scheduled for six to nine months from late December to early July. The total distance traveled is approximately 12,000 nautical miles, of which 5,000 miles is in cold current to reduce melting. The shortest straight line distance across all the currents is 6,000 nautical miles. At the destination site, the iceberg will be mined and the ice dissolved. A slurry of ice water can be pumped ashore to either storage tanks or pipelines. Tanker trucks and other ships will transport fresh water to remote regions where the pipe-

lines do not reach.

**Trouble:** World environmentalists are upset about the entire operation. They argue that if the iceberg sinks an atomic-powered vessel, the radioactive damage caused to marine life would be catastrophic. The effects of large quantities of fresh water in tropical and subtropical waters is unknown. The environmental impact of abundant fresh water in arid regions is another unknown.

Many Middle Easterners consider the plan a terribly expensive folly costing millions of dollars. Other Middle Easterners fear exploitation by industrialized nations loaning money for the project, providing technical support, and spreading Western ideals all along the water pipelines. Due to the tensions in the Middle East and the added environmentalist outcry, the project is considered at grave risk from sabotage and outright attack on land and at sea.

**Assignment:** Agents are assigned to the iceberg task force to detect and prevent interference with the project. Using all available means, the iceberg is to be escorted safely from origin to destination.

**Notes:** This would be a superb multisession adventure in which the Administrator could toss numerous unique NPCs, plot twists, and deadly surprises at the PC agents. Tension should be maintained at a high level throughout the adventure, with agents chasing down clues and plots as the iceberg convoy goes its way. The climax of the adventure, if and when the iceberg reaches the Middle East, should be one the agents will remember for years to come—if they live through the fireworks.

### Plot Situations For Espionage RPGs

#### Deliverance

Unfortunate	Threatener	Rescuer
Fellow agent	Secret police	Agent team
Diplomat	Terrorist	Antiterrorists
Passengers	Skyjacker	Hostage negotiators
Villagers	Military dictator	Freedom fighters
Defector	Oppressive government	Underground railroad

**Jobs:** Rescue, prison/jail break-in, defection, prevent rescue, prevent prison/jail escape, defection protection, guard duty.

#### Revolt

Tyrant	Conspirator
Foreign agency	Secret agent
Political group	Opposition party member
Criminal group	Detective
Drug smugglers	Narcotics officer
Student group	Police informer
Street gang	Rival game member
Oppressive government	Freedom fighters/revolutionaries

**Jobs:** Infiltrate, pass secret information, identify group leaders, reveal secret plans, disable major group function, subvert a group, destroy a group, foment unrest, prevent riot, assist coup d'état, guard against revolution.

*Chart continued on next page.*

## Daring Enterprise

Bold Leader	Object	Adversary
Bomb disposal team	Explosive	Bomber
Fire investigators	Burning structure	Arsonist
Sky marshall	Aircraft	Skyjacker
Security expert	Alarm system	Cat burglar
Detective	Stolen item	Thief
Internal security	Industrial equipment	Saboteur
Customs inspector	Contraband	Smuggler
Inspector	Counterfeit currency	Counterfeiter
Handwriting expert	Forged signature	Forger
Coast Guard member	Vessel	Modern pirate
Police investigator	Land vehicle	Car theft ring

**Jobs:** Prevent/Investigate arson or bombing, locate stolen goods, detect/trace counterfeit currency/forged documents, prevent industrial sabotage, install alarm systems, locate stolen goods, transport goods, handle animals, administer polygraph/stress test, guard duty, prevent skyjacking/hijacking/piracy, arrest suspect.

## Abduction

Abductor	Abducted	Reason
Kidnapper	Heir/Heiress	R a n s o m
Terrorist	Passengers	Publicity for cause
Rival agency	Fellow agent	Information
Secret police	Protester	Intimidate other protesters
Your agency	Fellow agent	Training purposes

**Jobs:** Bodyguard, prevent skyjacking/hijacking/piracy.

## Obtaining

Solicitor	Adversary Who is Refusing
Interrogator	Rival agent with secret
Assassin	Troublesome target
Mugger	Victim of crime
Blackmailer	Person with questionable past
Extortionist	Person with something of value
Investigator	Agent with valuable information
Private investigator	Suspect being followed
Communications expert	Jammer/Detector operator

**Jobs:** Interrogation, bodyguard against assassination/mugging, protect against blackmail/extortion/investigation, evade surveillance, lose tail, shadow suspect, Communicate, prevent communication.

## Madness

Madman	Victim	Cause
Mad scientist	Captive subject	Create life
Religious leader	Unquestioning followers	Mind control
Military leader	Ordinary citizens	Territory
Politician	Opposition party members	Political power
Terrorist	Innocent bystanders	Publicity

**Jobs:** Neutralize (render ineffective, not necessarily kill), take into protective custody, arrest suspect.

## Further reading

Benson, Raymond. *The James Bond Bedside Companion*. Dodd, Mead & Company: New York, 1984.

Heath, Eric. *Story Plotting Simplified*. The Writer, Inc.: Boston, 1941.

Polti, Georges. *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*. The Editor Company: Franklin, Ohio, 1921.

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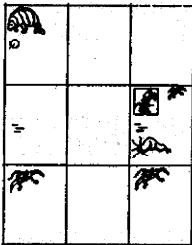
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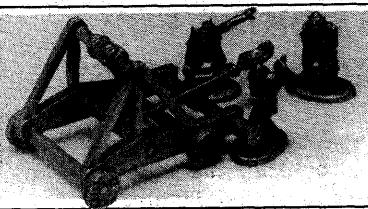
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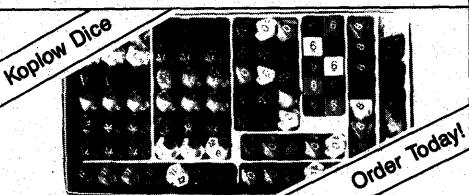
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## Forum

Continued from page 93

friends) to continue gaming.

In support of Mr. Bryan Walker's letter on the destruction of the AD&D game's image, I must say he has given an excellent analysis. The movie, *Mazes and Monsters*, gave the AD&D® game a terrible image, and I should know from experience. My parents went from supportive, trusting souls to panic-stricken, nervous wardens of my gaming habits. Mind you, we are talking about a guy who was (and still is) a dependable, sociable honor student, not the psychotic animal that has been the classic stereotype to the general public. Try as I did to change my parents' attitudes, they only tightened their monitoring. Only long, persuasive discussions would allow me release for a few hours. I got to the point where I was tempted to sneak out or deceive my folks in order to play more often.

Finally, I found a way to achieve more gaming time and give my parents more confidence in the game and me. My parents had never seen me play, so I invited my fellow gamers to my home. Once my parents saw who my fellow players were and talked to them, they relaxed and trusted my judgment on how much involvement I had in role-playing. I think that part of the fear of the game involves the mystery of who is playing the game with you. When parents see [bad] public images, like the terrible ones Mr. Walker encountered at the convention, they develop the idea that their sons and daughters are flirting with terrible people. Your parents have probably never seen your fellow players before, and they fear those players might influence you in a bad way. Parents typically worry about peer-pressure situations, and role-playing is often categorized as one. It is a sad situation brought about by the terrible rumors the game has gained.

I believe that by letting your parents know your gaming associates, they will be more open and trusting of your gaming habits and of your fellow players. As long as you're capable of having constant company and having gamers who are both flexible and give a good impression, and if you have parents who are open-minded (or at least happier to know your friendships and activities), I think you can improve the setting in which you play. Maybe this won't work for you or maybe you don't care, but I think it works given time and patience. It may even disperse the cloud of superstition around the AD&D game and improve your family's relationships.

To Mr. Michael Townsend (and all concerned), I reply that I know what it is like to play with a handicapped individual and how gaming gives one a sense of meaning. I had a friend who was blind, and role-playing gave him more confidence and a more sociable attitude. He became a great player to have around.

As to the question of finding more gamers, I have noticed that most role-players are also avid comic-book and fiction-novel readers. At my favorite store, the owner had developed a role-player's bulletin/network for people to look for fellow gamers. I simply added my name and, within weeks, found people to continue playing games. Go to your local book store or comic store and see if the owner has (or has considered) having such an announcement board or network. If not, suggest it or even develop it for him if he can't. Usually, independent dealers are more open to this idea than large chains like Waldenbooks, but try wherever you can. If the

store also sells the AD&D game or similar role-playing products, it will probably be more open to such an idea (since this will bring repeat business). Try it and see if you can find the gamers you're looking for.

Alex Martin  
Mesquite TX

I am writing in regard to a letter written by Stanley Bundy that appeared in issue #143. I am 11 years old, and I enjoy both the D&D® and AD&D games. With 1½ years of experience as a DM, I strongly suggested playing a non-evil character to all of my players. So far, only one has played an evil character, but he greatly disrupted the game and ruined it for the others.

The stories that people hear about D&D games are most likely started by nonplayers overhearing a game with evil characters. When parents hear these stories, they do what good parents would do and protect their child from this "cult" of role-players. My mother has heard these stories, too, but she does not stop me from playing because of the mental and creative aspects of the game. But others have not been exposed to this, and I have problems finding players for my campaigns.

The best way to stop these rumors is to stop the use of evil characters—which, after reading Mr. Bundy's letter, I have done. When I read what happened to the group of 200 in Corbin, I realized my own shortage of gamers was petty. But I still felt compelled to write this letter.

Dan Humphries  
Mercer Island WA

I have just finished last month's issue and am forced to respond to the battle that continues to be debated in "Forum." I am not talking about the struggle between Good and Evil, but rather the struggle about Good and Evil.

I have been reading DRAGON Magazine for six years now, and I have played role-playing games of all types for the same amount of time. It still amazes me how many people write in and voice objections to those who play evil characters in the AD&D game.

Now, don't get me wrong. I am not a psychologist, and I don't pretend to be an authority on role-playing. I also do not worship Satan, beat my dog, abuse my girlfriend, take drugs, or have a criminal record. However, according to some people who have written in to "Forum," if I play an evil character in a game, I might as well be in any or all of those categories.

Some people suggest that the choosing of an evil character is actually linked to the person's subconscious personality, and any evil acts his character commits during the course of the game will therefore be possible in his real-life personality as well. I say, "Dragon dung!"

Is the actor who portrays a mass murderer in a film then considered psychotic himself? Is the person who wrote the script automatically a bloodthirsty madman?

I have played evil characters and good characters in equal proportions over my experience as an RPG enthusiast. The flavor of the game came from successful role-playing of the character I chose, not from slaying innocent townsfolk or sacrificing victims to an evil deity.

The whole reason for the success of the AD&D game (and others like it) is singularly based on role-playing. Good and Evil within the constraints of the game make no difference. A lawful-good paladin is just as removed from my personality as a chaotic-evil assassin. I find it difficult to believe that average people of the sort that play the AD&D game could aspire to either of these extremes in the real world.

I choose to play these characters to experience a different personality, to role-play, not because I have a desire to seek out and destroy all Evil in the world or to become the Dark Lord himself. My characters may have these ambitions, but these characters are pieces of paper. I play the AD&D game, like many gamers, as a hobby and a release. (I would also like to add that I am just as mentally stable now as I was before I played the AD&D game regularly.)

It has also been said that the AD&D game was created to preserve the struggle between Good vs. Evil, with Good always being the victor. This is totally inaccurate. The fact that there is an assassin character in the game shows that it was not created for the Good only.

This whole suffocating attitude borders on paranoia. I believe it was this fear that caused the controversy a few years back about the AD&D game as a whole. One girl I talked to during this time said to me, "You play that? That's an evil game." She obviously knew nothing about the AD&D game. I am assuming, however, that most people who write in about this subject do. I would expect then, that they realize that it is only a game, and its purpose is to role-play. Though I take the game itself very seriously, it is fantasy. It is not reality.

Michael J. Natale  
Westborough MA



## LOOKING FOR MORE GAMERS?

You may think you'd have to travel to another planet to find a game convention. Finding friends who are also gamers can be a problem, too. Put your scoutsuit away and turn to the Convention Calendar in this magazine. There may be a game convention closer to your home than you'd think—and conventions are a great place to find friends who share your interests. Whether you like board-games, role-playing games, miniature wargames, or just browsing around, a game convention can be all you've hoped for. Plan to attend one soon.

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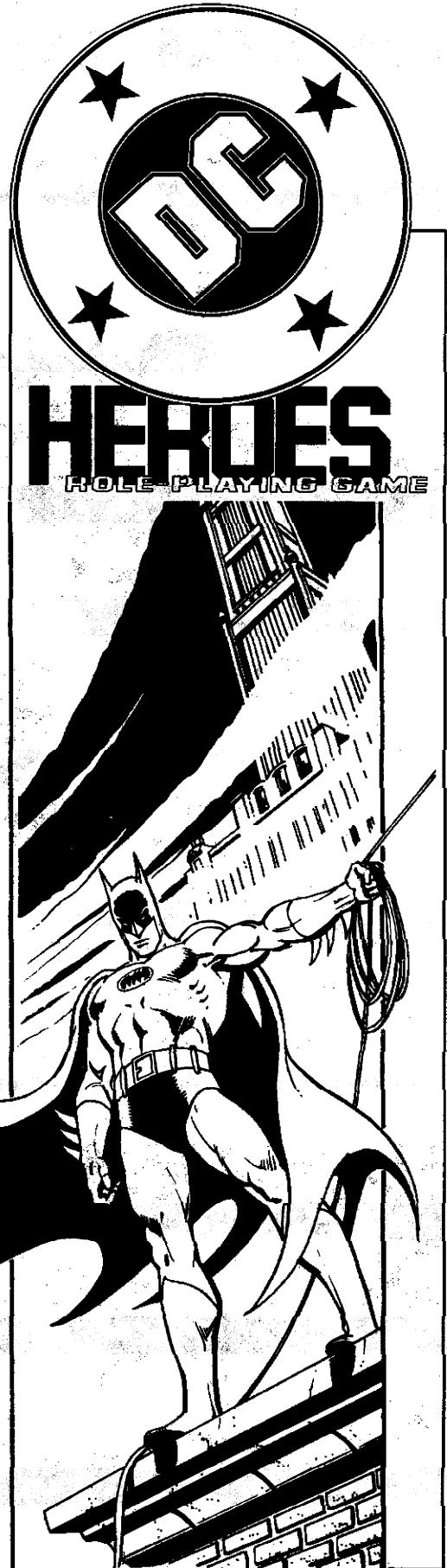
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