

241

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Playing Favorites

The TSR online areas see a lot of activity. I spend far too much time there myself, chatting with friends and keeping an eye on the message boards. One topic that never fails to draw responses (and flames) is that of favorite game world.

Depending on which topics you read, you might get the impression that all GREYHAWK® setting players are embittered 30-somethings with a deep and abiding scorn for anything new. And you might think that fans of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign are all 14-year-old boys who want to grow up to be Drizzt Do'Urdan. You might think that those who enjoy the PLANESCAPE® setting are incomprehensible, cant-spewing power gamers.

Naturally, you'd be wrong on all counts.

Put fans of two different football teams together, and you generate rivalry. You can even put fans of two different soft drinks together and sit back to watch the sparks fly. It's only human nature, really. We like to think that what we like most is the best, and we'll find things to disdain in those who have different tastes.

Among gamers, perhaps because we love our favorite settings passionately, the rivalry can become more than a little fierce, sometimes downright nasty. That's a shame, since we're all playing essentially the same game, speaking the same language. We just have different accents.

I'm one of those people who has a hard time picking a favorite anything. It's even harder for me when it comes to gaming because I love a lot of different game systems, even different settings within the same system. Part of my problem—if it is a problem—is that I have a short attention span. Give me a RAVENLOFT® game for a few weeks, and I'm ready to try the BIRTHRIGHT® setting for a change of atmosphere.

I suspect that many gamers are like me in this respect, enjoying a variety of settings as much as having a passion for one in particular. The reason you don't hear from us more often on those message boards is that it's hard to be a partisan when you don't have a single favorite. What's the point of jumping in on an argument between those who love Toril and those who love Oerth if you agree with them both?

It's also hard to get a good feel for how many gamers like a particular setting based on the responses of a relatively small group, even one as active as that online. At a guess, there are dozens, maybe hundreds of people who are fairly active in the TSR message boards. Considerably more of you are reading this right now, so let's hear what you think.

Write me a letter. Tell me whether you have a favorite setting or like several of them about equally. More importantly, tell me what makes you like each setting so much. Send your letter to "Favorite Setting" in care of the magazine address. We'll print the most interesting ones in "D-Mail" or "Forum" (depending on which is more appropriate for the particular letter), so be sure to include your full name and postal address, even if you send your letter via email. Let us know whether you'd like your full address printed or just your name; we'll print only your name, city, and state otherwise.

My favorites if I had to choose? I'll tell you after the letters come in.



Dave Gross

Issue #241 Vol. XXII, No. 4

November 1997



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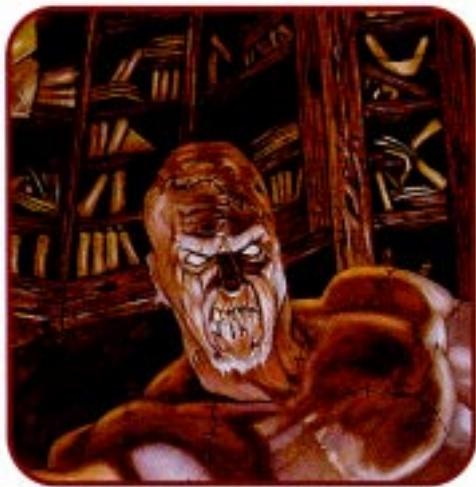
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Issue #241



Great Excavations

Steve Berman

Indiana Jones look out! New kits, spells, and proficiencies for making your next dungeon crawl a journey through time.

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A timeline of the BIRTHRIGHT® campaign, with new material for your AD&D® game.

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Roger Moore

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The modrons are on the march again, and just look at their new toys!

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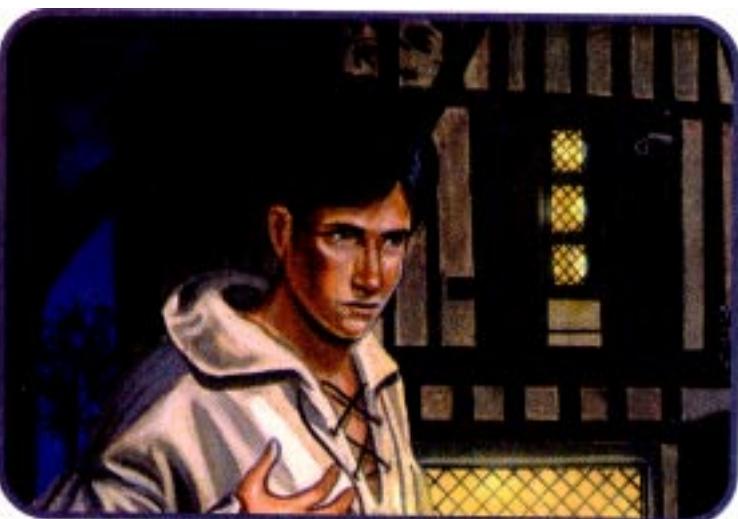


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If you have a comment, opinion, or question for the editors of DRAGON® Magazine, we'd love to hear from you.

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Male Chauvinist Article?

Dear Dragon Magazine,

I write with mixed emotions. While the article by Lawrence Wenzel on Mother NPCs in issue #238 did provide the occasional chuckle, it also gave me reason to pause and reflect on the message it really sent to the reader.

The type of mother portrayed in the article shares more in common with the idyllic June Cleaver than with any "real" modern mothers. In fact, most mothers would probably be offended by the stereotypical treatment they received in the name of humor.

A close examination of the article reveals an underlying lack of respect for women in general. It totally ignores the many valuable contributions women make in modern society and regulates them to the role of mere servants. Are mothers or women in general good for

nothing more than cooking, cleaning and changing diapers? Whatever the author's intentions, that is the distinct impression I had after reading the article.

The article also sends the message that "motherly" chores are the exclusive province of women. I don't know about the other readers of this magazine, but in my home most of these chores are equally shared by me and my wife (who is a mother). I will, however, admit that my wife works harder in the home than I do-a fault which I might never completely eradicate.

In the generally male-dominated hobby of fantasy role-playing games, we often hear the complaint that not enough women play the games we so enjoy. Well, can you blame them? If you were a woman, would you wish to role-play with a bunch of clods who tend to think of you as nothing more than a Mother NPC or at best a scantily clad barbarian princess?

Women deserve more than this. It is little wonder so few of them sit around our gaming tables. And for the naysayers, who would contend that there really is little interest for roleplaying among women, I suggest you access one of the online role-playing chat areas or MUDs and see how many women are roleplaying there. Chances are you'll find as many or more women there than you will find men.

I think DRAGON Magazine has a duty not only to provide quality articles for use in our games but also to promote the hobby in general. More than half the population is female, and if we continue to alienate them with chauvinistic attacks we can never hope to attract more than a few to this great hobby.

You should know better.

Sincerely,

Steve Stewart
Davenport, IA

So far, nobody's mom has complained about "Mommy Dearest." Should we be grounded for it? We'd like to hear what others think on this topic.

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ALTERNITY™ Game Support

Dear Dragon Magazine,

I wish to compliment DRAGON Magazine on issue #237. I used most everything in it in my dungeon, even the article on Lupins of the MYSTARA™ setting. I hope that you folks are back on track after the buy-out by the Wizards of the Coast and that you continue to produce useful quality articles for DRAGON Magazine. I might even subscribe if I can scrape up the moolah. Issue #237 is a great issue.

Another thing, I read the piece on the ALTERNITY game and was excited about it. Then my local sage of gaming told me that you weren't going to release Alternity until '98 because you wanted to "get it right." Well, here is some unsolicited and possible unwelcome input on it (sorry):

1. Help would-be ALTERNITY DMs by including everything necessary to star system and planet creation. Hopefully this would cut the paperwork and math to a minimum.

2. Can it possibly allow conversions from fantasy AD&D in terms of characters and worlds already created and using, for instance, the *Worldbuilder's Guide*?

Thanks for the good work. Keep it up, because I am an avid fan and DM.

Mark C. Runyon
Columbia, MO

As you should see by the time this issue hits the stands, we're back to our regular shipping schedule. (And there was much rejoicing!) In fact, with the help of our extended family, we're planning to improve DRAGON Magazine even more in the coming months. Scraping up the "moolah" for a subscription should be easier than ever, too. (Check out the new subscription prices in this issue.)

Yes, after the "recent unpleasantness," the TSR product schedule adjusted to take best advantage of our expanded resources and make sure that the ALTERNITY game arrives with the fanfare it deserves. You'll see the ALTERNITY game Player's Handbook in May of 1998, followed by the Gamemaster

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Guide in June. The latter should answer most or all of your questions about star system creation, keeping things simple enough that you needn't worry much about the math.

For an advance look at the conversion rules between the AD&D and ALTERNITY games, check out this past summer's Tale of the Comet, the boxed AD&D game adventure by Thomas Reid. Those rules also appear in the appendix of the Gamemaster Guide.

Article, Anyone?

Dear *Dragon Magazine*,

Let me start out by congratulating the staff of *DRAGON Magazine* for a very nice issue, namely, *DRAGON Magazine* #238. The "Ancient Enemies" and "Dungeon Mastery: Campaigns of Intrigue" articles were great. I'm sure my players will love them and the pain the two articles bring to their characters.

Anyway, in the party I DM, there are two sets of two characters that do not like each other. One is an elf-dwarf combination, and the others are a very masculine paladin and an Amazon warrior. I like the roleplaying this creates, but sometimes it takes too long or interferes with game play, and sometimes it is ignored when it would have an effect on the situation. Could you print an article or three dealing with this? I'm sure I'm not the only DM out there with this problem. I would also like to see material for the little races-halflings and gnomes, possibly even some races from the *Complete Book of Humanoids*, like pixies or fremlins. I like these races a lot, and I don't see much material for them.

Thanks for printing this letter (if you do), and curses on your soul (if you don't).

David Liepmann
Via Email

What choice did we have but to print this letter? Will one of our freelance authors please send in the articles David is requesting before we bear the full brunt of his wrath?

And while we're on the subject of article submissions:

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Tell Me What To Write!

Dear *Dragon Magazine*,

I haven't written a game article before, but I want to contribute to the magazine. The problem is that I don't know what to write about. Can you give me some ideas so I can write articles for you?

**Joe Gamer
Everywhere in the World**

This question has been appearing frequently again, so here's the short answer and some advice for prospective contributors.

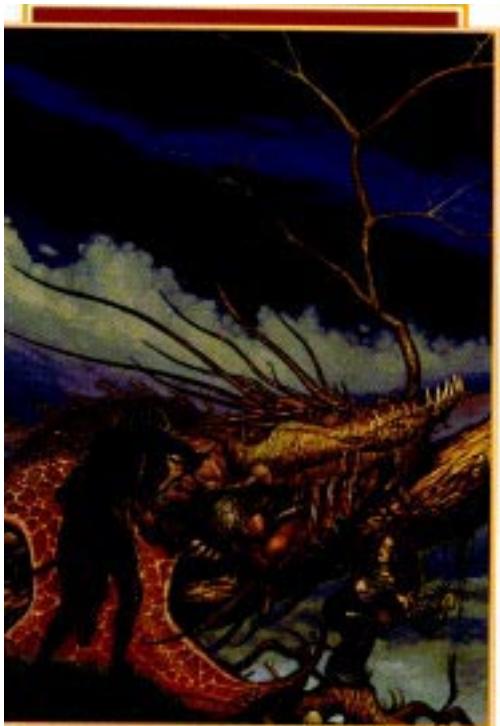
No, we won't tell you exactly what to write. You should always choose a subject that interests you. If you love playing wizards, for instance, then maybe you'll want to design some new spells-but make sure they're spells you'd like to use in the game! If you think it's fun, chances are good that others will feel the same way.

Beyond that advice for first-time contributors, the other important thing about articles for the magazine is that they should be immediately useful to most players. From the letters we've received over the past year, new spells, magical items, kits, races, equipment-anything that players can use in the game-are the most popular parts of the magazine. Articles with these elements are a good way to start out.

That's not to say we don't want articles aimed at the DM, too. We still want "Dungeon Mastery" articles and what we call "idea generators," articles-especially well-researched ones-that give readers a starting point for creations of their own imagination.

Remember to read a copy of the writers guidelines (available at www.tsrlinc.com or by sending an SASE to "Writers Guidelines" at the magazine address) before sending in an article query. And always send a query rather than a full manuscript.

We look forward to seeing plenty off first-time article queries this winter.



On the Cover

"Music hath charm to sooth the savage beast"—or so cover artist R.K. Post seems to believe.

When pressed for a statement about this painting, Randy replied, "It's always best to let sleeping dragons lie."

The warrior in this painting is none other than staff illustrator Todd Lockwood. (for another view of Todd, check out the cover on this year's *DRAGON Magazine* Annual.) When asked about the model for the bard, Randy just smiled and walked away.

Randy is currently busy creating images for the new ALERNITY™ game and illustrating several upcoming PLANESCAPE® setting products.



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Cavalier Rebuttals

I would like to address the issue of the cavalier kit and warriors in general in response to Bruce F. Beyers' letter in DRAGON Magazine #238. In his letter, Mr. Beyer decries the fact that the cavalier has been taken down a few notches between its first- and second-edition incarnations. One of his chief complaints is that the cavalier cannot specialize.

My first response to this complaint is that the first-edition cavalier was a plaything for power-gamers. Cavaliers—along with barbarians—were frequently called “fighters with tons of special abilities and attitude problems.”

edition AD&D® game. I've roleplayed tons of characters with attitude problems, not expecting or receiving one iota of compensation in game terms.

The second point I would make is that under the second edition rules, cavaliers are not prevented from specializing in any way. Mr. Beyers seems to have forgotten the distinction between “classes” and “kits.” According to the *Complete Fighters Handbook*, where the cavalier kit is discussed, any single-classed warrior can specialize (which is a slight change from the core rules, allowing only single classed fighters to specialize). There is nothing anywhere prohibiting a fighter or paladin who takes the cavalier kit from specializing. However, I consider this a bad thing, not a good thing. Despite the fact that the cavalier no longer has the same variety of bewildering abilities, he still has his old weapon bonuses. If you add to that the specialization that any warrior can take, once again we have a rules-exploitative killing machine.

In the meantime, it's not the cavalier kit that is collecting dust, as Mr. Beyers suggests. It is the good old-fashioned fighter. With all the bells and whistles you can have playing the cavalier kit and some of the other more extreme kits in the *Complete Fighters Handbook*, nobody is willing to play a regular fighter anymore. While the *CFH* went a long way toward giving the warrior a little variety of options, it ended up circumscribing the path that a warrior would have to take if he or she wanted to be good.

The best and latest treatment of the warrior classes is the **PLAYER'S OPTION** rules. Under the *Skills & Powers* rules, players have a great degree of flexibility

With all the bells and whistles you can have playing the cavalier kit . . . nobody is willing to play a regular fighter anymore.

Their “attitude problems” were offered as a counter-balance for the impressive array of abilities that they receive. However, the *Unearthed Arcana* failed on that note: all cavaliers and barbarians I saw in play were little more than killing machines. The supposed “counter-balance” served merely to be an eternal thorn in the party’s side. I was glad to see them go with the coming of the 2nd-

in deciding what abilities their characters have. Fighters still have the upper ground when dealing with weapon specialization, but other classes can obtain such abilities—at the cost of other abilities common to the class.

In addition, all the kits in *S&P* are balanced. You can make a barbarian-fighter, an acrobat-fighter, or an explorer-fighter and expect him to have a reasonable

chance if he were set up against a comparable-level cavalier fighter. The playing field has been evened at last.

I also feel the disappearance of certain cavalier abilities perfectly appropriate. Some benefits-like the ability to raise certain attributes-were inexplicable or overpowering to begin with. Other abilities were redundant; why make a special “weapons of choice” rule just for cavaliers when you already have specialization rules in place?

Now the character kits are more launching points for roleplaying and characterization, less goody-laden grab-bags for drooling power-gamers. The newfound flexibility of the kits has also been a boon to my game. There is an order of mage knights on my world that now has a simple explanation in character creation terms: they are simply wizards with -the cavalier kit.

The *Combat & Tactics* has further expanded the options available to warrior PCs. No longer do you have to resort to kits to carve out a “forte” for your character; you can craft your character to be a good warrior in one of a large variety of combat forms-such as the old cavalier’s mounted combat. Further, a warrior now has as many options in combat as a high-level cleric or mage; this helps bring back the storytelling aspect and banish the hack-and-slash side of combat in the AD&D game.

The warrior has finally come into its own light. It’s time to explore new characters and new role-playing horizons instead of dwelling on old ones.

Alan D. Kohler
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XP Bonuses

One subject which has never been satisfactorily explained is the concept of awarding experience point bonuses to characters with a high ability in their prime requisite. These characters already enjoy benefits to their class, whether they are bonuses to attack and damage, extra spells, or increased chances to employ class skills. The characters have more “natural ability” than others of the same class. This should not also translate into the ability to learn faster. A fighter who is stronger, for example, does not learn to wield a weapon better than another simply because he is stronger.

In fact, quite the opposite should happen. The warrior who knows he lacks physical strength must develop

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skill at arms if he wishes to survive against powerful opponents. The rogue with average manual dexterity refines his craft, using safe but secure techniques to ensure the same results as those with nimbler fingers.

The character with higher abilities can also learn to make the most of those abilities. A powerful fighter can learn when to rely on his power to over-

whelm an enemy's defenses, and a rogue can learn to judge whether his agility and speed are enough to escape from pursuit. Characters with high abilities sometimes learn when to capitalize on their gifts and when they must rely on their skills alone.

This system forces min/maxers to make a difficult choice and might change the seemingly inviolable order of similarly descending ability scores in characters of the same class. It also provides an advantage to an ability score that seemingly offers little benefit to characters other than priests.

Lloyd Brown

3863 Walsh Street

Jacksonville, FL 32205

Fear of Death

For Kevin McMahon who wrote about the fear of death, I fully agree, having seen too many campaigns go awry due to a GM's desire not to ruin the game by killing a favorite character.

My personal interpretation of the game is that it should be challenging; each treasure is offset by certain risks. The greater the treasure, the greater the risk. All characters should know in their hearts that sneaking into the dragon's cave will end in death unless the endeavor is carefully planned and executed. If there is a foul-up, chances are that a character will die. If a player doesn't want a character to die, feel free to offer up such adventures that do not have that inherent risk, such as body-guarding the fifth heir to the throne on his trip to the baths....

The key, I think, and most of my players would agree, is not to have healing magic available—it's to let the players know the risks. That way they will actually have an incentive to think as opposed to hacking through the plot. My campaigns run from 0-10th level in a low-magic version of the RAVENLOFT® campaign, and while characters do die, the players enjoy the challenge of the high-risk, convoluted plot-style games. For those who care not for that style, feel free to play risk-free, monty-haul games. Just don't expect me to play!

For Alexander Fontenot, who wrote about multi-classed humans: First, a well-researched and informative letter! While I agree with your comments, I would like to inform you (and any other readers) of my method of play. I like to allow pretty much what the player wants. To do this without causing too many unbalancing side effects, I have adopted a simple modification to the *Skill & Powers* rules. During initial character development, if a player wishes to pick multiple classes, he may. The key is that the number of character points he receives is the average for the chosen classes. He may then spend those points anywhere in the chosen class abilities. Once in play, any character, regardless of class, may search out a teacher of at least two levels higher in rank to teach a specific skill. The only exception to this is spellcasting, which must be chosen at the initial character generation as a racial ability. In this manner, a starting fighter/thief would have 48 points (rounded up) for class abilities. I have found this method reasonably evens out the power of having multiple classes.

As to your mentioned problem combinations, the solution lies more in my setting than in the rules. In my world, to become a paladin, the character has to have adventured and proven himself to his god. Then, around 5th level, his god would grant him paladinhood if he has proven himself. The bard is a similar case; I still use the 1st-edition rules for the bard class. A bard-in-training is much too busy to devote himself to the fanatical following of a god that paladin training requires, and vice versa. In this fashion, both the paladin and the true bard are rare and powerful characters, and by force of character point restrictions, will be naught but single-class characters.

All in all, a point that I see argued everywhere gamers voice their opinions: each campaign is the artwork of the ruling GM. All rules are optional, and if the players and the GM can't work out a reasonable compromise that satisfies both parties, find a new group. The whole idea of this venture is not to bog ourselves down in endless reams of rules and options but to enjoy playing a game (heaven forbid!) Please, rules lawyers and GMs all, if naught else, remember that!

David DeKeizer

Havelock, NC

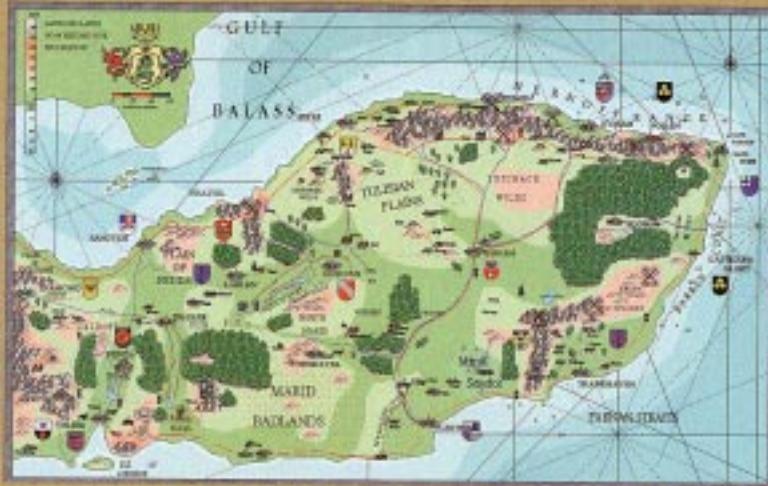
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Sage Advice

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, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, lake Geneva, WI 51347, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: "Sage Advice," DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, CB1 3LB, U.K. You can also email questions to thesage@tsr.com.

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This month, the Sage considers some queries taken straight from the mailbag.

What happens when a Rogue character violates his alignment restrictions? What if a thief becomes lawful good or a bard loses neutrality? All of their class abilities are skills, not granted powers, so what happens to them?

The DM is free to impose any penalties he deems appropriate. I recommend that a thief who becomes lawful good suffer no immediate effects, but the thief should not be allowed to gain any further experience in the thief class. A bard who loses his neutral alignment also should no longer be able to gain experience and should immediately lose his

levels of turning ability. I'm wondering which undead are considered to be in the aforementioned category. And how should DMs deal with special or customized undead?

If the undead creature's description lists any detrimental effects from sunlight, a specialty priest of Lathander gains the bonus levels; the description's Combat section usually lists such effects. The undead creatures from the *Monstrous Manual™* tome that fall into this category include banshees, spectres, vampires, wights, and wraiths. The priest retains his extra power even against exceptional individuals that can resist sunlight. For example, a Patriarch vampire (see *Van Richten's Guide to Vampires*) remains more susceptible to turning by specialty priests of Lathander despite its special resistance to sunlight.

Are the hiding properties of a cloak of elvenkind added to a Rogue's or rangers Hide in Shadows skill, or are they used instead of the skill?

The cloaks power to hide its wearer operates independently of any concealment skill the wearer might have. It is not cumulative with any form of the Hide in Shadows skill.

Are the hiding properties of a cloak of elvenkind added to a Rogue's or ranger's Hide in Shadows skill . . . ?

ability to memorize spells. While a bard's spellcasting ability is not a granted power, it does require a certain state of mind that the bard loses along with his neutral alignment.

According to *Faiths & Avatars* and to the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures book specialty priests of Lathander are especially effective in turning undead affected by sunlight-gaining four

The item description for the *cube of frost resistance* reads: "... it encloses an area 10' per side, resembling a cube of force. The temperature within this area is always 65 degrees F." Does this mean that no heat-based attack can raise this temperature? A player I know was trying to do this, saying that during a battle close to molten lava his character was not harmed because he had a *cube*

of frost resistance activated. I think that the temperature in the area is raised to 65°, so heat can affect a person carrying it, but he insists that it is always 65° regardless of the outside temperature. Which one of us is right?

You have encountered that most dangerous and irksome of beasts, the rules lawyer. Show no fear or uncertainty (they can sense that and will charge, fangs and claws deployed). Look your rules lawyer in the eye and say: "Within the field a *cube of frost resistance* generates, the temperature is always at least 65° Fahrenheit, but it can be higher. A *cube of frost resistance* offers no protection against heat or fire."

How is the favor of Ilmater spell (from *Faiths & Avatars*) supposed to work? The second form of this spell allows the priest to transfer his hit points to someone else, while absorbing the damage that this person has suffered. What happens if the caster doesn't have enough hit points remaining to handle all the damage the recipient already has suffered? Can casting this spell ever reduce the caster's hit points to less than zero? What happens when the recipient is at negative hit points or is suffering from a special damage effect, such as a bleeding wound from a sword of wounding?

The spell caster can never give the recipient more hit points than he currently has; however, if the campaign uses the optional rule for hovering at death's door (see Chapter 9 of the *DMG*), the caster can reduce his hit points to as little as -10 and transfer them to the recipient. That is, a priest with a total of only 10 hit points could actually transfer 20 points to the recipient.

In any case, whenever the caster transfers enough hit points to bring his total to zero or less, he must make a successful System Shock roll or die. If the caster's System Shock roll succeeds, he loses consciousness and remains so until magical healing restores his hit points to a positive number; nonmagical healing has no effect on the caster. Likewise, if the recipient has less than 0 hit points when the spell is cast, both the caster and the recipient must make system shock rolls as noted above. If the recipient makes a successful System Shock roll, he regains consciousness and can function normally, though he still forgets any spells he had memorized.

A wound from a sword of wounding prevents the recipient from benefiting

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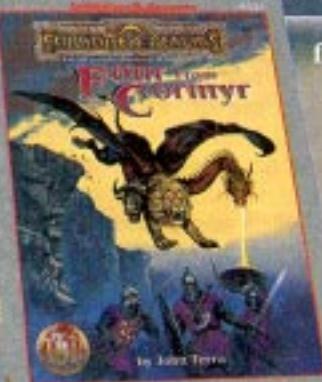
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from the spell; any hit points transferred are simply lost. Otherwise, the spell heals any special effects from wounds so long as they are purely physical. That is, the spell mends broken bones and cures dizziness but does not cure diseases or neutralize poisons. The spell also does not restore severed limbs, but it does halt bleeding from such catastrophic hits.

A few of the more unusual character races available to players—such as minotaurs, ogres, and most Athasian

Hit Dice usually works as a default casting level, but check the creature's description to be sure. A creature's casting level is either its Hit Dice or the minimum level required to cast its most powerful innate ability, whichever is higher. A brownie, for example, functions as a 7th-level caster—it can employ the fourth-level Wizard spells *dimension door* and *confusion*, and a Wizard must be at least 7th level to cast these spells. Table 7 in the *Spells & Magic* optional rule book lists caster levels for many types of monsters.

A *spell immunity* spell does not function with any other form of magical protection, including itself. It doesn't matter what form the magical protection takes. The DM might want to designate certain exceptions, such as magical armor or *bracers of defense*, but anything that provides a universal saving throw bonus (such as a *ring of protection*) or which renders the user immune or partially resistant to a specific attack form (such as a *ring of warmth* or a *ring of fire resistance*) should interfere with spell immunity.

Does the *know alignment* spell work on sentient magical items, such as swords?

races—can regenerate damage thanks to Constitution scores of 20 or more. What are the limits on this power? Can it regenerate the character back from death (provided the damage wasn't from fire or acid)? If so, is the character required to make a Resurrection Survival roll or lose a point of Constitution?

No, a character with a very high Constitution score can't regenerate back from death—once dead, a character effectively has no Constitution score at all. Note however, that a character hovering at death's door (see the optional rule in Chapter 9 of the *DMG*) is still alive, albeit unconscious. Characters with high Constitution scores cannot regrow lost limbs, but the DM might allow them to reattach lost limbs if the severed member is pressed onto the stump.

Does the *know alignment* spell work on sentient magical items, such as swords?

Sure, both the wizard and priest versions of the *know alignment* spell work on both creatures and objects, so long as they actually have alignments and so long as no outside force interferes with the spell. A *nondetection* spell, for example, defeats *know alignment* spells.

As you pointed out back in issue #228, the fourth-level priest spell *spell immunity* doesn't work if the recipient also uses other forms of magical protection. Does this mean that the spell recipient cannot benefit from any form of magical protection, or just not from magical protections relevant to the current use of the *spell immunity* spell? For example, does a *ring of protection +1*

Which of the following defensive priest spells work cumulatively with each other: *bless*, *protection from evil*, *aid*, *chant*, *prayer*, *strength of one*, *defensive harmony*? Or can they all function together? I am experiencing abuses by PC priests who can cast these spells together. Two priests can transform a party into an unbeatable killing machine.

Generally speaking, a creature or character cannot benefit from multiple defensive bonuses from similar sources. I suggest allowing *protection from evil* to work with anything else on your list. *Chant* and *prayer* can work together, but only when there are two different casters of the same sect (see spell descriptions); otherwise, I'd treat *bless*, *aid*, *chant*, *prayer*, and *defensive harmony* as progressively more powerful versions of the same effect—only the most powerful works for any recipient. Note that a single character could enjoy the offensive benefits of a *prayer* spell along with the protective benefits of *defensive harmony*, and that *aid* still grants temporary hit points even when other spells render the combat bonuses it provides moot.

Strength of one is a purely offensive spell that increases its recipients' Strength bonus to damage; it works with other offensive bonuses according to the principles outlined above.

Can magical effects generated through innate magical abilities . . . be dispelled?

Can magical effects generated through innate magical abilities, such as a monster's ability to haste itself, be dispelled? If so, should the creature's Hit Dice be used as the ability's casting level?

Such effects can be dispelled, provided the effect has a duration longer than instantaneous. A creature's

count against a *spell immunity* effect vs. *magic missile* spells? Or do only those spells and items directly linked to the current spell immunity effect apply, such as a *ring of fire resistance* when used with *spell immunity* effect vs. *fireball* spells? One final question: Can a character benefit from more than one *spell immunity* effect at a time?

Skip Williams has recently traded the bitter winters of Wisconsin for the fault lines, volcanoes and other uncertain geological features of the Pacific Northwest.

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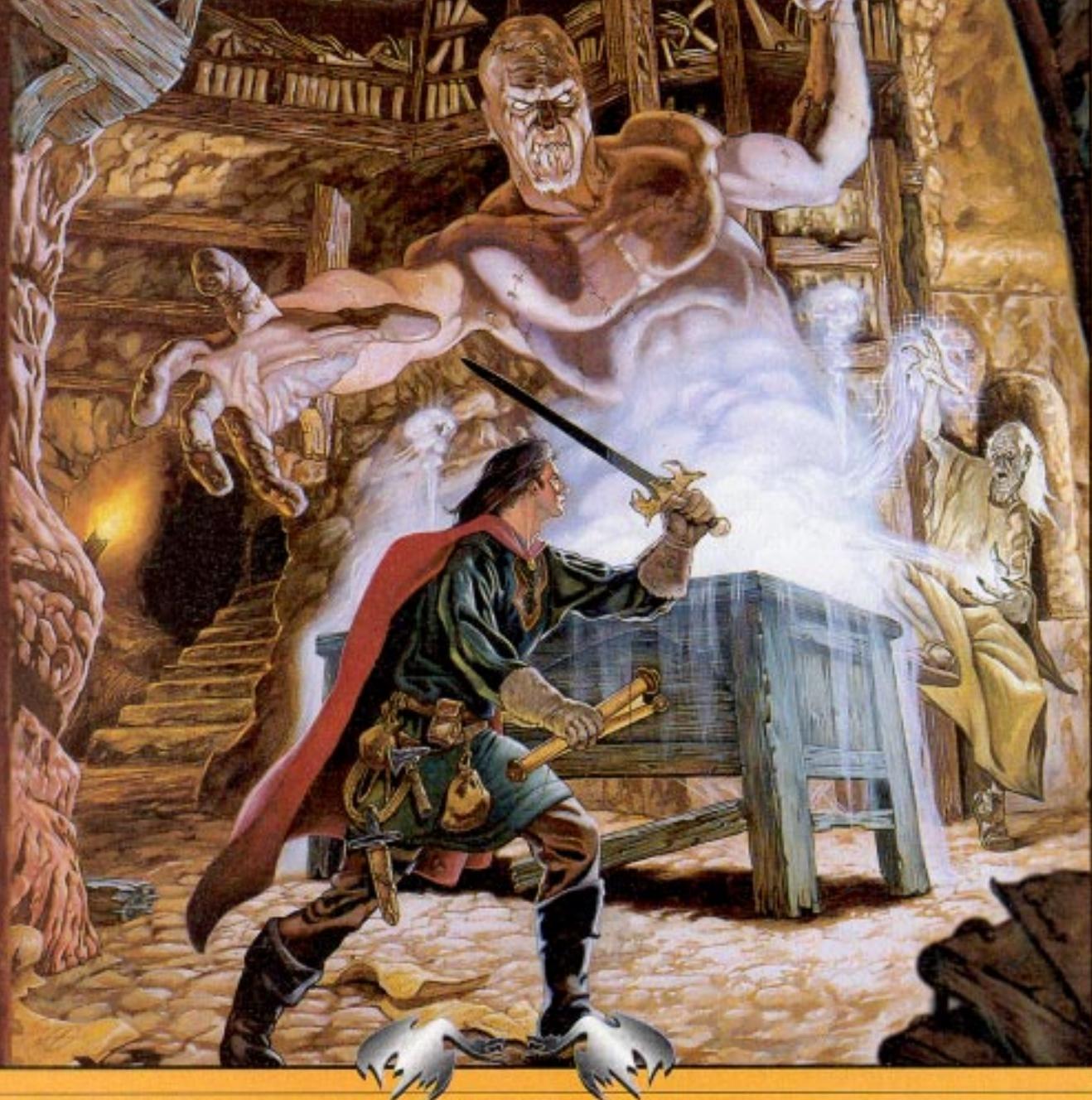
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Archeology, the study of ancient objects, peoples, and sites, is a natural addition to any AD&D® setting. Though most campaigns are set in a fantasy world often representing a pseudo-medieval age, there is no reason to ignore the times and cultures from the past. Indeed, they can provide some of the greatest excitement the game has to offer.

Why Dig Around?

Why introduce archeology and expeditions for relics and ruins to your campaign? The answers are simple: to expand the variety of adventures and to deepen the setting's history. Adding archeological quests to your game provides a reason why all these ruins exist and why so many people are eager to visit them. Such adventures allow a DM to reveal more of his game world. Sure, the characters may have traveled the lands, but do they know what happened on that battlefield a thousand years ago? Who built those ruins recently uncovered from the desert sands? Have the explorers learned the tragic mistakes of a culture now long-dead, or are they doomed to repeat them?

For players, joining an archeological expedition provides the opportunity to explore something many often neglect: the cultural background of a character. That dwarven thief might be proud of his mining talents and his ability to drink anyone under the table, but what about his heritage? He might join the search for the lost dwarven city of Khuldane hoping to find loot, but instead he might experience an epiphany walking in the halls of his ancestors, in the very rooms where they held court, planned battles, and sang songs of triumph and tragedy. Rather than merely ransack the site, wouldn't the thief desire to learn some of his people's ancient ways as a means of connecting himself to what was once so grand? The chance to roleplay an awakening—an awareness of a character's ancestors—is too wonderful to pass up. Considering how much potential history lies behind the culture of any PC, it is no great trick to entice a character of any class to take part in archeological explorations.

Archeological Adventures

by Steve Berman

illustrated by Alan Pollack

Priests

Many AD&D game priests are likely to involve themselves in archeology. Every faith has its own account of the history of the world and the origin of its religion. Eventually, adventurous members of the flock, whether laymen or clergy, seek to authenticate the stories by searching out evidence. For example, let's say that the Essence of Lireme is a powerful religion in the campaign world. According to the faith, the goddess once visited the ancient city of Pompere and shed a few of her tears upon the temple altar. For hundreds of years, followers made pilgrimages to the city to view what she left behind, which became known as her Essence. Tales say that when her priests began to charge a few coins to see the tears, the goddess punished the city with "winds of sand and a storm of rubble." The city was buried and forgotten in time. Now, centuries later, wouldn't followers of Lireme wish to seek out the fabled city and discover the temple where the Essence was kept? Who knows what lost prayers and knowledge could be found and shared with the rest of the devout.

A priest may seek out a forgotten shrine, buried or hidden away by the ages, seeking to reopen it and awaken the locals to the god. Such missionary expeditions would be dangerous not only because of whatever might be found in the ruins but also because of the challenges of dealing with the customs and mannerisms of the locals, who may not be primitive, harmless, or friendly.

Other times, priests might accompany expeditions simply because they fear that, without the presence of their church, important religious objects and sites might be ransacked. They must be present to enforce moral values and see that no sacrifice is done.

Rogues

Characters of the Rogue class are easily the most likely to join an archeological expedition, though their desires can vary greatly depending upon alignment and background. Good-aligned rogues might be hired to circumvent any traps within the ruins and to provide

advice on security for those artifacts found. The unscrupulous are, after all, drawn to a successful expedition like vultures to carrion. To those driven by avarice, ancient sites often hold treasure, but not always the sort that thieves are used to stealing. Sure, there might be precious gemstones and metals, but some collectors will pay more for a statuette made of carved stone if it has a profound historical significance to folks today. If that statuette is the first known idol of the water god Tryphonis, then any still-existing cult of the god will desperately want it. Most will be willing to pay quite handsomely. Others might try to take the item through force or stealth. Smugglers and fences will wish to play a role in any expedition in the hopes of making a sweet profit off the traffic of artifacts. Indeed, except for famed explorers, such Rogues might have the most contacts with caravans, buyers, and archivists.

Bards naturally will be interested in the remains of the past, as the songs demanded by audiences are nearly always old tales passed down from generation to generation. Minstrels desiring inspiration or seeking source material for new verses and compositions would be well-advised to take part in an expedition.

Warriors

Most warriors find themselves part of an expedition due to promise of pay. During peaceful times, a soldier might find himself out of work and thus without food or shelter. Many caravans hire such men as guards to ensure safe passage, and an expedition is no different. Indeed, besides brigands along the way, dangerous creatures might well be encountered in the ruins; the scholars will need a hired sword to protect them while they investigate. Rangers could be in great demand when the expedition must pass through an inhospitable wilderness like a desert or arctic waste; their expertise could well be responsible for the success of the mission.

Some warriors might seek to join an expedition simply to discover more

Table 1: Archaeological finds

Roll 1d100	Item During Dig	Notes for the DM
01-04	Bone Fragments	Ancient remains may be useful spell components for necromancers.
05-13	Pottery Shards	If an entire work can be recovered, then a <i>mending</i> spell might repair and yield a valuable artifact.
14-17	Dry or Rotted Leather	Adversely affected by the site's climate; could have originally been used with steeds or storage.
18-19	Colored Glazed Bricks	Limited value to collectors of bricks.
20-23	Arrowheads	Might be bone, stone, or metal depending on the Age of site.
24-29	Clay Seals or Tablets	Might bear an incomplete incantation or legend.
30-34	Hand Weapon Blade	Might be bone, stone, or metal depending on the Age of site.
35-39	Pages of Manuscript	Could be rolls of papyrus or vellum torn from a book.
40-45	Mosaic Tile Work	Might be part of a larger design; could even be a part of a map or puzzle.
46-50	Tableware	Carved from wood or bone, or fashioned from metal.
51-59	Broken Statue	Might be made of stone or bronze; could be the remains of a golem.
60-63	Wax Sealed Clay Urn	Might hold ancient grain or spices.
64-67	Clay/Terra Cotta Figurine	Perfect for enchanting or may hold a trap.
68-71	Implements or Tools	These may have been used by any tradesman (such as a physician, stonemason, etc.).
72-73	Whole Manuscript	A sheaf of tied parchment or a complete tome; contents could be anything imaginable!
74-77	Remains	Might be a desiccated/mummified corpse or simply a complete skeleton.
78-83	Ancient Coins	Would be valued for their age rather than for their metal.
84-85	Mummified Animal	The sacred or beloved animal of the culture.
86-89	Stone Vessels	Fashioned from semi-precious stone (alabaster or lapis lazuli, for example).
90-91	Oracle Bones	Carved/inlaid bones thrown to predict the future.
92-93	Religious Artifact	Might be of a dead/lost god or of an earlier version of the icon of a present-day cult.
94-95	Coffer of Wood or Stone	Could hold treasure or trap.
96-97	Complete Statue	Such art objects are usually made of marble or bronze.
98-99	Burial Mask	Might have religious significance or be made of precious metal.
00	Magical Item!	Roll again on this table to determine the nature of the object; a roll of 01-17 indicates an item once enchanted but now destroyed.

about their race's or culture's past. (This is especially true with the demihuman races.) Though they be militant in nature, warriors might still hold a great deal of pride in their society and want to see the past (in some cases more glorious than the present) rediscovered.

Wizards

While one might have talent to use magic, a true mage combines skill with knowledge. Knowledge is the primary treasure to entice a mage into joining an archeological expedition. Who can guess at what esoteric and eldritch practices were performed when the world was young and magic fresh to the land?

Of course, the arcane arts might well be quite different in the old days (see "The Concept of Ages," below). Evidence of ancient magic might be unrecognizable or unusable, but still it can provide much inspiration to the workings of modern magic.

For those mages seeking to earn a bit of coin to further their pursuit of the

arcane, hiring out as part of an expedition can be most profitable. Often, archeological sites need the use of magic in deciphering old writings and revealing hidden rooms. Since some distant cultures would consider knowledge as the ultimate wealth, ancient libraries and archives could be as well protected as treasure troves. A wizard's talents would be demanded when dealing with the strange wards left behind as guardians.

The Archivists Guild

Characters are not alone in their pursuit of the past. There exists an alliance that also seeks out such knowledge. Members of the Archivists Guild vary from sages to merchant-princes. Though the guild is not affiliated with any one religion, it is not uncommon to find priests of differing faiths as part of a guildhouse. The guild's symbol is a broken hourglass with the sand released, symbolizing how one can reach the essence of time through its remains. They hold chapters in major cities across the

world and are often associated with universities and other centers of learning. Not all chapters of the guild are peaceful; sometimes bitter rivalries over an archeological find turn into fierce intrigue or even open conflict. Most guildhouses claim that they are interested not in the collection of artifacts for profit, but rather in the study and cataloging of the past. This claim, however, is not always true. Most maintain a certain level of nobility in the pursuit of knowledge and turn aside prospective members who show obvious greed. Perhaps what most separates one guildhouse from another is their philosophy. Each tends to develop a certain school of thought regarding the past and how earlier cultures lived. Some might take a more religious view, that the world was created by the gods, while others take a more humanistic approach.

Members who sell finds for profit without guild authorization are dismissed, and word of such deeds circulates quickly among all of the different guildhouses.

One earns membership in the guild by nomination. The main perk is that the guild sponsors archeological expeditions. To be considered for nomination, a person must have proficiency in ancient history and knowledge of at least one ancient language.

The archivist guild trades in certain objects that aid in the exploration of ruins and the recovery of artifacts. Nonmembers pay a steep fee for the same objects. One can obtain anything, from scrolls of *comprehend languages*, dig, and mending spells to shielded lanterns, to special brushes and shovels for the delicate unearthing of finds.

Ancient History

Ancient history is pretty much knowledge gained from two sources: surviving documents that have been translated over the years, and religious documents and stories. Written or transcribed mention of the antediluvian past would be highly rare and certainly valuable. Of course, the reader is at the mercy of the author's pen (or chisel); the work can be highly spurious if not outright false. Remember that most ancient historians were actually travelers and thus had no real scholarly training. The same can be true with legends and religious stories. Some of the actual facts might have been lost over the years of constant retelling and embellishment. Opposing religious groups are sure to rewrite the record of history to agree with the theology of their faith.

The concept of prehistory as real-world historians understand it might be unknown in a fantasy world. Fantasy historians might envision ancestors as being more primitive in culture (such as manners, clothing, possessions, and inventions) than on the evolutionary scale. Fossil remains could be considered a number of things other than what they are: necromantic experiments gone awry, for example, or the bones of a creature from the Elemental Plane of Earth. Living prehistoric finds, such as dinosaurs and neanderthals, might be seen merely as more monsters that lurk the land.

The Concept of Ages

In real-world history, we consider there to be different Ages of human development. Loosely, they are the Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age. These are differentiated by the use of materials in development: at first, humans can use only primitive stone tools and weapons; next comes the working of bronze in

both arms and implements, and jewelry; finally, ironcraft is developed. In a fantasy world, however, one must also consider the development of magic. While the three Ages of tools can still exist, there also might be an *Age of Wild Magic*, in which the powerful forces of the arcane were first tapped; an *Elemental Age*, when the only magic prevalent was that of the four elements; and finally the *Age of Traditions*, where the different schools of magic (Alteration, Conjuring/Summoning, etc.) were discovered and adopted.

A DM should consider the preceding Ages (or those of his own devising) when placing magical items or spells in any archeological site. A wizard might find a truly unique incantation carved on stone tablets he has unearthed, but the spell could well be unrecognizable or "primitive" to the mage's thinking due to lost concepts of thought (such as an alteration spell based on a fantasy version of the Greek "humors" theory, or any other ancient philosophy). Only after much research and experimentation could the spell be adapted.

DMs should also keep in mind that non-human races would have their own historical Ages reflecting the course and accomplishments of their own race. Thus, elves could have a *Dawn Age*, a carefree time when they were simple hunter/gatherers and first learned their ties with nature. Next might come a *Treeshape Age*, when the elves learned how to sculpt living plants to form breathtaking homes and defenses. Finally, elven development reached the point where their smiths could work the rare metal mithril. Other possible Ages include a *Schism Age* when the drow developed a separate identity. All these could be closely tied into the elven religion.

Dwarves might have an *Age of Stone*, when they would see themselves borne of the rock and first taught to mine. Next came the *Age of the Forge*, wherein iron-craft was discovered and mastered. Finally there might be an *Age of Valor*, defined by their massive campaigns to hold their underworld homes from marauding goblins and orcs. The last would hold great interest to warrior explorers who wish to recover ancient devices and relics that would provide great morale to the dwarven nations.

Not only would demihumans and humanoids have their Ages, but so too would other intelligent creatures. Why not include *Hatching*, *Ironscales*, and *Long Slumber* Ages for dragons? Could that well-funded expedition to the moun-

tains secretly be at the behest of a bronze dragon seeking a fossilized ancient eggshell to prove its claim to the lordship of such beasts?

Depending on what Age to which the archeological find dates back, the sort of artifacts found can vary from chipped stone arrowheads to worked pottery all the way to simple steel blades. Imagine a dwarven explorer discovering one of the earliest hammers used in the forging of iron. Even though the object is not magical, it would be priceless to any dwarven community as a link to their past and the pride of their race's accomplishments. Or consider the discovery by a human expedition of tattered scrolls revealing elven magics used in the birth of dryads. Would not the fey races want such things kept from falling into unethical hands? Would not the elves desire to reclaim a fragment of their past?

Discovering a Site

Most ancient sites are found quite by accident. Sometimes a construction crew uncovers some unusual remains while making renovations on a city. Most urban dwellings are built on the remains of far older cities, and it is not inconceivable to discover ruins as one digs down. The filthy winding sewers might well lead to a buried marketplace where treasures abound.

Other remains might be found by wanderers or explorers. Sometimes weary travelers seeking shelter in a cave might find pieces of artifacts used by the land's inhabitants ages ago. In cold regions, fossilized remains lie locked in ice.

Not to be overlooked are the ever-present maps and literature of fantasy campaigns. Explorers and treasure-hunters often use such resources as the groundwork for their exploits. Ancient maps may turn up as part of libraries or the holdings of monasteries, drawn on the walls of caves or worked as inlaid tiles on a ruin's floor. Literature includes passages from old sagas and poetry. Either may hold clues to the location of lost cities, forgotten shrines, or abandoned trade routes.

The most important thing to remember about archeological adventures is that the past holds more wealth than simple gold. Ideas and dreams that had been lost for centuries yield the most treasure. A good DM will coax his or her players into realizing the value of exploring the sites of ancient cultures. A good player will incorporate the findings into the workings of his character's personality.

Table 2: Archpeolpgist Thief Skill Adjustments

Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Find/Remove Traps	Move Silently	Hide in Shadows	Detect Noise	Climb Walls	Read Languages
-15%	+5%	+ 10%	- 5%	- 5%	-	+5%	+5%

New Kits

Archeologist

Description: Archeologists are Warrior or Rogue adventurers who travel the world exploring ancient ruins. They could be loners seeking a personal challenge to discover the past, or they might work with an array of other interested parties. Some choose such a lifestyle for personal profit, others for the pursuit of knowledge or to improve their understanding of their own race or culture. No matter what their ethics, archeologists brave the dangers of lost civilizations and may encounter anything from unsafe tunnels and excavations to guardian beasts and ingenious traps.

These are not the sort of folk who deal with present threats; an archeologist is more interested in dealing with the remains of the past. An adventure in which a maiden needs rescuing from the maw of a beast would not entice this character, but mention how the monster blocks the passage to a lost city and the archeologist is already checking his gear in preparation for the journey. As such characters must be ready for anything and thus require a keen mind, good reflexes, and a strong arm, an archeologist PC—whether Warrior or Rogue—must have a minimum Strength, Dexterity and Intelligence of 13. An archeologist character can be of any alignment.

Role: Archeologists are often at odds with typical adventurers. Those of a more ethical nature wish that sites remain as they were found and consider intruders and looters to be the lowest of thieves. Those archeologists of a more sinister bent are rivals to both their ethical fellows as well as common adventurers: they seek to reach a site before anyone else and grab the treasures for their own sakes.

There is no reason why archeologists need be only humans. In fact, it seems likely that many will be either dwarves or halflings of Stoutish blood. Such demihumans have the most experience with exploring underground where most ruins lie buried. Such races have a natural talent for deducing unsafe conditions. Multi-classed fighter/thieves would be tremendously popular archeologists.

Weapon Proficiencies: *Required:* None. *Recommended:* Because there is often limited room while exploring ruins, most archeologists are proficient with one-handed melee weapons such as the short and long swords. A whip might also be used by dramatic characters whose players have seen all the Indiana Jones movies.

Secondary Skills: Mason, miner, or trader. Miners especially foster an interest in buried ruins.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: *Required:* Ancient history, excavations (new). *Recommended:* Directional sense, languages (ancient), looting (taken by unethical archeologists), observation, reading/writing, relic dating (new), stonemasonry.

Equipment: Archeologists tend to travel lightly; there is nothing more frightening than being trapped under some fallen debris and being unable to move in metal armor. Archeologists therefore usually wear nothing more encumbering than studded leather. Excavating sites and recovering relics requires a variety of tools, from picks and shovels that need a pack animal to light brushes for removing dirt from finds, and wrappings to protect a find. Those archeologists without infravision had best be prepared with a good light source, such as a lantern.

Skill Progression: For rogues with this kit, Find/Remove Traps and Read Languages are the most useful.

Special Benefits: An archeologist, at any time during the beginning of his career (in game terms, no later than 3rd level) may choose to specialize in a specific culture or race. Demihuman types must be specified; one cannot specialize in all dwarves but must choose in hill or mountain or even gully dwarves. This specialization grants additional insight when dealing with any such remains or ruins the character happens across. On applicable proficiencies (ancient history, ancient language, excavations, relic dating, etc.) he gains a +3 bonus to his roll. The DM may also grant this bonus to other proficiencies depending on the immediate situation. For instance, an archeologist specializing in wood elves may happen across an ancient wooden

flute instrument and wish to make use of his musical instrument proficiency to figure out how it was played; the DM considers this a valid request for the +3 bonus.

Rogues also gain a +5% bonus when using their Find/Remove Traps and Open Locks skills upon the workings of their specialized culture/race. Warriors with this kit may take proficiencies from the Rogue group without penalty.

Special Hindrances: As this kit is more one of exploration and discovery than of martial endeavors, Warriors acquire new weapon proficiencies much slower than other fighters, at the rate of one every four levels.

The drawback for Rogues is a matter of reputation: thieves that steal and plunder from archeological sites will become known far and wide, and the only ones that will associate with them are greedy merchants and other thieves looking for spoils. They suffer a -2 on reaction rolls with learned folk (such as other archeologists, sages, and scholars). Those rogues who choose to value sites as places to further knowledge become disliked by collectors and traders, suffering a -2 on reaction rolls when dealing with such individuals.

Wealth Options: $3d6 \times 10$ gp

Bibliotaph

Description: Most learned men value the written word, but a bibliotaph hoards it. Bibliotaphs are priests and wizards who have become obsessive about collecting and guarding books, scrolls, and tomes. Their entire life has meaning only in relation to the number of volumes they have acquired and kept locked away for their eyes only. What might begin as a career hunting down knowledge soon turns into a passionate desire to acquire text after text, regardless of the subject matter, the rarity, or the worth of such volumes.

Priests may choose this kit. Such men and women tend to worship gods of lore or knowledge. Such deities are rarely more than Lesser Powers and may be as miserly as their followers. The various acts of worship may not be held in an open temple but rather in the private holdings of the cult. All this secrecy

further instills a devotion to the written word in the bibliotaph.

Wizards of this kit are rarely specialists; such men and women are privy to far too much knowledge to limit themselves to any one school of thought. They often seek out the rarest of spells simply because such incantations are often kept in the pages of the rarest of books.

Most bibliotaphs are human simply because that race feels the nagging voice of time the most. A collector is aware of his finite life span, but still he tries desperately to hoard as much as possible during his years. Elves may experience some level of the thrill collectors feel, but their extended life spans tend to make such pursuits seem frivolous. But there are rumors of elven bibliotaphs who have spent centuries caching writings from countless cultures. Such a thought is tantalizing to adventurers, maddening to other bibliotaphs.

A bibliotaph character must have a minimum Intelligence of 13 and a Wisdom score of no more than 15. This latter restriction reflects the shortsightedness of the character who cannot see past his own obsession.

Role: Bibliotaphs are usually found locked away in their libraries or monasteries, but they are sometimes encountered traveling the land, searching for more writings to steal and lock away. At lower levels, such men and women are forced to be involved personally. As they progress in power and rank, they can hire a network of rogues and underhanded merchants to help them acquire the tomes they so desperately seek. Some of the most powerful bibliotaphs have not stepped foot outside their domiciles in years. Like one of their treasured manuscripts, they have become a prisoner of the collection.

Bibliotaphs tend to be Neutral in alignment; their obsession may have originally been noble (the safeguarding of knowledge for generations), but soon the desire to hoard overcomes any altruism, and thus Good alignments soon develop into more Neutral ethics. There are some Evil bibliotaphs, but such men and women tend to become so vicious in the acquisition of books that they draw notice of authorities and may find themselves thrown into dungeons without even so much as a page to comfort them.

Weapon Proficiencies: Required: None. Recommended for priests/wizards: dagger or staff.

Secondary Skills: Scribe.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Required: Reading/writing, screed lore (new). **Recommended:** Ancient history, languages (ancient), languages (modern), spellcraft.

Duties of Priest: Guidance. A bibliotaph priest believes he has been charged by the god to ensure the survival of tomes and lore (this may or may not be a delusion). As such, he does everything in his power to defend his library from intruders and thieves.

Spheres of Influence: Major: All, Divination, Guardian, Learning, and Summoning. Minor: Enchantment, Protection.

Special Benefits: Mages with this kit gain a bonus of +5% to learn a spell (but this bonus will never increase the chance over 99%).

Priests gain access to a new sphere called Learning, which deals with the accumulation of knowledge, books, and lore. (This is opposed to magical learning through the Divination sphere).

Because of their stubborn, obsessive nature, bibliotaphs are naturally resistant to Enchantment magic. They gain a +1 on all saves against such spells and, whenever commanded to perform an action that would be against the welfare of their collections, they are entitled to another, immediate saving throw at +5 to resist. If successful, the spell is broken.

Special Hindrances: Because of his lack of social skills, a bibliophile suffers a -1 penalty to his loyalty base and reaction adjustment when dealing with anyone not interested in books (such as sages, scribes, and other bibliotaphs). As the character becomes progressively more a recluse, this penalty worsens by -1 for every 2 levels of ability gains (so -2 at 3rd level, -3 at 5th, and so forth).

Wealth Options: 5d4 x 10gp



Below is a listing for the Sphere of Learning, as well as two new spells. Both are available to Priests and Wizards of this kit.

Sphere of Learning

All of these spells deal with learning or books. Several Wizard spells have a priestly counterpart in this sphere, and these are listed below. Except for a change in spell level, the characteristics and effects are identical.

First Level: *Comprehend languages, copy**

Second Level: *Dictation**

Third Level: *Secret page*

Fourth Level: *Diary**

Fifth Level: *Read banned letters***

Sixth Level: *Distant diary**

* from the *Wizards Spell Compendium*

** new spell listed below

New Spells

Read Banned Letters

(Abjuration)

Level: 5

Sphere: Learning

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Duration: Instantaneous

Area of Effect: one book, scroll, etc.

Saving Throw: None

This spell exists in both priestly and wizardly forms. It is used when the caster must read a document or object that is suspected to be cursed (as in some magic scrolls) or trapped with a spell such as *explosive runes* or *sepia snake sigil*. The caster merely touches the document, and the words are revealed to his thoughts safely, without triggering any protective magic attached to them. The dweomer upon the words is in no way dispelled; it will activate, as according to the spell, when the document is read normally.

The document need not be open and apparent; the priest may read the banned letters of a rolled scroll or closed book. However, no special understanding is imparted by the spell, so if the writings are in a language unfamiliar to the caster, he simply sees an image of the script in his mind, nothing more. Thus, a tablet with the *confuse languages* dweomer (the reverse of *comprehend languages*) remains unfathomable- to the caster.

Note that the casting of this spell also does not ensure that any real information is learned. A cursed scroll may simply be gibberish upon a rolled piece of parchment and would be revealed as such. Also, this spell does not allow the caster to read a passage written with *illuminatory script*.

The material component for the Priest version of this spell is the caster's holy symbol laid upon the document or object to be read. The material component for the Wizard version is a small, wire-wrapped glass lens that is clutched in the caster's hand, which he lays upon the document. Otherwise, the spell description is the same for both Wizards and Priests.

Page Guardian

(Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 5

Sphere: Guardian

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 5

Duration: See below

Area of Effect: 1 book, scroll, or item bearing words

Saving Throw: None

The *page guardian* is a rare and potent spell used to protect an entire library by casting the spell on a single volume within it. When the spell is cast, whenever a creature other than the caster approaches within 100 feet of the document, a *page guardian* is conjured forth from the script to attack the intruders. The spell can lay dormant for years until being triggered.

A *page guardian* is normally a nondescript humanoid figure whose lower limbs fade off to wispy trails. However, if this spell is cast upon a page that features illustration, the *page guardian's* appearance mimics that of the most prominent drawing.

A *page guardian* adopts some of the dweomer from the writings from which it rises. Thus it may possess special attacks and defenses depending upon the exact nature of the document. If a *page guardian* rises from a *scroll of protection*, then the *page guardian* is invulnerable to the same force that the scroll would ward off. For instance, a *page guardian* spawned from a *scroll of protection from swords* would suffer no damage from a long sword, no matter what its enchantment. If a *guardian* rises from a spellbook, then it can cast up to five random spells, launching each spell but once from the tome. The DM must adjudicate what abilities are gained by the *page guardian* should this spell be cast upon other magical books, such as those that increase characteristics or a *manual of the golems*.

A common fallacy among opponents of the *page guardian* is that the creature can be damaged by the destruction of the source writing. This is untrue, because when the guardian rises, it automatically absorbs any enchantment upon the document; it erases clean that which it springs from.

A *page guardian* attacks until all intruders within sight are slain. However, it does not leave the chamber in which its source writings are located. If no foes are left, the guardian slowly fades back into the writings that spawned it.

Table 3: New Proficiencies

Proficiency	Group	#Slots	Relevant Ability Check	Modifier
Excavation	General	1	Wisdom	-1
Relic Dating	General	2	Intelligence	-2
Sacred Legends	Priest	1	Intelligence	-1
Screed Lore	Priest, Wizard	1	Intelligence	-1

Thereafter, the magic fades away after a number of days equal to the caster's level, leaving the books unprotected but intact.

Notes: *Page guardian* is restricted to bibliomorphs.

The material component is a special ink made from rare components that cost 500 gp. A virgin hawk feather must be used to draw the single sigil that the document bears as proof of this spell's dweomer.

Page Guardian: Int Average; AL N; AC 0; MV 9; HD 5; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA Special; SD Special; SZ M; ML Fearless (20); XP Special (depending on special abilities and defenses).

New Proficiencies

Excavation

The character with this proficiency has learned the techniques for the careful unearthing of a site or ruin. This process involves shoring up crumbling foundations, choosing the proper tools, and protecting exposed finds. Without the proper use of this proficiency, delicate finds may be destroyed by crude and reckless digging. Characters with the excavation proficiency can ensure that the structural details of a dig are left intact so that further visits to the excavation site can still yield useful knowledge.

Relic Dating

This proficiency proves useful whenever the character comes upon an object of questionable age. He can use this skill to gain an educated guess as to when the item was made. There is no roll necessary for those objects fashioned in the last 20 years (the age of these will be obvious to the character), unless it has been altered through non-magical means to appear much older; in that case, a successful proficiency check reveals the fraud. This proficiency can be combined with ancient history to give more accurate information as to the past of a relic.

Sacred Legends

A character with this proficiency is well-learned in the myths, stories, and

tales of a single religion. This knowledge is not the same as the theology and practices that are gained with the religion proficiency. The character, when confronted with a question or evidence of the faith's past, may roll this proficiency to recall a specific event or legend that has relevance. For instance, when an ancient idol is discovered, a successful proficiency check might reveal that the statue resembles a long-forgotten paramour of the goddess, and the character could retell some of the important stories about them.

Additional proficiencies can be chosen to gain knowledge of the sacred legends of other religions.

Screed Lore

A rare proficiency, screed lore offers expertise in the care and collection of books, tomes, scrolls, and the like. This proficiency is crucial to librarians, sages, and scribes. A check would be required whenever the character handles a particularly delicate or worn manuscript. This proficiency also allows a collection to be searched and a specific volume found. Failed rolls indicated problems from the annoying (a torn page or lost book) to the disastrous (an entire scroll crumbles to dust at the slightest touch) depending on how badly the check fails.

This proficiency also provides some knowledge of the safeguards used in protecting books. This knowledge covers not only mundane traps, like poison painted along the edges of the pages, but also magical means of safeguarding libraries. The character can attempt a roll at a -5 modifier to notice any evidence of such traps.



Steve Berman, when not writing articles to fit DRAGON® Magazine themes perfectly, is currently busy with his first fantasy novel.

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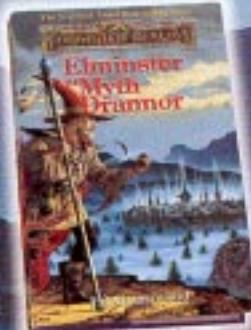
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Chronicle of Cerilia



A timeline for the BIRTHRIGHT® campaign

by Carrie A. Bebris and Ed Stark

illustrated by Albrecht Dürer

According to bards and historians of the land, to understand Cerilia (the world of the BIRTHRIGHT® campaign setting), one must first understand its history. The struggles and triumphs of Cerilia's people, no matter how far in the past, still shape the land today.

The most critical event of Cerilian history is the War of Shadow, which culminated in the battle at Mount Deismaar. The evil god Azrai, who had already chased five human races from the southern continent of Aduria, threatened them once more in their new home of Cerilia. The resulting war involved all those who lived on the continent: the five transplanted human races (the Andu, Masetians, Rjuven, Brechts, and Vos), a sixth human race that had migrated from across the Sea of Dragons (the Basarji), and Cerilia's native peoples (elves, dwarves, halflings, and humanoids). Yet the mortals' strength alone could not stop Azrai: In the end, the good gods themselves had to take physical form and battle their evil brother.

The resulting cataclysm destroyed all the gods. As their divine essences rained down, they landed on the human champions who had fought at their sides. Some of these champions absorbed so much divine essence that they became Cerilia's new gods. Among them was Haelyn, who ascended as the new god of noble war.

References

This timeline includes events from the following sources:

BIRTHRIGHT™ Campaign Setting: *Atlas of Cerilia, Rulebook*

Campaign Expansions: *Cities of the Sun, Rjurik Highlands, Havens of the Great Bay*

Domain Sourcebooks: *Roesone, Endier, Tuornen, Medoere, Iljen, Talinie, Ariya, Binsada, Khourane, Baruk-Azhik, Tuarhivel, Halskapa, Stjordvik, Hogunmark*

BIRTHRIGHT Accessories: *Blood Enemies*

BIRTHRIGHT Novels: *The Iron Throne, War, The Hug's Contract, The Falcon and the Wolf*

The calendar most commonly used in Cerilia today, Haelyn's Count (**HC**), takes as its starting point the cataclysm at Mount Deismaar. Two other calendars in common use are Masetian Reckoning (**MA**), which takes as its starting point the first arrival of humans in Cerilia (in -515 **HC**); and Michaeline Reckoning (**MR**), which commences with the death of Michael Roele, the last Emperor of Anuire (in 973 **HC**). The elves of Cerilia have their own calendar, which takes as its starting point the birth of Queen Tuar (in -3205 **HC**). All dates listed here are given in Haelyn's Count; approximate dates are given in italics.



The Scepters of Old Oak

-2911 HC

The elves of Cerilia came before all other humanoid or demi-human races, or so the legends say. They awoke out of the elements and joined together-at first out of fear of the new world, then out of joy for finding others like them. Sidhe Braelachheim united them, and they lived in the Aelvinnwode, the first nation of Cerilia. When the other, "lesser" races appeared (dwarves, kobolds, and goblin-kind), the elves dominated them or forced them into hiding. The Golden Age of the Elves lived on under the trees of the Aelvinnwode.

After centuries of uncontested dominance, the elves faced challenges from these "lesser" races. The elves had grown great indeed, but the others grew plentiful. The goblins arose against their elven lords and battled them. Other humanoids did the same. The elves fought back and blamed each other for their failings.

In time, certain elves arose among the throng and declared themselves lords of their people. These lords took charge of the battles against the humanoids at first, but then sought to rule their people as well. Soon, external conflicts ceased as each lord fought for dominance.

The lords finally agreed to meet at the Old Oak, the center of the Aelvinnwode and a hallowed place where they could discuss their differences. The "discussion" became an "argument" which came near to becoming a "battle." But then, whatever forces created the elves in the first place stepped in.

Legend has it that the ground shook underneath the elves and cast them about like dolls. Only seven elven lords remained on their feet but then lightning, out of a clear sky, struck the Old Oak and all were cast upon their faces. When the seven lords looked up, they saw the center of their empire shattered and smoldering. The Old Oak was dead.

But something drew the seven lords to the cloven tree. Amid the smoldering ash, each found a stick, blackened by the lightning but still strong. Each took up a piece of the Old Oak and, within a day, led a portion of their people out to a new part of Cerilia, to form the seven elven kingdoms.

No one knows which forest domains these became, but it has always been said that the first among them was the Aelvinnwode. The Coulladaraight may have been another, as well as dark Tuarn Annwn and hidden Cwmb Beinn. Did Rhoubhe Manslayer have a

scepter of old oak as well? None now know. Lluabright and Tuarhievel could have once, but these scepters were once the basis of the individual elven kingdoms' power. They may still exist, enduring as the elves endure, though they are now lost from history.

According to legend, a scepter of old oak would have the following powers. It would be intelligent, with a special purpose directed at ruling an elven kingdom. Its wielder would gain +5 toward the success of any domain action used to directly benefit his elven kingdom, and it would automatically increase the loyalty of his provinces by one grade. In an elf's hands, the scepter would be a +3 weapon, causing 1d6/1 d6 damage (double against goblins and kobolds). If a command word were spoken, the scepter would release a part of the lightning still stored inside it, once per day, as a *lightning bolt* spell cast by a 6th-level wizard.

Finally, it is rumored that each scepter had one additional power, unique unto itself. None know what any of these special powers are, but they would be guarded jealously by the scepter's wielders.

For more information about the history of Cerilia's elves, see the *Tuarhievel* domain sourcebook.

The Chronicle of Cerilia

Time Unknown

Elves spring from the union of earth, air, fire, and water.

-16294

Sidhe Braelachheim unites elven tribes of what eventually will be known as the Aelvinnwode into one nation, initiating the Golden Age of elven culture.

-15705 to -11205

Dwarves emerge from the depths of the earth, only to be dominated by the elves; dwarves eventually retreat into the mountains again.

-4905

Elves enslave the primitive kobolds and goblins of the Stonecrown Mountains, teaching them civilization.

-3905 to -3705

The kobolds rebel, retreating into the mountains south of the Aelvinnwode and building impenetrable underground warrens.

-3700 to -515

Rise and fall of human empires in Aduria.

-3515

Founding of Baruk-Azhik.

-3500

Founding of Lluabright.

-3205

Birth of Tuar, future queen of Tuarhievel.

-2968 to -2911

Massive goblin uprising during which Sidhe Braelachheim is killed; individual powerful elves proclaim themselves lords over portions of the forest; end of Golden Age.

-2910 to -2749

Humanoid Wars. Tuar manages to secure a haven for the elves (later known as Tuarhievel); she is declared queen.

-2249

Tuar constructs Thorn Throne in Tuarhievel.

-1435

Dwarven-elven peace accords.

-1200

Ghaelfyd of Sielwode befriends Tarazin the Gray.

-800

Brechts in Aduria begin explorations by land and sea to find a new home, hoping to flee the Shadow.

-515

The Flight from Shadow and arrival of humans in Cerilia; the Brecht explore the western seas.

-515 to -465

Andu settle most lands now recognized as Anuire.

-508

Mhor Maglan begins rule of Mhors in Mhoriad.

-503

Maltos Sariya founds city of Saria, where Ariya now stands.

The Ghost-Ship

-20 HC

The Basarji did not come to Cerilia from Aduria, and many believe they were not fleeing any war or Shadow in their homeland but came simply as explorers and settlers, eager to find a new land for their people. Whatever the case, the Basarji settled along the southern coast of Cerilia about the same time as the other human races came from Aduria, and they fought against the Shadow alongside their human cousins.

The Basarji came across the Sea of Dragons, and dragons have always been a part of their legends. Some believe that dragons may have driven them from their homeland, while others believe that the tales of Cerilian dragons drew the first Basarji explorers to Cerilia. Whatever the case, the Basarji of old may have known more about dragons than they would tell.

It should not surprise anyone then to believe that (as legend has it) one Basarji wizard-king brought a unique item across the Sea of Dragons to his new home. An orb of dragonkind may have made the journey on his fast ship to the coast of Cerilia. But it never made the landing.

The wizard-king, eager to arrive in the new land (perhaps to try out his orb on a Cerilian dragon, which were more plentiful in those days), used powerful magics to provide wind for his vessel.

But, upon nearing the Cerilian coast, the magics either went crazy or attracted the attention of some powerful Cerilian entity and the ship foundered. Only a small party of survivors escaped, and they told the tale of the wizard-king refusing to leave the ship without his "treasure."

Many believe that the wizard-king was able to partially save the ship by placing it under some strange geas. Though he and most of the crew died fighting in the magical storm, the ghost ship returns to the world of the living every so often, during the greatest of storms, and tries to land on Cerilia's southern coast. So far, it has always failed, but the ghost-ship has been spotted several times, just off Cerilia's southern coast. The undead wizard-king stands at the helm, lighting the way with his spells as his undead crew strains at the rigging, screaming for a release from their half-life.

Legend has it that, if the ship can be boarded by a living man, it can be guided into a safe harbor and the man will gain the treasure of an ancient Basarji king. However, other legends state that the wizard-king will slay any would-be savior, rather than give up his powerful orb.

For more information about the Basarji's colonization, see the *Cities of the Sun* campaign expansion and the Ariya domain sourcebook.

a major trade center. The first wave of Brecht settlers reaches the Great Bay of Brechtür. They settle what will later become Müden, Massenmarch, and Kiergard.

-192

Local clans elect first jarl governor of Skapa Hjarring.

-190

Death of the Old High Druid Sigvar; Njarl Sunbow succeeds him. The Brecht encounter the elves of the Coulladaraight. Despite initial fears, the two sides agree to delineate borders. Danigau is settled by the second wave of refugees.

-183

Halskapa founded.

-182

Lluabright stands as the only remaining elf nation in Rjurik.

-166

The Mhora raze Kar-Durgar.

-115

Irboudans migrate to Saere Sendiere from Irbouda.

-105

Irboudan tribesmen form empire over Zikala, Sendoure, Rohrmarch, and lands that will eventually become Binsada.

-100

Azrai corrupts Vos and sways elves to take battle out of elven forests and into human lands; decline of elven culture is accelerated.

-50

The Brechts try to sail north past Andu; initial attempts fail. The smaller ships founder in the Sea of Storms; others that attempt to anchor for provisions disappear. Tales of hideous creatures in the great northern woods reach old Brechtür.

-350 to -250

Brecht explorers cross the land bridge but find themselves embroiled in the human-elf wars. Andu overlords enslave many. Some flee north and discover the Krakkenauricht.

-250

The Brechts try to sail north past Andu; initial attempts fail. The smaller ships founder in the Sea of Storms; others that attempt to anchor for provisions disappear. Tales of hideous creatures in the great northern woods reach old Brechtür.

-249

Rjuven druids found first temple at Odemark in Halskapa.

-220

Rjuven wars with the elves begin.

-200

Skapa Hjarring in Halskapa known as

-20

Basarji colonization by sea, from Djapar to Cerilia, begins in earnest. Müden's population increases in the third wave of Brecht colonization, settlers push into Mountains of the Silent Watch.

-10

Khinasi clans displace Irboudan tribes in Binsada and neighboring lands, marking end of Old Binsada.

-478

First humans reach Tuarhievel; elves and humans agree to share the forests.

-400

First Rjuven settlements in northern Cerilia.

-400 to -200

Wars of humans and elves. Humans begin clear-cutting forests and driving elves away; elves establish the gheallie Sidhe ("Hunt of the Elves") knighthood. Wars of the Deretha (5th tribe of Andu) and Spiderlord. Founding of city of Ilien. Tarazin the Gray attacks Elins. Wars of the Mhora (3rd tribe of the Andu) against the goblin kingdom of Kar-Durgar (Caer Duirga).

-350 to -310

Human-elf vs. humanoid war in Rjurik.

- 2

Opening of the War of Shadow. The third wave of Brecht colonization ends with the War of Shadow. Most Brechts fight under Anuirean or Basarji banners. Brecht warships help to turn the tide against Vos raiders. The Great Bay region holds firm against invasion.

0

Battle of Mount Deismaar; Masetians all but exterminated; Tuar recognizes true nature of Azrai and sways most elves to ally with humans, then vanishes during battle; Tuarhievel is named in her honor.

1 to 435

Thorn Throne of Tuarhievel sits empty while power figures squabble over rightful ruler.

2

First Rjurik nations are founded.

8

Karn Aglondier becomes ruler of Iljen, vassal of Diemed. Saria sacked, then rebuilt by Basarji as Ariya.

9

Nurida el-Deyir experiences a vision, begins preaching Avani's faith in Ariya.

10

Rohrmarch founded by Brecht refugees and Masetian survivors.

12

Founding of City of Anuire.

10 to 40

Roele unifies Anuire, dominates eastern Brechtiir and southern Rjurik; priests of old gods battle priests of the new; surviving Masetians flee to islands near Ajari Deep.

14

Rjurik defeat Anuireans at Battle of Dankmaar.

15

Roele wages war on Rjurik but is repelled; Baruk-Azhik seals gates and retreats underground.

22

Battles between Anuireans and northern Rjurik end in stalemate.

24

Halskapa achieves status as the most powerful Rjurik realm.

25

Jankaping, Halskapa, Svinik, Rjuvik, Stjordvik, and Hjalsone join Roele's

Shadowstrike

34 H.C.

Wjulf, first king of Hogunmark, was a hero of the battle at Mount Deismaar. He fought in the great War of Shadow with an heirloom sword called *Shadowstrike*, which his ancestors brought from Aduria when they fled to Cerilia. The sword was passed down through the centuries from father to son until it came into Wjulfs possession.

Shadowstrike was forged of a metal called viikmer that is found only in the western region of Aduria. During Azrai's attempt to overtake Aduria, the Rjuven people discovered that weapons constructed of this silver-purple metal were more effective against shadow creatures than were standard weapons. Viikmer weapons receive a +3 bonus against undead and creatures born in the Shadow World.

Already a powerful weapon because of the viikmer, *Shadowstrike* became even more so at the battle of Mount Deismaar. When the gods were

destroyed in the cataclysm, the sword of Wjulf's ancestors absorbed some of the dying god Reynir's essence—enough to imbue it with intelligence and a blood ability.

Shadowstrike is therefore now an intelligent *long sword +3 vs. undead and shadow creatures*. It has a neutral good alignment, an intelligence of 12, semi-empathic communication capabilities, an ego of 11, and the ability to *detect evil* in a 10' radius. Its special purpose is to defeat scions of Azrai and their minions, and its special purpose power is the healing blood ability. The sword can heal its wielder of 246+7 hp damage per day (all at once or as needed); it can also cast (as a 7th-level priest) *remove paralysis*, and either *cure disease* or *cure blindness*, once per day.

Currently, *Shadowstrike* rests in a place of honor in the treasury room of Hogunmark's palace complex in Veikanger. For more information about the sword and King Wjulf, see the *Hogunmark* domain sourcebook.

empire as equals to the Anuirean realms.

29

Faroud el-Mesir founds Mesire.

34

Hogunmark founded; Wjulf chosen as first king.

38

Danigau repels Anuireans in Wierech three times. The Count of Danigau announces that further attacks will force him to "cleanse Cerilia of the Anuirean pestilence." Anuireans relent.

40

Crevesmtihl, Müden, Massenmarch, and Dauren all bend to Anuirean overlords. Kiergard is in anarchy. The rest of the southern Brecht realms are under Anuirean occupation. Djapar breaks off contact with the Basarji; Roele conquers the Saere Siendere.

49

Nurida el-Deyir reaches the Docandragh.

51

Roele's campaign to conquer Vosgaard fails.

52

Roele flees Vosgaard after a failed

campaign, visits Anuirean lords in Grevesmühl and Müden.

53

King Wjulf of Hogunmark dies; his daughter Breyana ascends as queen.

60

Death of Roele; his son Boeric Roele becomes Emperor. Anuirean overlords in some Brecht lands involve Brecht leaders in government. Some win popularity and respect.

61

Cities of Aaldvika and Veikanger founded in Hogunmark.

70

Mhor Endira swears allegiance to Boeric Roele, formally incorporating Mhoried into Anuirean Empire.

71

Birth of Thendiere Mhoried, illegitimate son of Mhor Endira and Emperor Boeric Roele.

81

Rise of the Serpent's power; first mention of him in the Docandragh.

83

Emperor Gladian Roele allows founding of Talinie.

The Wounding of Tarazin

886 H.C.

The full tale of the battle between Tarazin the Gray and Witt Hoffstugart is epic that cannot be rendered in its entirety here-so let us focus on a legend that arose after the battle, when Witt leaned panting against a broken boulder and Tarazin, bewildered and trailing blood from many deep wounds, fled north, toward the Drachenaurs and his current lair.

Witt, it is said, gathered up some of the scales and blood of Tarazin, to prove that he had indeed fought the beast and driven it from its long-time home. But, in his weariness, Witt stumbled and fell, rolling through a puddle of Tarazin's dark and steaming blood and over a nearby cliff.

By all rights, the Brecht warrior should have died from the fall, but he arose, as bewildered as Tarazin before him, completely unharmed. The wounds he had sustained during his battle with the dragon still troubled him, but he suffered no damage from the fall. Reasoning that Tarazin's near-immortal and obviously magical blood

had protected him, Witt gathered up as much blood as he could, filling his waterskin in the process.

Over the course of several centuries, Witt, or one of his ancestors, has had cause to bathe in Tarazin's blood. According to legend, the blood renders the wearer completely invulnerable to normal and, possibly, magical damage for a duration equal to 1 d6 turns. If any of the blood exists today, however, it has been lost. Witt Hoffstugart's remaining heirs, if there are any, have no knowledge of this magical element's whereabouts.

It has been speculated that all Cerilian dragon blood bears special properties. Invulnerability, immortality, magical prowess-all these things might be gained by a person able to cover himself in dragon's blood. Of course, it is unlikely that any Cerilian dragon will sit still and allow anyone to extract enough blood to bathe in, but that is how legends are made.

For more information about Cerilian dragons, see the BIRTHRIGHT campaign setting. Tarazin the Gray is detailed in *DRAGON Magazine* issue #218.

85

Founding of Nurida and el-Deyir.

110

Civil war in Müden. Quelled quickly, it leads to the eventual establishment of Treucht and Berhagen as separate realms.

117

Uprising in Massenmarch. Assisted by renegade Mtidenites, the remaining old families of Massenmarch rise up against their Anuirean overlords. Massenmarch's overlord brutally puts down the rebellion. Massenmarch begins slide into anarchy.

208

The Gorgon defeats Raizhadik, dragon of Kal-Saitharak.

229

Gorgon launches invasion of Anuire that is repelled along the line of the Maesil.

245

Orhan of Ariya converts to Avani's faith.

253

Appearance of Dusk Man in Halskapa, raises troops of orogs and gnolls to conquer three Halskapan provinces.

255

Baruk-Azhik reopens contact with outside world.

300

Founding of Khourane.

370

Hjalsone conquered by Anuireans and renamed Dhoesone.

375

Dwarf-city of Kheleb-lzhil sealed.

436

Goblin invasion of Tuarhievel repelled by generals from House Llyrandor; Thorn Throne accepts Fhilerwyn Llyrandor as ruler, though he refuses title of "king in favor of 'prince'" so as not to equate himself with Queen Tuar.

479

Battle of the Iron Cape; Anuireans attempt to invade Halskapa.

491

Britter Kalt slays the Sinister and becomes the Vampire.

502

Gorgon's second invasion of Anuire is halted in the pass of Caerlinien, in Cariele.

550

Serpent curses surviving Masetians.

556

Mhor Ulmaeric, a powerful sorcerer, ascends to Mhoried's throne.

568

Ulmaeric deposed by his sister, Princess Philiera.

574

The Order of the Sun founded in Djafra.

681 to 708

Clan Wars (civil war) in Hogunmark.

700 to 800

Height of the Anuirean Empire's power and expansion.

734

Birth of el-Arrasi.

755

Rashid douné el-Arrasi defeats brother Eirat in battle for succession.

756

El-Arrasi ascends to the throne of Ariya.

762

Emperor Alandalae takes Iron Throne, opens campaign against the Basarji. Founds Lectis Magna on Saere Sendiere.

764

El-Arrasi organizes Basarji Federation; Basarji revolution begins.

781

El-Arrasi sacks Lectis Magna.

784

Alandalae killed in Basarji campaign at Battle of the Asarwe; Caercuillen becomes emperor and ally of el-Arrasi following Battle of Kfeira; Basarji Revolution ends with Anuire keeping only Suiriene. Basarji rename themselves "Khnasi," meaning "people under the protection of el-Arrasi."

785

Khourane struggles to reestablish itself as a nation.

787

Diyab el-Falai'a emerges as victor for throne of Khourane.

788

City of Ber FalaTa founded.

784 to 885

Golden Age of Ariya.

796	Death of el-Arrasi; assassinated by an agent of the Serpent; body (in stasis) disappears.	950	Death of Emperor Hadrian, beginning of Boeruine's rebellion.	1032	Halskapa and the remaining Rjurik realms declare independence from the Empire.
798	Diyab el-Falaïa is assassinated; son Yezeed ibn Diyab el-Falaïa succeeds him as ruler of Khourane.	958	Battle of Sorrows Field, end of civil war with Boernuine.	1038	Mhor Caelwyn leads army to aid Cariele against Thurazor.
812	Eldracht Hoffstugart of Müden leads rebellion against Anuire.	955	Founding of Besdiam.	1050	Mhor Oervyn fortifies Torien's Watch.
813	Prince Eldracht killed by Tarazin the Gray.	973	Death of Michael Roele, end of Empire; Anuire abandons. Suirienean colony; the Sorcerer appears in northern Rjurik and begins carving out what is now the Realm of the White Witch from Hogunmark and Lluabrait.	1050	Fulda Geissen of Grabentod marries Kurrel of Drachenward; Kurrel dies in the same year. Drachenward and Grabentod nearly go to war. The Hag appears in Kordan.
833	Chenghas Zaran brings Binsadan nomad clans to aid of Ariyan ruler Jamal I against Aftane; Jamal refutes Chenghas Zaran any territorial reward. Chenghas Zaran conquers western Ariya, founding modern Binsada.	975 to 1100	Civil wars rack Anuire, shattering Empire. Brechtür regains its independence. Anuireans retreat from Rjurik, Khinasi.	1051	Appearance of the Lamia in Besaïam.
865	First accounts of the Hydra in the Harrowmarsh.	976	Müden and Massenmarch achieve true independence from Anuirean overlords. The other Basin States soon follow, though the war is bloody in Kiergard. The realms of the Overlook and the Western Reaches gain independence in the coming decades. Berhagen becomes an independent state.	1063	Avans and Boerunes conclude treaty ending the worst of Anuire's civil wars.
885 to 985	Height of Khinasi power.	980	Fatima bint el-Arrasi founds theocracy in Ariya.	1075	Sefra pillaged and destroyed by Vos raiders.
886	Tarazin wounded by Witt Hoffstugart, removes lair to Drachenaurs to avoid humans.	982	Aftane attacks Ariya and seizes four northern provinces, beginning century of warfare.	1100	Anuirean influence completely banished from Rjurik lands; King Hjafolen of Halskapa forges early alliances with new Rjurik domains.
911	Death of Rhuobhan, King of Innishier, and ascension of King Rhynnwyd.	999	Death of Aedan Dosiere, Regent of Anuire.	1118	Appearance of the Basilisk in Djira.
920	Müden, Treucht, and Berhagen become "free states" under Anuire. Both Brecht and Anuirean leaders rule in these realms.	1011	Appearance of the Lamia in Besaïam.	1122	The Diabolyk destroyed by the Gorgon.
922	Transformation of Garrilein Suliere into Seadrake.	1013	Orog encroachments in Baruk-Azhik begin.	1134	Appearance of the Sphinx in the Bair el-Tehara; residents sack Irbouda and flee.
925	Founding of the Nuridian Temple of Sarma.	1024	Prince Philerwyn of Tuarhievel marries Ibelcoris, outlaws gheallie Sidhe, opens trade with humans. The Sielwode condemns stance and threatens war.	1136	Brecht League is founded. All major realms are represented, though Müden contributes only naval forces.
926	Massenmarch and Rheulgard become "free states." Treucht is ruled by guardians from both Massenmarch and Mtiden. A strong army remains in Kiergard. Founding of Sendoure.	1030	Stjordvik and Rjuvik declare independence from the Empire.	1137	Brecht "exploration army" moves into "unoccupied" lands to the east. Conflicts with Vos tribes begin.
938	Birth of Michael Roele.	1031	Svinik declares independence from the Empire.	1140	Tsarevic Basil Zariyatam unites Vos tribes and defeats Brecht League at the battle of Lake Ladan. Brecht forces flee north and west, strengthening Müden and Grevesmühl.
				1140	The Vos overrun the realm now known as Rzhlev. The forces of Müden

The Overlord's Head

1320 H.C.

Karl Bissel, the Swordhawk, served the Gorgon faithfully as spy, general, and assassin during the Kiergard campaigns. Shut out from what he believed his rightful reward, he took over Massenmarch and declared himself an enemy to the Gorgon and his minions. The Gorgon seems to have little regard for the threat presented by Bissel, however, and has tried to have him removed from his usurped throne on only three known occasions.

The first occurred right after the Swordhawk began his rule. The Gorgon sent messengers to Kiergard, ordering his newly-appointed overlord to bring Bissel back into the Gorgon's fold. Apparently, the Gorgon did not mind the Swordhawk's impertinence, since it might garner him a new kingdom.

The overlord, bloated with his own importance, went to Massenmarch along with a sizeable retinue. They road to the old capital of the realm, only to find it in flames. They began to scour the country, looking for the Swordhawk.

The Swordhawk, however, found them first.

Ignoring the overlord of Kiergard's banner, the Swordhawk attacked immediately. He slew the overlord's retainers and personally captured the man he saw as the Gorgon's favorite over him. The overlord pled for his life, offering to surrender Kiergard to the Swordhawk but Bissel just smiled and beheaded the man.

Riding into Kiergard with the overlord's head on a pike, Bissel believed he, not the Gorgon, would rule Kiergard

drive the Vos out of Berhagen and negotiate an uneasy peace. The dwarves of Daikhar Zhigun help the people of Grevesmühl, and a cautious friendship develops.

1198

Medeci stormed by Vos hordes; Medec falls.

1225

Death of the Sandpiper.

1230

Minotaur claims the Maze.

1258

Richard Endier begins clearing the Spiderfell, wins the lands now known as Endier in a riddling contest with the Spider.

and Massenmarch. But the Gorgon had anticipated the Swordhawk's actions. He had counted on his overlord's arrogance and appointed a newer, more competent ruler for Kiergard in the old one's absence. The Swordhawk barely escaped Kiergard with his life.

Sometime during the debacle, the new overlord of Kiergard (a sorcerer, it appears) caused the head of the old overlord to be animated. Resting on the Swordhawk's pike, it cried down mockingly at its killer, taunting Bissel amid his failure.

Normally, the Swordhawk would have had the head burned or otherwise destroyed to end its taunts, but he reasoned that the greatest torture was to allow it to remain alive. The Swordhawk keeps the head of the old overlord of Kiergard as a trophy now, and never travels anywhere without it. The head, dismayed at its continued existence, still bitterly reviles the Swordhawk at times, but, most often, acts as a fairly competent advisor to the ruler of Massenmarch. It finds existence boring and painful, and gains relief only in activity. If that means working for its most hated enemy, it will do so.

If the head of Kiergard ever fell into other hands, it might prove valuable to an enemy of the Swordhawk. It knows all of Bissel's plans (or nearly all) and has been with him for centuries. Still, it is very evil and angry, and might betray any possessor out of sheer habit and spite.

For more information about Kiergard, Massenmarch, and the Swordhawk, see the *Havens off the Great Bay* campaign expansion.

1271

Gorgon invades Tuarhievel, armies repelled.

1272

Endier declares itself a Free City, independent of Diemed. Goblin-army from Spiderfell pillages eastern Diemed.

1278

Lehoene Aglondier proclaims Ilien free of Diemed.

1292

Jarod Dannis wins Battle of Ice Haven, ending three centuries of chaos and warfare in Talinie; puts three-year-old son Edrand on throne. The Gorgon attempts to invade Tuarhievel; Prince Philerwyn is killed and the province of

Sideath becomes uninhabitable due to a magical disaster.

1294

Birth of Prince Phileraene of Tuarhievel.

1304

Rise of Karl Bissel in Massenmarch. Acting secretly as an operative of the Gorgon, Bissel assassimates leaders of Massenmarch and Kiergard, causing anarchy in both realms. Müden tries to assist the remaining nobles in Massenmarch.

1305

Dantaverah el-Sharaf, the Tyrant, claims regency over Binsada

1313

Kingdom of Famenna conquered by Pipryet Vos.

1315

Erdrand the Great ascends throne of Talinie. Facing Zikalan expansion, Ariya and Binsada ally.

1320

The Gorgon's armies conquer Kiergard. An overlord (other than Bissel) is appointed. Bissel names himself the Swordhawk and makes himself ruler in Massenmarch.

1327

Completion of Ber Dairas in Binsada.

1331

Dantaverah el-Sharaf assassinated, elsharafs broken in Binsada.

1334

Founding of Kvigmar.

1342

Western Merasaf conquered by Iron Hand orogs; northwest Vos provinces secede, form Yeninskiy.

1345

Erdrand II becomes Thane of Talinie; first Rashid queen begins rule in Binsada.

1347

Erdrand's wife Clarice becomes regent after Erdrand II's death. Clarice, the Apostate Queen, marries Halloravant.

1356

Morik von Luftar lands on the Krakenstaur and observes no inhabitants. Other explorers follow in the next few decades; many disappear along with their ships.

1372	Barony of Ghoere created from old states of Ghiste and Bhalaene.	1436	Llaeddra ascends to the throne of Lluabraith.	1461	Rhuobhe Manslayer kills Telaena Tuor, regent of Tuornen.
1388	The Serpent seizes control of Mairada.	1439	Ulrich Graben "returns" to Grabentod and names himself the new king. Local pirates and other inhabitants seem to accept his claims after some initial dissension. He begins raiding the northern waters of the Great Bay.	1462	Alamie invades Tuornen, held at Haes; Braedonnaal Tuare of Tuornen kills Jerem Alam.
1396	Sultanate of Djira conquered by Aftane and Djafra, Black Spear Tribes add chaos.	1440	Colin Shaefpaete reveals himself as the Island Mage and closes the Zweilunds to outside incursions. His ships, once confused with the pirates of Grabentod, begin raiding on their own. Coronation of Grimm Graybeard in Baruk-Azhik.	1464	Gilgaed Tuor rises to rule of Tuornen.
1397	Ber Faldia fends off an attack by the Black Spear Tribes.	1441	Turanda becomes Mage of Merasaf.	1471	King Fjerdinand of Halskapa slain by the Dusk Man, son Bervinig assumes throne.
1402	Ghoere marches on Ilien, but is defeated by Axlea Aglondier.	1442	Last known sighting of the Leviathan.	1473	Brun Szareh disappears in Spiderfell. Mourton Enlien sent to Braeme to rule in Diemed's name.
1406	Birth of the Harpy; Djiran capital falls to gnolls.	1443	Daen Roesone returns to eastern Diemed.	1476	Thane Thalia of Talinie also installed as leader of Northern Imperial Temple of Haelyn, beginning theocracy.
1410	Birth of Daen Roesone.	1444	Baron Noered Tuorel comes to power in Ghoere. First human settlement constructed in Tuarhievel, within one mile of Thorn Throne.	1478	Death of Duke Vandiell Diemed; Roesone recognized; Gunnar overthrows the Sorcerer to wrest control of what is now the Realm of the White Witch.
1414	Sphinx mounts foray into Binsada, leading to el-Reshid leadership in Binsada.	1447	Coronation of Aziza el-Mashil in Khourane.	1479	Axlea Aglondier declares Ilien's neutrality.
1417	Berric Alam of Alamie inherits throne after Kaeduric Alam's death.	1447 to 1450	Roesonian war of independence.	1480	The Royal Navy of Müden declares war on piracy in the Great Bay region. It scores some initial successes before the pirates switch to more cautious raids.
1420	Berric Alam attacks supporters of brother Dalton Tuor. Basilisk and Black Spear Tribes hold power in Djira.	1450	Plague year in Ariya.	1481	Refugees from Djafra spill into Khourane.
1420 to 1423	War of Brothers in Alamie.	1453	Brun Szareh has vision of Ruornil, begins gathering faithful in eastern Diemed.	1482	Braedonnaal Tuare banished from Tuornen. King Snorri Snidilsson of Stjordvik dies; his wife, Queen Ljorrah ascends throne.
1421	Transformation of Chimera.	1480 to 1500	Ruornil's faithful migrate to eastern Diemed.	1483	Pact of Ilien recognized by all southern coast kingdoms.
1423	Dalton Tuor defeats Berric Alam in Alamie's War of Brothers; Tuornen wins freedom.	1457	Ghoere invades and occupies Elinie.	1484	Dajel Aglondier ascends to throne of Ilien.
1424	Medoere declares independence from Diemed.	1458	Death of Emira Aziza el-Mashil in Khourane. Coronation of Farid bin Aziza el-Mashil.	1485	Ibelcoris of Tuarhievel marries the human Baron of Dhoesone.
1430	Dalton Tuor's death, daughter Telaena inherits Tuornen.	1459	War of Ghoere and Mhoried, start of Gaelin the Restorer's reign.	1487	Rhuobhe harries Elevesnemiere in Tuornen. Appearance of the Boar of
1432	Pyotr Tusilov deposes Tsar Lenski, claims Ust Atka as Raven.				
1433	Birth of Gaelin Mhoried.				

Thuringode. The Swordhawk's armies suffer large numbers of casualties trying to capture or destroy it. A secret power (later identified as the Fae) arises in Treucht.

1489

The fortress of Adlersburg in Wierech is built, ostensibly to watch over the expanding empire of the Gorgon. The armies of Danigau drive the last of the Urga-Zai goblins out of Danigau's western provinces. Death of Daen Roesone.

1491

Soleme Aglondier inherits Ilien after brother Dajel's death.

1492

Braedonna Tuare returns to Tuornen. Baruk-Azhik dwarves suffer major defeat vs. orogs.

1493

Incorporation of Chimaeron. Dalien Enlien inherits Braeme, persecutes Ruornites.

1494

The White Witch rises to power after her uncle Gunnar's untimely death.

1495

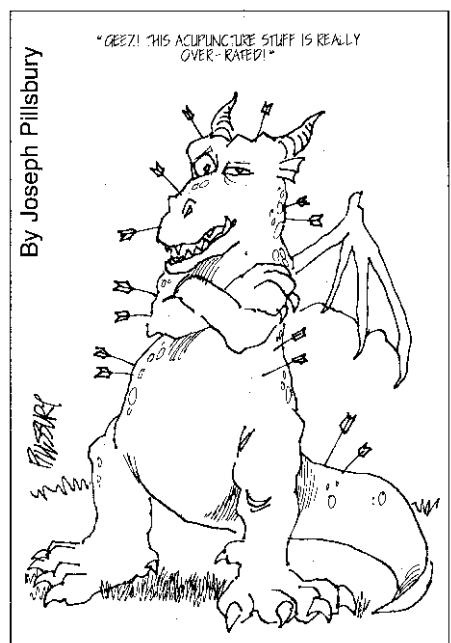
Death of High Lord Daegendal of Rhuannach.

1497

Founding of the Siren's Domain when Siren defeats Dusk Man.

1498

Halskapan delegation into the Siren's realm is slain.



1499

Ohlaak Brynjolfsson (now known as Ohlaak the Dragon) disappears as a child.

1501

Mhor Gaelin steps down in favor of his son, Mhor Daeric II.

1502

House Tuarlachiem sponsors revival of gheallie Sidhe in Tuarhievel.

1504

Guilds gain power in Djafra; Hjolvar founded by King Uldviik; Fulgar wrests control of province of Yvarre in Rjuvik from the jarl Norvlad. Destruction of Adlersburg in Wierech.

1505

The Sphinx begins attacking Khinasi trade routes.

1506

Appearance of el-Sheighül in Black Spear Tribes.

1508

Death of Emir Farid bin Aziza el-Mashil of extreme old age. Coronation of Kalilah bint Farid el-Mashil in Khourane.

1509

Thuriene Donalls becomes Thane of Talinie.

1511

Moeren Aglondier, son of Dajel, deposes Soleme and wins Ilien. Ibelcoris of Tuarhievel and Dhoesone is assassinated; son Phileraene ascends throne of Tuarhievel while his half-sister Phiele takes power in Dhoesone.

1512 to 1523

The gheallie Sidhe gains strength in Tuarhievel; Phileraene re-establishes friendly relations with Sielwode.

1512

Viborg in Rjuvik falls to Fulgar.

1513

Rise of the Red Kings of Aftane. Dalien Enlien outlaws worship of Ruornil in Braeme.

1514

Appearance of el-Sirad and founding of Mour el-Sirad. Lord-Prince Gerard of Ariya defeats pirate lord Bédize. Bard Crisoeyr meets Tarazin the Gray. Zhullik the Scarlet Baron leads invasion of Taelshore kingdoms, is killed in Battle of Innsmark by Thrakkazz, who seizes

power to become new Scarlet Baron. Heidrek Bern takes generalship of Stjordvik's armies.

1516

Suris Enlien, daughter of Dalien, has vision of Ruornil. Egris Enlien killed by his brother Dalien. Suris kills Dalien and declares theocracy of Medoere. Dieman invasion of Medoere defeated at Tieren Keep.

1518

The Magian appears from across the Sea of Dragons and conquers Pipryet. The Royal Navy of Müden launches an invasion of Grabentod. King Albrecht Graben is captured and brought to Müden as a hostage.

1520

Manticore comes to power in Madrik; the Sphinx takes three provinces from the Tarvan Waste in the Carnegauan Massacre; secret summit between King Bervinig of Halskapa and the Siren

1521

Queen Ljorrah of Stjordvik dies; son Varri succeeds her.

1522

Death of Grimm Graybeard in Baruk-Azhik. Huljim Ironhand, jarl of Namverg province in Stjordvik, dies; Council of Freemen takes over rule of Namverg.

1523

Prince Phileraene of Tuarhievel outrages fellow nobles by taking a human woman, Savane, niece of the Mhor, as his consort.

1524

Emira Kalilah bint Farid el-Mashil of Khourane lost at sea.

1524

Current date.



Carrie A. Bebris is an editor for the BIRTHRIGHT setting line and author of the Hogunmark domain sourcebook. Ed Stark is a designer for the BLRTHRIGHT setting; his credits include Legends of the Hero-Kings, Havens of the Great Bay, and King of the Giantdowns. They wish to acknowledge all the designers and editors of BIRTHRIGHT products for their contributions to Cerilia's history.

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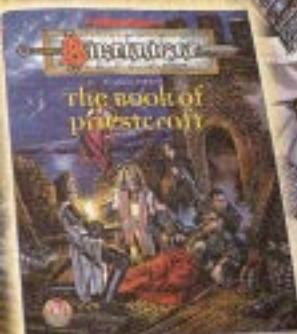
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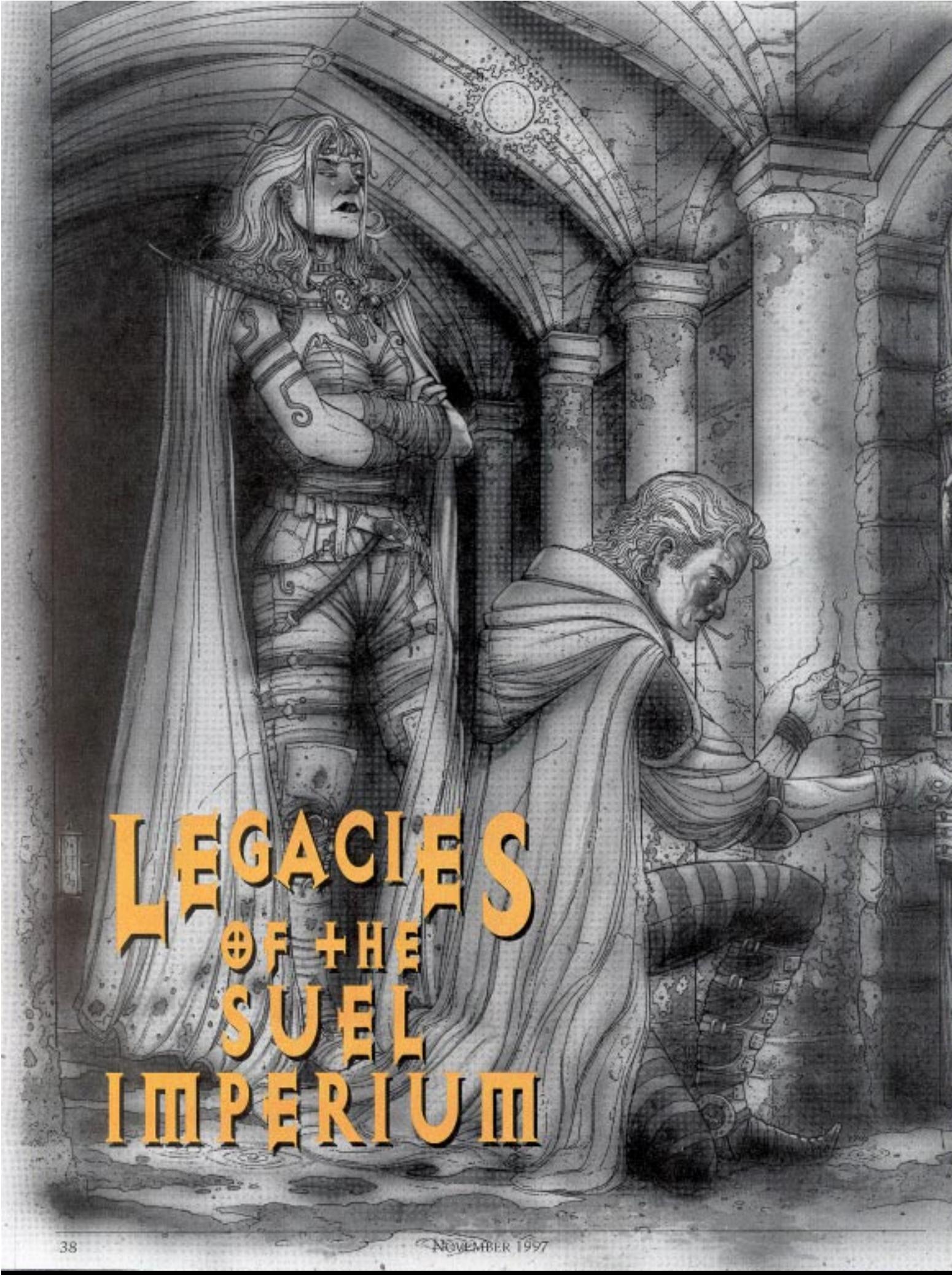
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LEGACIES OF THE SUEVI IMPERIUM

More Player-Character Races for the GREYHAWK® Campaign

by Roger Moore

illustrated by R.K. Post

The AD&D® game constantly expands as players and DMs alike invent new player character (PC) races for new role-playing challenges, broader game appeal, and improved campaign flavor. Several AD&D campaigns offer players a choice of unusual PC races, such as the mul, half-giants, and thri-kreen of the DARK SUN® world or the draconians, xixchils, and lizard men of the SPELLJAMMER® campaign. (Not to mention the dragons and half-dragons of the COUNCIL OF WYRMS™ setting.)

The GREYHAWK® campaign, like all others, is open to the development of new PC races. However, any races added should maintain the campaign's overall flavor, which is particularly humanocentric. Humans are the true shakers and movers of this setting; demihumans and humanoids hold second place, and monsters like dragons, beholders, and so forth come in a distant third. Dragon and xixchil PCs would be out of line, but races related to humans, demihumans, and humanoids would be quite at home.

This article presents five such PC races for the GREYHAWK campaign: derro, Lerara tribesmen, skulks, jermlaine, and doppelgangers. Each race is also connected directly to the historical background of that campaign's Flanaess. Some background information given here might need to be altered if these races are used in non-GREYHAWK campaigns.

The format used here for presenting these new races is a modified version of that used in PHBR10 *The Complete Book of Humanoids*. Any sort of class other than those listed for each race is not allowed for that race. Kits are suggested only and should be modified as necessary to fit the circumstances of the PC's home environment and the DM's campaign. For instance, the agriculture proficiency in an underground homeland might apply solely to the growing of giant fungi, and the riding proficiency could apply to taming giant lizards or similar subterranean creatures. The DM is free to replace inappropriate proficiencies with logical and appropriate ones. Thieving Skill Racial Adjustments for rogues are given as per the *Player's Handbook*, Table 27.

There are a few caveats to adopting this material into game play. Characters from these races are best added to a campaign in a manner logically consistent with that campaign's set-up. A skulk or derro played as a popular, crusading, lawful-good priest of Rao, for instance, is unlikely, illogical, and probably inappropriate for most campaigns. Far better is a neutral but shifty skulk or derro thief who acts as a scout for adventuring groups in the underdark, for huge amounts of pay. The DM, as always, is the final arbiter of what works and what doesn't for a particular campaign, but players, too, should carefully consider how their characters fit into the larger picture of the campaign's story line.

Alignment presents an important problem in role-playing these particular PC races. Nearly all of these races, as non-player characters (NPCs), are evil in the main and extremely hostile to humanity, even though they are presented here as deriving from one branch of humanity itself, the Suloise. (They are not

fond of the Suloise, either, generally treating them as any other humans.) Despite this, PCs of the five new races here are best played with non-evil alignments, though not necessarily good alignments. Certainly, the PCs can have conflicting attitudes about the humans and demihumans who usually form the bulk of an adventuring party. These PCs can be outcasts or marginal members of their home societies, giving them the freedom to act in concert with adventurers who might be seen as enemies of the outcasts' kind. A derro thief might not like the humans in his party, and the humans might not like or trust him, either, but they can certainly work together for the group's survival and ultimate goals.

In addition, my own experience has been that avoiding the use of evil characters promotes group cohesion, keeps good relations between players, and prolongs campaign life. The Chaotic Neutral alignment, because it often conflicts with group goals and cohesion, can be problematic, too. The DM should consider the kind of campaign desired and the maturity of the players involved when making decisions on what is allowed for play.

Abbreviations from "Suggested Kits": PHBR1 = *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*, PHBR2 = *The Complete Thief's Handbook*, PHBR3 = *The Complete Priests Handbook*, PHBR4 = *The Complete Wizard's Handbook*, PHBR10 = *The Complete Book of Humanoids*, S&P = PLAYERS OPTION™ Skills & Powers.

Derro

My dear Mordenkainen,

Your inquiries into the origins of the derro following the recent discovery of them beneath our city streets will be satisfied in part by the account herein, taken from my personal investigations. The heroes who last month saw to the defeat of the serpentine Falcon and her derro followers saved us all from an unspeakable fate.

The creation of the derro, the only servant race of the Suloise whose generation was publicly known and debated, is an especially ugly page in our fragmentary history of the Suel Imperium. References to their creation and uses appear in several buried libraries in the eastern end of the Sea of Dust; I have made copies of some of these if you wish to examine them, though as usual I do not wish to reveal the exact location of my sources.

Approximately 1,800 years ago, after much debate, the Suloise Imperial Congress

approved the creation of a new subject race of beings to serve as miners, delving into the earth in search of precious metals, gems, and magical compounds sought by the wealthy and politically powerful wizards of the empire. The race was bred from human and dwarven prisoners and slaves by means that do not bear description here. This new race was called the thurgamazar, Suloise for "little miners," but they became more popularly known as dwur-rohoi, "twisted dwarves," a term used by a Flan slave of the Suloise who saw the new race at work. Dwur-rohoi was corrupted over the centuries to dwurroh, then to derro.

The creation of this race produced a permanent rift in the Suloise pantheon. Fortubo, the industrious god of stone, metals, and mountains, was so outraged at the horrific mistreatment of the captive dwarves used by Suloise wizards to create the derro that he withdrew his favor from nearly all his human followers. Clerics of Fortubo were apparently later responsible for instigating numerous anti-imperial revolts among the empire's few dwarven slaves, free workers, and merchants. Fortubo's efforts to destroy the derro and punish the Suloise who created them were seen favorably by the dwarven gods Moradin and Berronar. They soon gave Fortubo his hammer-artifact Golbi and joined forces with him in the Flanaess to destroy enemies of the dwur-folk. Fortubo is the sworn enemy of the derro and their patron deity Diirinka, whose origin I do not know but which I suspect lies in the Suel Imperium's time.

The derro gained a great streak of possessiveness from their dwarven progenitors, but they craved magic and knowledge, not gold, perhaps as a result of their Suloise ancestry. The Suloise blood in them gifted the derro with extraordinary magical ability, and the dwarven resistance to magic was magnified further as well. But the derro temperament was most fully formed by their cruel mistreatment at the hands and spells of the surface-dwelling Suloise.

Their slavery came to an end 1,000 years ago, when the Baklunish Rain of Colorless Fire slew the Suloise above ground but failed to penetrate the deep mines dug out by the derro over their centuries of enforced servitude. Derro regard the Rain not as a disaster but as their deliverance and a blessing. There in the subterranean darkness they survived and prospered, looting the many ruins above them now buried deep under the ashen desert we call the Sea of Dust. In imitation of their former masters, the derro began taking slaves of every sort from neighboring races in the underworld, but especially from human adventurers or sur-

vivors of the cataclysm. The derro continue this evil practice to this day.

Humans and dwarves of all worlds would be horrified to learn of the truth of derro ancestry, that our world Oerth is responsible for their creation. The dwarven priests of Fortubo know this today, and they rarely share it even with their followers though they act upon it to destroy their distant, wicked kin. It is suggested here that this knowledge never leave our Circle, lest our world serve as a lightning rod for the wrath of those elsewhere whom the derro have tormented.

- letter from Otto to Mordenkainen following the defeat of the Falcon, 22nd of Reaping, 582 c.y.

Ability Score Adjustments: Initial ability scores are modified by a +1 to Dexterity, +1 to Intelligence, a -1 to Strength, and a -1 to Wisdom.

Thieving Skill Racial Adjustments: Pick Pockets +5%; Open Locks +5%; Find/Remove Traps +5%; Move Silently -; Hide in Shadows -5%; Detect Noise +30%; Climb Walls -10%; Read Languages -15%.

Class Mixing: A derro PC may become a fighter/image-savant, fighter-thief, or thief/mage-savant. Single-classed derro with extremely high ability scores in their prime requisites may gain additional levels above the given racial maximums, as per Table 8 in the DUNGEON MASTER® Guide.

Derro PCs cannot be priests under any circumstances. Savants are the derro NPC equivalent of priests, their wizards' powers granted part by the

Derro

Starting Ability Score Range:

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength	3	17
Dexterity	12	19
Constitution	3	18
Intelligence	9	19
Wisdom	3	
Charisma	3	8 (18)*

* Derro PCs have a maximum Charisma of 8 to any beings but other derro, as they are so hated and distrusted.

Class Restrictions:

Class	Max. Level
Warrior	
Fighter	10
Wizard	
Mage-Savant	12
Specialist	13
Rogue	
Thief	15

derro deity Diirinka. The mage-savant is a variant type of derro savant whose powers do not spring from Diirinka but are learned as per normal wizards; mage-savants may become specialist wizards.

Suggested Kits: Kits reflecting combat, secrecy, and an outlaw existence are appropriate for derro. Very few derro choose solitary careers; even an assassin works as part of a team. Derro value magic and knowledge, which may affect kit choice. The underdark is considered the place of a derro PC's origin, which will affect the proficiencies available.

Fighter- myrmidon, outlaw (PHBR1); mine rowdy, sellsword, tribal defender (PHBR10); assassin, beggar, outlaw, scout, smuggler, soldier, spy, thug (SW).

Wizard-academician, militant wizard (PHBR4); hedge wizard, humanoid scholar, outlaw mage (PHBR10); assassin, outlaw, scholar, scout, smuggler, soldier, spy, thug (S&P).

Thief-adventurer, assassin bandit, beggar, bounty hunter, burglar, cutpurse, fence, scout, smuggler, spy, thug (PHBR2); tramp, tunnel rat, scavenger, shadow (PHBR10); assassin, beggar, outlaw, scholar, scout, smuggler, soldier, spy, thug (S&P).

Hit Dice: Derro PCs receive Hit Dice by class.

Typical Alignments: Most derro are chaotic evil, but some are neutral evil, chaotic neutral, or true neutral.

Natural Armor Class: 10.

Age Categories: Starting Age = 25 + 2d4 years; Maximum Age Range = 170 + 2d20 years; Average Maximum Age = 191 years; Middle Age = 85 years, Old Age = 113 years, Venerable = 170 years.

Average Height and Weight (male/female): 44 + 1d8/43 + 1d6 inches; 95 + 4d8/90 + 5d6 lbs.

Movement Base: 9.

Appearance: A typical derro stands about 4' tall, with short, thick limbs and dexterous fingers. The derro appears to be a very short human with an unusually large head; a high forehead, thick hairless brows, and a receding hairline are also common. The skin is rough, white with blue undertones, with scattered tufts of coarse hair. A derro's hair is straight and rough, pale yellow and often cut raggedly into a sort of lion's mane. Facially, a derro has a small hairless chin, a long thick mustache (on males only), protruding cheekbones,

small round ears, and distinctively egg-like eyes that are entirely white, with no pupils or irises visible. It is often said that to true dwarves, a derro looks like a small ugly human, and to humans a derro looks like an ugly dwarf.

Habitat: The majority of derro on Oerth inhabit vast mines, caves, and tunnels beneath the Sea of Dust, and they hold scattered pockets in the cavern network below the Hellfurnaces. A major enclave of them is rumored to lie under the location of the old Suel capital, now called the Forgotten City. They have spread farther eastward into the



Flanaess, however, and some have moved into foreign lands south of the Sea of Dust. Major conflicts between derro and other inhabitants of the caverns under the Hellfurnaces have become quite frequent in the last five centuries.

Derro have also used spells or magical devices to travel to other worlds, such as Toril of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign, where they have colonies beneath Faerun (particularly in the Savage North). A dwarven subrace very similar to derro, the Theiwar, lives on Krynn of the DRAGONLANCE® campaign, but it is unrelated to true derro and has different origins and language; true derro are as yet unknown on Krynn.

Society & Religion: A typical derro PC originates from an underdark tribe, all members of which share a common tribal name, origin, history, dialect, and culture. A derro tribe is most often an extended family of relatively healthy members (weak ones having little chance of surviving the hostile underdark and abusive fellow derro) whose tribal name is taken from that of their tyrannical savant leader or patron deity. A tribe divides if its number greatly exceeds 40, with the two new tribes soon acting in all ways independent of each other. Certain tribes can grow to 10 times this number or more under an extremely powerful leader, such as one with an artifact or special magical ability. Males and females generally have equal rights in a tribe to own property, to choose careers, and to receive (chaotic) justice.

Most derro tribes take slaves, nearly always humans caught in night raids on the surface world ("open hunting"). Orcs and dwarves are also enslaved on occasion, and adventurers of any race are so vulnerable. Such prisoners are treated barbarically. Derro and humans can interbreed, always producing more (fertile) derro as offspring. Derro and dwarves can also interbreed, but their derro offspring are always sterile males of great strength (STR 6+). Derro PCs should not partake of such practices.

The major patron deity of the derro, Diirinka, was the first derro slave created by the Suel Imperium. An extremely powerful spellcaster, Diirinka concealed his talent from his masters and slowly gained in knowledge and skill, passing his knowledge on secretly to the derro most loyal to him. He gained godhood through some means unknown even now, then gained greater powers following his theft of magic from an illithid deity, Ilsensine. To escape the illithid god, he betrayed his deified "brother," Diinkarazan, the second derro created by the Suel Imperium and nearly as gifted a spellcaster as Diirinka; the results of this misadventure are detailed in DMGR4 *Monster Mythology*, page 65.

Derro savants rarely perform religious rites like the priests of most other races, which leads many to believe that derro worship no one but perhaps themselves. Diirinka supplies his savants with magical knowledge and ability largely out of his hatred for other races, particu-

lary humanity, making derro his instruments of revenge. A derro PC cannot have either Diirinka or Diinkarazan as a patron, as this causes a magical link between the deity and character that produces extremely destructive behaviors and beliefs in the derro; another deity, if any, must be selected.

Every 20 years or so, all savants are notified by Diirinka to begin a Uniting War, an all-out war against all other races in their local underdark. This serves to unite the derro against all other beings and create the sort of havoc in which derro revel and prosper.

A few derro groups have turned to the worship of other deities. These renegades ("traitors") are hunted down by Diirinka-worshiping derro at every opportunity. The Suloise goddess Beltar (ruler of caves, pits, and hidden malice) is usually the secondary patron of choice. Several tribes of derro devoted to Beltar are concealed in caves under the Rakers, the Griffins, and the Corusk mountains on or near the Thillonian Peninsula of the Flanaess. (Information on Beltar appears in *DRAGON® Magazine* issue #89, pages 21-22, "Gods of the Sue1 Pantheon.")

Languages: Derro PCs know their own racial language, called Derrosh (a language with ancient Suloise and Dwarvish roots). They also start knowing the common tongue, dwarvish, orcish, and the drow version of elvish. Other languages can be learned in the usual fashion.

Special Advantages: From their dwarven ancestry, derro each have 30' infravision. (Note: The *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* tome has a misprint giving them 3' infravision.) In addition, a derro has keen hearing, granting all the powers of the blind-fighting proficiency without taking up any proficiency slots.

A derro has a resistance to magic of 30%, which must be checked first before any saving throws against magical attacks or effects are made. This has distinct disadvantages, however, as noted below.

A mage-savant PC, like an NPC savant, has an innate ability to *comprehend languages* and *read magic* at will, as per the wizard spells. (It is the surfacing of these powers earlier in life that determines whether a derro becomes a savant or mage-savant.) The mage-savant can use either power during a round while performing another activity, such as reading a magical scroll to cast a spell, or hearing a command given in a foreign language while fighting.

Poison is commonly used among derro tribes. A derro PC of non-good alignment may, with the DM's permission, start the game with a vial of non-lethal poison (2d4 uses) for use on hand weapons or missiles. This poison cannot be replaced unless the derro purchases more from other sources. The poison can induce weakness, paralysis, pain, or other disabilities in a foe, but cannot cause hit-point damage or instant death. The use of poison is regarded by many creatures and societies as an evil act meriting severe punishments, so this advantage can quickly turn into a disadvantage.

Derro PCs and NPCs have the same abilities as dwarves to detect grade and slope, new tunnel construction, sliding walls and rooms, stonework pits and traps, and approximate depth underground. (See *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 2, "Dwarves.")

Special Disadvantages: All derro are nauseated by direct sunlight touching their skin, losing 1 hit point per hour of exposure and suffering a -2 to all combat rolls, defensive adjustments, and saving throws while exposed. Hit-point losses are slow to heal if curative magic is not used; only 1 hit point per day maximum will be healed by complete rest, so a derro left outdoors will lapse into a coma and die after a few days of a condition resembling heatstroke. All spells and magical powers that duplicate prolonged sunlight (such as *continual light*) have this same effect, though the *light* spell, flashes of bright light, and normal bonfires, torches, and lanterns do not.

A derro's 30% magic resistance is generally useful and does not affect a savant or mage-savant's ability to cast spells, but it does apply to all beneficial spells offering that derro healing or protection. It applies even if that derro is attempting to cast a spell on himself. Moreover, this magic resistance must be checked the moment a derro picks up, dons, or activates any magical device other than a weapon, armor, helmet, shield, girdle, or gauntlets. If the magic resistance applies, then the device does not function. Thus, a derro who drinks a magical potion or dons a magical ring might find the item does not function at all. If the item is put down, then picked up again in the following round, magic resistance is checked yet again, as many times as this is done. This does not apply to a mage-savant using his spellbook to memorize spells for the following day,

but it would apply to a mage-savant casting a spell from a scroll or wand he has picked up.

Derro are normally nocturnal, and PCs start the campaign on a nocturnal cycle (sleepy in day, alert at night). The DM may apply minor penalties (e.g., -1 to attack rolls and saving throws) if a derro PC operates out-of-cycle; an attempt to permanently change to a diurnal cycle takes 5d6 days.

Derro are considered "persons," not monsters, and are thus affected by *charm person* and *hold person* spells, as well as by such spells also affecting monsters.

The derro of the GREYHAWK campaign are regarded as wicked abominations by all dwarves aware of the derro's origins, and derro are greatly despised by anyone having had dealings with them. Derro are attacked on sight by all dwarven, gnomish, and human priests of Fortubo. (Fortubo is fully described in *DRAGON Magazine* issue #88, in "Gods of the Suel Pantheon," page 9-11.) A recent derro-aided attempt to conquer the City of Greyhawk left many people there with a hatred for derro as well (see WGA3 *Flames of the Falcon*).

Unlike true dwarves, derro have no Constitution-based bonuses to saving throws against poison, wands, staves, rods, and spells.

Weapon Proficiencies: All derro PCs must take a proficiency in dagger. Other weapons likely to be learned from their tribal days include the light repeating crossbow (3' long, uses hand-cocking lever, 120 yards max. range, two separate shots fired per round, six-bolt capacity, 1d3 hp damage, can be poisoned), hook-fauchard (two-handed polearm, 6-7' long 1 d4 hp impaling damage, 1-in-4 chance of pulling man-sized or smaller creature off balance requiring entire next round to regain balance, can be used to disarm opponent with attack roll vs. AC 6), spiked buckler (small shield with central spike causing 1 d4 hp impaling damage, no penalty for use as second weapon, shield good vs. one opponent and reducing users AC by one), and hooked aklys (short heavy hooked club on long leather thong, thrown up to 30' for 1 d6 hp damage plus hooking on victim, allows user to pull victim off-balance as per hook-fauchard on 1-in-8 chance). The, spiked buckler and hooked aklys are usually used together. The children of derro leaders other than savants and student savants also learn to use the

short spear (two-handed) and military pick (one-handed). The use of other small weapons, such as the short sword, dart, or hand axe, is possible but rare.

Though savant NPCs can use nearly any weapon, single-class mage-savant PCs are limited to standard wizard weapons. Nearly all learn the dagger first, and perhaps darts (possibly poisoned) later.

Derro NPC combat tactics usually focus on disarming foes, preventing enemy spell attacks, frustrating and confusing victims, and causing pain and multiple wounds. They are accustomed to capturing foes alive, usually for use as slaves. Derro PCs may use similar tactics to capture enemies for questioning or imprisonment.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Derro PCs should start out with a complete lack of skills reflecting elements of high, polite civilization (e.g., dancing, etiquette, heraldry). Other skills may be disallowed by the DM if not appropriate to a derro's origin underground or the campaign's nature (e.g., airborne riding, astrology, charioteering, navigation, weather sense), or may be modified to fit the campaign circumstances (herbalism as applied to underdark plants, not surface flora). Hunting and survival proficiencies are common.

Starting Possessions: A typical derro of either sex wears loose trousers made from poor-quality hides, fur, or woven materials, dyed red and brown. Over this is worn leather armor studded with copper and brass (AC 7). An ornamental but fully functional dagger called a *secari* is nearly always carried, a tradition dating back to the derro's days of servitude under the Suloise. (Miner-gang bosses each wore a *secari* as a symbol of rank.) Thicker armor equal to chain mail (AC 5) made from thick hides or exoskeletons taken from underdark monsters is worn by tough, experienced derro. Footwear varies from none to thick short boots, depending on the terrain and temperature. Thin gloves made from animal hide are commonly used.

Mage-savants cannot wear armor while casting spells, though true savants can wear up to studded leather and cast spells. (True savants can do this with the indirect assistance of their deity, Diirinka, while mage-savants must learn magic on their own.)

Starting money for a derro PC is determined by class, but cash should largely be converted into possessions of equivalent value before the game's

start. The derro PC could have a few small (10 gp) gems and some minor coins dating back to Suloise Empire times, worth 10-100 times their face value to collectors.

Role-Playing Suggestions: Derro NPCs are normally violent and abusive toward those they see as their underlings, such as children and slaves; in the presence of clearly powerful and dangerous beings, they are obedient and fawning. Otherwise, they have no interest in anyone's viewpoint but their own.

As a group, derro NPCs share a strong belief in their supposed racial superiority, a profound hatred for humanity, and a sort of free-floating paranoia about the world at large, believing that plots are constantly being hatched against them by all others. Even non-evil derro PCs could be violent, unpredictable, lacking in guilt, human-hating, secretive, or paranoid.

Derro have a mob mentality and intensely dislike operating on their own, even in extreme circumstances. "Safety in numbers" is their byword, even for PCs. A derro PC, outcast from his former tribe, is likely to quickly identify his adventuring group as a replacement "tribe," becoming obedient to a strong leader and learning the group members' ways of doing things. At the same time, the derro might engage in endless petty quarrels with peers over the division of treasure or supposed insults. It would not be wrong for a derro PC to come across as a bit of a fanatic, unthinkingly following the orders of a strong group leader and expressing extremist views on various political, racial, or religious matters. It is possible that a renegade derro PC will be hated and hunted by his former tribe for many years.

Derro by nature crave magic, either as spells or devices. They also love knowledge, usually for the sake of promoting or enriching the derro at the expense of others. Small magical devices like wands or potions are sought by most derro, even if magic resistance sometimes interferes with their use.

Derro PCs work best in underdark environments, away from urban settings. They may also function well at night outdoors, but must get to shelter by dawn to avoid sunsickness.

Other Information: Derro may gain wild psionic talents, but cannot be psionicists (as per PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook*), as they are mentally undisciplined.

Derro are omnivorous, eating a wide variety of underdark flora such as fungi (which they dislike except as spice) as well as meat from subterranean fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Many derro eat underdark insects and arachnids, cooked or raw, and consider them a delicacy.

Derro have no specialized unarmed combat techniques. Without weapons, they fight in a desperate, unorganized manner, maddened by their fears of injury and capture.

Specific game details on the derro vary from source to source, particularly between references from the 1st and 2nd Editions of the AD&D game. Derro originally had ultravision to 120' (or even farther outdoors, under starlight), which seems illogical for an underground race until one remembers that some underground regions in the Flanaess have outcrops of tumkeoite, a magical mineral that gives off ultraviolet light as it decays (see AD&D module #9021 D3 *Vault of the Drow*).

References: #2016 MONSTER MANUAL II, "Derro," page 42; #2140 MONSTROUS MANUAL tome, page 96, "Dwarf, Derro"; #9061 S4 *The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, "Derro"; #9292 WGR1 *Greyhawk Ruins*, "Derro"; #9302 WGA3 *Flames of the Falcon*, "Dwarf, Derro"; #1064 *From the Ashes: Atlas of the Flanaess*, "The Beauteous Cones of the Baklarran," pages 66-67, and *Campaign Book*, "The Honeycombed Halls of the Diirinken," page 37; #2128 DMGR4 *Monster Mythology*, "Gods of the Underdark," page 65 (Diirinka and Diinkarazan); DUNGEON® Adventures issue #20, "The Ship of Night," pages 6-25.

Lerara

Mordenkainen of the Circle, greetings.

It has been too long since I last heard from you. Your query is not unwelcome, but events of late leave me little time to reminisce about my childhood. Still, here is a brief sketch of my origins and people.

The folklore you quote is nearly accurate. The Suloise 'tribes' who entered the Flanaess after the Ruin of Colorless Fire were actually a number of once-prosperous noble families and their retainers. Being on holiday, they escaped the burning of Zinbyle, the ruined city in the Sea of Dust recently found by explorers from the Yeomanry. After the Rain died away, the survivors lived in barbarism, scavenging for food and stealing from the frocks of goat-herders in the foothills of the bordering Crystalmists. It was in such a condition a decade after the disaster that the

great wizard Slerotin found them, mistaking them at first for actual savages.

Slerotin heard the entreaties of the Suloise survivors, who could offer him nothing but gratitude in return for helping them cross the Crystalmists to the rich lands of the Flannae and demihumans. I believe he gave them his aid purely to sate his own ego, for he was never known for his charity before, but perhaps I wrong him. In any event, Slerotin summoned his power and opened a great tunnel directly through over 70 leagues of solid rock. In this way did the Suloise enter the Flanaess with Slerotin, meeting some of their own kind who had earlier crossed the Kendeen Pass (later destroyed by a volcano) and settled along the Javan River. The "tribes" in time became organized clans and noble Houses. They grew in strength, preyed upon Flan and olve and dwur alike, and ran afoul of the Oeridian hordes. You know what followed then.

Seventeen Suloise "tribes," including the local goat-herders, braved the Passage of Slerotin to reach what is now the Yeomanry. An 18th group, the Lerara, entered late. Further delayed by a fight between several nobles, the Lerara were trapped within the Passage when it was sealed. This little group of only 100-120 adults, with children and animals in tow, was forced to adapt to this dark land, thinking they were abandoned by the gods and cursed.

I was able to determine some years ago that I was actually born on 7 Needfest 333 c.y. At the time of my birth, the Lerara had formed a stable of barbaric community of about 3,800 adults, with four smaller communities scattered along the central part of the Passage and in nearby tunnels. The Lerara had become exceedingly conservative, unwilling to take great risks in the dangerous environment they inhabited. A father's word was law in each family, and women and children were kept close to home—that being whatever dead-end tunnel the family held as its own to tend fires, cook, make pots, and so forth. Hunters traveled in large groups, braving the darkness armed only with crude spears and javelins.

A new nobility of sorts formed among the family heads who oversaw the growing of mushroom crops and the training of hunters. The nobles were further supported by distilling poisons from certain fungi, then trading these to the treacherous drow in exchange for better weapons, food, tools, clothing, and trained armorbacks (what you would call giant millipedes). The nobles

would elect a governor among them, who served until voted out or dead. The Lerara might still live in such a manner, but I have never gone back to see the truth of it.

My childhood was not a happy one. My father a minor noble, wanted a son and had me sent away when I was a year old. You have heard from dear old Cobb Darg that I was sent to a "convent," but he is gilding lead. I was sent to serve the Mother. Mordenkainen, you cannot in your worst nightmares conjure up a horror like the oozing, glowing Mother, who still haunts every moment of my sleep. I was an acolyte, if that is the right word, an assistant at the rituals in which the Mother's appetite for life energy was sated on sacrifices of the weakest of my people. I watched the old and the crippled

ground and gave thanks to the gods, every one of them, for I was free, forever free.

I have rambled far too long. I have much to do these days to insure the safety of Ironton from the Scarlet Brotherhood and manage my own projects as well. If you are determined to learn more of the Lerara, you must send agents among them or go there yourself. The rediscovery of the Passage has attracted many explorers to the Yeomanry, and with the end of the Greyhawk Wars many soldiers are looking for work there, too. You could do no worse than to join the growing flood and send adventurers into the Passage to explore its depths and the imperial ruins in the Sea of Dust beyond. Be sure, however, that such groups are prepared for trickery, as the Lerara are sure to take them to meet the Mother personally, which will be your heroes' doom. If by chance these adventurers actually destroy the Mother, I would be amazed beyond words, though I fear the task will kill the heroes first.

If even this is not enough for you, be aware that when I fled from my people, I took with me one item from the treasures left by them in the Cavern of the Mother. That item was a notebook written by the hand of Slerotin himself, the Last Mage of Power of the Suel imperium, left behind by him but recovered by the Lerara as they went through the Passage. In return for a favor—and a telling favor it will be, for my adopted city is in great peril in these evil days, thanks to the Scarlet Brotherhood—you may examine this notebook for a short time and delve its many secrets. I guarantee that it will be worth your while to do so.

I trust I will hear from you shortly.

Yours sincerely,
Elayne Mystica, Free City of Ironton,
3 Growfest 585 c.y.

Ability Score Adjustments: Initial ability scores are modified by a -1 to Constitution and a +1 to Strength.

Thieving Skill Racial Adjustments:
Pick Pockets -; Open Locks -10%;
Find/Remove Traps -; Move Silently
+5%; Hide in Shadows -; Detect Noise
+5%; Climb Walls -; Read Languages
-10%.

Class Mixing: Lerara can be dual-classed like any other humans, but they cannot be multiclassed. Lerara have lost their ability to become paladins, druids, or bards from their low Charisma. See "Class Restrictions," above, for other notes.

Suggested Kits: Leraran PCs begin their careers either in an underground



and the diseased
and the malformed be cast into the Mother's
amoeboid embrace, and I saw them all die.
I wake up every morning to the memory of
their screams.

At the age of 16, I could take no more. I escaped the "convent" and fled through various caverns, running as far as I could get from the Mother and my people. I had expected to die, but instead I discovered an exit to the bright surface. Oh, that glorious, awful sun! It blinded my weak eyes, burned my white skin, and terrified me beyond words. But the upper world—such light, color, and beauty, such smells, such openness and grandeur and life! I fell to the

environment (the Passage of Slerotin) or having just escaped from it to the surface. All suggested kits and proficiencies should be modified if necessary to reflect these origins. Leraran nobles in Mother-dominated society employ many adventurer-types for their own ends, usually against the drow or rebellious Lerara; an asterisk (*) indicates a kit that likely works for the nobles.

Fighter-barbarian (must have hunting proficiency), **beast rider*** (uses giant millipede), **outlaw** (against nobles) (PHBR1); **barbarian, bandit** (Robin Hood type, working against evil groups), **rider*** (giant millipede), **scout***, **sharpshooter, soldier*, spy*** (*S&P*). All Leraran nobles are actually barbarian fighters of high charisma who have proven their skills at political combat as well as personal combat and hunting; they have few if any "polite" proficiencies.

Ranger-barbarian, bandit (Robin Hood type, working against evil groups), **rider*, scout*, sharpshooter, soldier*, spy*** (*S&P*).

Priest -none in Mother-dominated society. In distant groups with little contact with Mother or nobles: **barbarian, outlaw** (PHBR3).

Wizard -anagakok, savage wizard* (PHBR4).

Rogue-assassin*, **bandit, bounty hunter***, **scout***, **smuggler** (with drow contacts, not sanctioned by nobles), **spy***, **thug** (PHBR2).

Hit Dice: Leraran PCs receive hit dice by class.

Typical alignments: Most Lerara are true neutral or neutral evil, but some are lawful evil, chaotic evil, lawful neutral, or chaotic neutral. Few are good in alignment, given the influence of the Mother over most of this folk.

Natural Armor Class: 10.

Age Categories: Starting Age: 14 + 1 d4 years; Maximum Age Range = 70 + 2d12 years; Average Maximum Age = 83 years; Middle Age = 35 years, Old Age = 47 years, Venerable = 70 years.

Average Height and Weight (male/female): 56 + 248/55 + 2d6 inches 130 + 4d12/110 + 4d10 lbs.

Movement Base: 12.

Appearance: The Lerara, once an attractive people, have degenerated thanks to a combination of inbreeding and environmental pressures over the last thousand years. Though certainly human in appearance, they are almost albinos, having chalk-white skin, very pale blue eyes, and rough, silver-white hair. Many true, pink-eyed albinos live

among them. Most Lerara have receding chins and very small ears, a few having minor deformities such as one less finger or a few extra toes. Their eyes, however, have grown slightly larger and have a disturbing aspect when staring. Elayne Mystica has altered her appearance considerably through her use of magic, taking on a youthful, "pure Suloise" look, so she is not a typical Lerara in any sense.

Leraran NPCs rarely bathe and so have a dirty, unkempt look. They wear a wide variety of clothing. Commoners (including most hunters, warriors, and all women and children) wear crude clothing and foot wrappings made from skins and furs stitched together by tribal women, while Lerara nobles (all of whom are males) wear leather boots and other finery gained in trade with the drow under the Hellfurnaces. Gloves and hand wrappings are common. Jewelry is usually crude but popular; nobles wear the best necklaces, rings, amulets, etc., often cast-offs traded to them by the drow, who are glad to be rid of their "junk."

Common warriors wear a peculiar dark-gray platelike armor over their chests, arms, and thighs; the armor plates are made from the exoskeletal back plates of giant cave millipedes, woven together with ropelike strands of fur and hair from other creatures. A full suit of this armor grants a base AC 6. Shields are sometimes used.

Habitat: Nearly all Lerara inhabit the northern reaches of the vast cavern-and-tunnel system under the Hellfurnaces, along the Passage of Slerotin. The Passage was once hidden but is now open, its ancient magical seal gone. It extends from hex S5-141, where the Crystalmists border the Sea of Dust, to hex 05-134, leading out onto the grasslands of the Yeomanry. The Mother and the heart of Lerara culture are located in deep tunnels in hex Q5-137.

The Lerara's territory is lit by animal-fat candles and glowing fungi, the only fires being those for cooking and heating, tended by the women. The temperature of the Passage is cool, about 56° F, growing warmer within one mile of either end of the Passage. A light draft blows from the western end of the tunnel, in the hot daylight in the Sea of Dust, to the eastern end in the Yeomanry; the breeze reverses as the Sea of Dust cools at night.

Society & Religion: Elayne Mystica's description of Leraran society and government is accurate in 585 c.y., though

Lerara

Starting Ability Score Range:

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength	6	18/00
Dexterity	3	18
Constitution	3	16
Intelligence	3	18
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma	3	12 (18)*

* Lerara have a maximum Charisma of 12 to any beings but other Lerara, as they are unused to anyone but themselves.

Class restrictions:

Class	Max. level*
Warrior	
Fighter	Unlimited
Ranger	Unlimited**
Priest	
Cleric	Unlimited***
Wizard	
Mage	Unlimited
Specialist	Unlimited
Rogue	
Thief	Unlimited

* Lerara, in their stagnant Mother-dominated society, rarely achieve any level above 6th in any class. They have normal chances for advancement if taken out of this realm.

** Rangers, being good aligned, do not exist in Mother-dominated society, but they could exist in other Lerara groups underground or on the surface.

*** Priests do not exist in Mother-dominated society, but they could exist in other Lerara groups underground or on the surface. The Mother is not a deity-yet.

the main community, which was never formally named, now has an adult population of 5,400 with 11 surrounding smaller "towns." The Lerara are still conservative, tradition-bound, and patriarchal, governed by wealthy male nobles under an elected governor. The goats survive of the original livestock brought into the Passage centuries ago. Giant millipedes are their steed of choice.

Since the discovery of the Passage of Slerotin in 577 c.y., an increasing number of adventurers and treasure-hunters have reached Leraran society. Unlucky outsiders have been sacrificed to the Mother, a monstrous amoeboid entity that glows pale white in its great cavern chamber, where most Lerara worship it. The Mother has never left its chamber since it was found in 221 c.y., nor has it ever actually communicated with the Lerara, but it is definitely evil and appears to have gained strength from the sacrifices made to it. (The DM must determine the Mother's actual statistics and powers.) The Suloise word for "mother" is *murma*, and the Mother is referred to by the Lerara as *se-Murma*, "our Mother." A group of six old men

function as "priests" (zero-level humans without spell powers), attempting to interpret the possible meanings of the random ripples and vibrations seen in the Mothers ooze. Though the Mother is not a deity, it might give telepathic advice or offer its secretions as potions and poisons.

Languages: Leraran PCs speak a corrupt form of ancient Suloise mixed with words borrowed from the drow. Leraran Suloise is 50% understandable to anyone who speaks true Suloise (which is extinct in the Flanaess today), but it is barely understandable to anyone speaking a modern Suloise-descended language (e.g., Lendorian or the Cold Tongue). Leraran PCs also know the drow's language (a corrupted form of elvish) and can speak a crude form of common, learned from contacts with surface people after the Passage of Slerotin was discovered in 577 c.y.

Special Advantages: A Lerara's light-sensitive eyes are able to use a single candle flame or phosphorescent fungus to see within a 50 æ radius. A torch illuminates a radius of 150' for Lerara. This light-intensifying vision is ruined (becoming the same as for normal humans) once a Lerara is exposed to anything brighter than a torch, such as a *light* spell or a campfire. Ten rounds of later exposure to darkness enable the Lerara's eyes to regain their great light-gathering ability. (See Table 63 in the *Player's Handbook*.)

Special Disadvantages: As mentioned above, a Lerara's eyes are highly sensitive to light. A Lerara is blinded by full daylight or a *continual light* spell, suffering a -4 to attack rolls, a +4 to armor class, and a +2 penalty to initiative rolls, as well as various penalties to saving throws as determined by the DM. Lesser penalties may be applied in less-than-full daylight. An extremely bright light flash in darkness will also temporarily blind a Lerara (1d2+2 rounds), who saves against such attacks at a -2 penalty thanks to the lack of eye pigmentation.

It takes 5d4 days for a Lerara to adapt to surface sunlight, given constant exposure to the outdoors, leaving him with only a -1 penalty on attack rolls and a +1 penalty to Armor Class. These penalties cannot be negated because of the lack of eye pigmentation unless the Lerara uses a pair of slit-opening, stained-glass, or smoked-glass goggles, which restrict the Lerara's vision to the immediate front. A "sunlight-adapted"

Lerara forever loses the special ability to see in near-darkness, instead seeing normally in all ways for a human (see Table 63 in the *Player's Handbook*).

A Lerara is very likely to be badly sunburned given any skin exposure to direct sunlight longer than 10 rounds (1 turn). For every turn following the first, a Lerara suffers 1 hp of burn damage. At the DM's option, given the placement of the burn (arms, back, chest, legs), the PC could also suffer a loss of 1 point of Dexterity per turn after the first. Each lost Dexterity point can be regained with a full day of rest; hit-point losses can be regained by either curative magic or rest. A hit-point loss of 50% or more from sunburn causes the PC to make a system-shock roll to avoid falling into a coma and dying within 1 d4 hours unless given immediate curative treatment, such as a *cure disease* spell.

Weapon Proficiencies: Commoner Lerara, including the hunters and warriors, use handmade spears with stone-tipped heads, stone axes (treat as war hammers or footman's maces), clubs, daggers, javelins, and an assortment of other primitive weapons. Mounted Lerara always use long spears and javelins. Some missile weapons (but no hand-held ones) are dipped in a paralytic poison that the Lerara know how to make.

Leraran nobles (and lucky hunters) often use well-crafted weapons received in trade from the drow under the Hellfurnaces; some have a magical weapon or two as well. Such drow-made weapons include any that the drow themselves would use (long sword, short sword, dagger, hand crossbow, etc.) plus any the drow would take from the bodies of their enemies, so a wide range is possible for the well-to-do.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: As the Lerara have an organized society, most sorts of proficiencies can be found among them, though in a primitive state and modified for underground life. The Lerara do no blacksmithing of their own, and their "fine arts" are quite limited and barbaric (often with an evil, downbeat touch). Some proficiencies are not used in the underdark (e.g., airborne riding astrology, charioteering, navigation, weather sense), and so should be modified or replaced. Hunting and agriculture (fungi) are common proficiencies among them.

Starting Possessions: A Leraran noble PC, who must be male, may start the game with the equivalent of 50 gp of equipment, as appropriate to a primitive underground existence. Lerara do

not use actual currency, instead bartering for needed goods or receiving goods in payment for work rendered. They long ago gave all their real money, in Suloise Imperial currency, to the Mother as a gift. A giant millipede steed is worth 30 gp to them, but it has little use beyond the underdark.

A commoner Leraran PC (including a hunter, warrior, or any female PC) may start the game with primitive clothing, equipment, and weapons of up to 20 gp total value, regardless of the PC's class. At the DM's option, the PC may also gain one better item, likely an heirloom or stolen treasure, such as a small gem, a steel weapon, a shield or partial suit of metallic armor, a minor potion, or the like.

Role-Playing Suggestions: Leraran NPCs have little interest in the world beyond their warren, though they know it exists from their own legends. The outside world is said to be either heavenly or hellish, depending on which Lerara or legend one believes.

One PC role would be that of an outcast (heretic, criminal, refugee) who has fled Leraran society through the Passage of Slerotin into the Yeomanry, there to be found, possibly in a bad state, by other adventurers. A PC might also be a scout, hermit, or outcast who meets up with an adventuring band in the underdark, where the PC's visual skill and knowledge of the region can be an asset to the other PCs. The PC might hate the Mother, and thus guide PCs away from contact with the other Lerara.

Other Information: The game statistics for a giant cave millipede follow: Climate/Terrain: Subterranean (in caves below Hellfurnaces); Frequency: Rare; Organization: Nil; Activity Cycle: Any; Diet: Carnivore; Intelligence: Non- (0); Treasure: Nil; Alignment: Neutral; No. Appearing: 2d4; Armor Class: 4; Movement: 12; Hit Dice: 4; THAC0: 17; No. of Attacks: Nil; Damage/Attack: Nil; Special Attacks: Nil; Special Defenses: Nil; Magic Resistance: Nil; Size: H (13'); Morale: Average (8-10); XP Value: 10 (inoffensive); can carry up to 300 pounds at full speed, 450 at one-half speed, and 600 at one-third speed.

Leraran PCs have normal chances for gaining psionics, and they may become psionicists if the DM allows, using PHBR5. Like humans, Lerara are omnivorous. They have no specialized unarmed combat techniques.

The ultimate fate of Slerotin is unknown. Lerara PCs might be interested in seeking out Elayne Mystica for her

knowledge of Slerotin if they are tracking down Slerotin's legend.

References: #1015 **WORLD OF GREYHAWK** boxed set (1983, *Glossography*, pages 27-28, "The Lost Passage of the Suloise," and *A Guide to the World of GREYHAWK Fantasy Setting*, page 8, "A Brief History of Eastern Oerik"; *DRAGON Magazine* issue #139, "Lords & Legends: A miscellany of magic-users," page 18 (Elayne Mystica).

Skulk

I was startled that you would ask me about troubles with skulks in Faerun, as I've not heard about them of late. Are they troubling your City of Greyhawk? If so, they likely reached your world from our own. The skulks who lurk beneath Calimshan far to the south of Waterdeep have been there for millennia—I could not say exactly for how long—and it is likely they've migrated through long-lost gates to many worlds. We've determined that these skulks evolved ages ago from human captives of the drow under Calimshan, slave who remained in the Underdark after being freed from their servitude by a giant lizard (claimed to be an avatar of Ibrandul by priests of that deity as if their words could be trusted). I would write more on this, but we are preoccupied with certain political matters that you might find of interest, namely . . .

-from a letter to Mordenkainen
from Khelben "Blackstaff"

Arunsun,
City of Waterdeep, Ches 12, 1369 D.R.

M., thank you for forwarding K.'s letter. His comments puzzle me greatly. O. and I, working with colleagues in Leukish, have strong evidence that skulks were deliberately created during the second millennium of the Suel Imperium, probably to serve their masters as House or Imperial assassins. You recall my investigation of the little-known Eight-House War of around 1100 s.p., which could have sparked the inception of the skulks' use within the empire. It is wholly reasonable that they could have gotten out of the control of their creators and spread throughout the empire thereafter, despite the best efforts of all to command or exterminate them. Still, I fail to see how they are connected with the alleged reports of skulks in Faerun. We are preparing our notes on this matter, but a final paper will not be ready for many weeks.

I should point out that two years ago, a hired adventurer brought some items to me

he alleges were taken from the body of a skulk he had slain in the Grandwood. Among them was a dried, forked serpent's tongue, treated to avoid decay. Such things are used by priests of Syrul as holy symbols. Can skulks become true priests, or do they merely revere and seek to emulate this treacherous Power? Did Syrul and not Suloise wizards create skulks, for her own deceitful purposes? I should like to explore this question further, but I have too many irons in the fire nowadays. . . .

-from a letter to Mordenkainen
from the priestess Johanna,
formerly of Almor, City of Greyhawk,
Wealsun 20, 585 c.y.



Thieving Skill Racial Adjustments:
Pick Pockets -20%; Open Locks -; Find/Remove Traps +5%; Move Silently +30%; Hide in Shadows +85%; Detect Noise -; Climb Xalls -; Read Languages -.

Class Mixing: Though mostly human, skulks have been mutated so much that they can gain multiple classes like demihumans. Skulks can be thief/fighters, thief/clerics, thief/mages, or thief/illusionists. Skulks cannot become paladins, druids, or bards because of their low Charisma scores; their cowardice and bent toward evil also preclude their becoming rangers. They cannot have any single class except for that of the thief.

Suggested Kits: Skulk PCs begin their careers in an underground or wilderness environment. Kits and proficiencies should be modified to reflect these origins. Kits reflecting secrecy, stealth, and a criminal or outlaw existence are appropriate; direct combat and civilized interactions should be avoided, as skulks are cowardly, barbaric, and widely hated.

The only kits available apply to single-class skulk thieves; multiclassed skulks gain no kits.

Thief-assassin, bandit, bounty hunter, scout, smuggler, spy (PHBR2); assassin, outlaw, scout, smuggler, spy (S&P).

Hit Dice: Skulk PCs receive Hit Dice by class.

Typical alignments: Most skulks are chaotic evil, but some are neutral evil, chaotic neutral, or true neutral.

Natural Armor Class: 10.

Age categories: Starting Age: 14 + 1d4 years; Maximum Age Range = 60 + 2d10 years; Average Maximum Age = 71 years; Middle Age = 30 years, Old Age = 40 years, Venerable = 60 years.

Average height and weight
(male/ female): 59 + 2d6/56 + 2d6 inches; 110 + 3d12/80 + 3d12 lbs.

Movement base: 12.

Appearance: A skulk appears to be human about 5'-6' tall. He is completely bald and hairless, with light-gray leathery skin, graceful limbs, normal ears, soft facial features, and pink (*FORGOTTEN REALMS* campaign) or blue (*GREYHAWK* campaign) eyes. A skulks skin magically changes color to fit his background when seen by any viewer. Facially and in body posture, a typical skulk NPC has a shifty, cowardly, untrustworthy, creepy look. Either gender initially appears sexless. Clothes, jewelry, and armor are worn only in the security of a skulks lair, if at all, as they block the camouflage, trackless movement, and silent movement abilities.

Habitat: Skulks are found throughout the temperate and tropical regions of the Flanaess. They usually inhabit those regions settled by Suloise fleeing the ruins of their empire, as the skulks followed the tribes who passed through the Passage of Slerotin. (Some were trapped with the Lerara, but they left and soon spread through the Hellfurnaces' underdark.) Skulks are particularly fond of the lands of the former Great Kingdom, as the chaos in this realm favors their activ-

Skulk

Ability Score Adjustments: Initial ability scores are modified by a +2 to Dexterity, a -1 to Strength, a -1 to Wisdom, and a -4 to Charisma.

Starting Ability Score Range:

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength	3	18*
Dexterity	6	18
Constitution	3	18
Intelligence	3	18
Wisdom	3	16
Charisma	3	14

* nonpercentile

Class Restrictions:

Class	Max. level
Warrior	
Fighter	2
Priest	
Cleric	2
Wizard	
Mage	4
Illusionist	6
Rogue	
Thief	Unlimited

ties. Almost none are known among the Baklunish lands, Tiger and Wolf Nomad territory, Blackmoor, the Barrens, the Thillonrian Peninsula, or the southern jungles; they prefer the fringes of temperate, well-populated, civilized areas where ruins, sewers, tunnels, caves, dense forests, and other terrain allow them to hide.

Skulks are also known from the Underdark of Calimshan, in Faerûn (the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting), where they appear to have developed independently. See "History" for details.

Society & Religion: Skulk NPCs have little true society. They usually move about in loose family bands, each led by a strong male skulk. Their oral traditions and histories paint them as superior beings who are unjustly persecuted by jealous humans. Humans are their favored targets; demihumans and humanoids are considered beneath contempt. Skulks also have an extremely high level of self-preservation, meaning they are cowardly in the extreme and will sacrifice anyone or anything to flee and survive. Cases of fleeing mothers leaving their children behind are common. Despite their sociopathy, they rarely fight one another over loot, instead stealing desired items from each other in secret.

Nocturnal in nature, skulks hide in caves or forests by day to sleep, then

emerge at night to raid civilized communities. Skulks are masters of camouflage, concealment, trickery, and escape. They prefer hit-and-run raids but also like to sow confusion and discord while committing their crimes, by leaving false clues implicating other parties. This chaos allows skulks to continue raiding, stealing, and murdering.

Skulks and doppelgangers have a peculiar ability to instantly recognize one another for what they truly are. How this is possible is not known, and even skulks and doppelgangers admit they have only a peculiar, instinctive certainty as to each other's identity. Skulks and doppelgangers are generally unaware of their true origins, yet they harbor no animosity toward each other and even cooperate at times.

Skulk NPC clerics of the Flanaess most often worship Syrus, the Suloise goddess of deceit and treachery. It is speculated that Syrus had something to do with the creation of the Flanaess skulks, through her various agents, though no such proof exists. A connection between Syrus and the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign deity Ibrandul is suspected, but no evidence of such a link is known. It is entirely possible that skulks developed independently on each world at about the same time, as the skulks of Oerth have pale blue eyes (like their Suloise ancestors) and those of Toril have pink eyes (as they developed from subterranean humans who had become albinos).

Languages: A skulk PC begins the game knowing common and two other languages often spoken in the campaign region, usually demihuman tongues (elvish, dwarfish, etc.) or a human dialect (in the Flanaess: Nyrondese, Keolandish, etc.). None of them now speak their original language, Suloise.

Special Advantages: An unclothed skulk has the ability to freeze into immobility in an instant, its skin taking on background coloration as camouflage. This renders the skulk 90% likely to be unnoticed by passers-by who are not staring directly at the skulk when it tried to blend into the background. (The thief's score for hiding in shadows, with the 85% racial bonus for skulks, simulates this ability.)

Thief abilities given here also simulate the general skulk skills at silent movement and backstabbing. A skulk that successfully moves in silence imposes a -3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls, and it can attempt to backstab if surprise is gained.

By lifelong training, a skulk can move through a forest or underground setting without leaving a definite trail behind it. If someone like a ranger uses the tracking proficiency to follow a skulk, the tracker's base Wisdom score is reduced to one-third its former value for purposes of the proficiency roll; fractions are rounded down. Thus, a ranger with a Wisdom of 14 would have an effective Wisdom of 4 before modifiers are applied using Table 39 from the *Player's Handbook*. (Note that nonrangers still have the -6 penalty applied to their tracking proficiency rolls after this reduction to one-third Wisdom is made.)

Special Disadvantages: Skulk NPCs use no armor, helmets, shields, or clothing, being unable to tolerate the resulting loss of camouflage power, silent movement, and trackless movement. Skulk PCs should also adhere to this guideline.

Skulks are normally nocturnal, and PCs start the campaign on a nocturnal cycle (sleepy during the day, alert at night). The DM may apply minor penalties (e.g., -1 to attack rolls and saving throws) if a skulk PC operates out-of-cycle; an attempt to permanently change to a diurnal cycle requires 5d6 days.

Skulks, being nearly human, are affected by *charm person* and *hold person* spells. Magical items that affect humans alone (such as *potions of human control*) have a 50% chance to affect skulks as well.

If attacked by any will-force spell or power simulating fear (e.g., *cause fear*, *fear*, *scare*, *emotion fear*), or fear caused by dragons' auras, a skulk must take a -6 penalty to his saving throw. Failure produces a random result, either immediate flight (50%) or immobility (500%), regardless of the actual situation.

Skulks are too cowardly to ever use poison, though this can be seen as an advantage, of course.

Weapon Proficiencies: Skulk NPCs like small, easily carried, one-handed stabbing weapons, like knives, daggers, or short swords. (These alone can be used for backstabbing.) Hand axes and other light weapons might be learned, but only after at least one of the above weapons is mastered. Skulks dislike heavy or complicated weapons, preferring to move about unencumbered. Skulk PCs should also consider these guidelines.

Nonweapon proficiencies: When selecting proficiencies for this race, remember that nearly all skulk NPCs are

cowardly, greedy, selfish, unwilling to work, uncivilized, and parasitic. They won't learn agriculture or brewing, for instance, since they prefer to steal their food, and etiquette is out of the question. Survival skills like weather sense, direction sense, rope use, and disguise are good choices. Skulks have almost no entertainment skills, being so self-concerned and paranoid as to not want an audience, but singing is still possible.

Starting Possessions: Skulk PCs start with only one weapon each (player's choice) and nothing else.

Skulk NPCs covet many fancy and expensive items they see, dragging them back to secret lairs where the items are used and abused until they fall apart. Clothing, for instance, is liked by both sexes, with furniture and jewelry also being popular.

Role-Playing Suggestions: A skulk is likely to be prone to various phobias, fears, and paranoias because of its cowardice. This should be considered in role-playing this race. It would thus be unlikely for a skulk to take a forward (point) position in a party, though it might serve as an unreliable rear guard. A skulk might also be prone to be secretive, tell lies or evasions, avoid direct confrontations, and save itself first when facing danger.

One good starting situation for a skulk PC would be for it to be abandoned as a child by parents fleeing vengeful humans. The PC is raised later by human captors who bring out a somewhat better nature in the barbaric child. The skulk's abilities and memories of how other skulks behave will certainly color its actions and attitudes, though it need not be evil.

Other information: Skulks are omnivores, like humans, and eat the same things humans eat. They can never develop psionic abilities or become psionicists. If unarmed, they attempt to flee, avoiding weaponless combat unless trapped and desperate; in the latter case, they strike out in a panicked, random manner.

It is suggested that a skulk PC who becomes wholly fearless by some means gradually loses all special abilities, evolving within a week's time into a regular human thief who happens to look like a visible skulk with gray skin. This would suggest that some form of magical connection exists between the

race's great cowardice and its special powers. This is not illogical in a magical world, especially if deities are involved. This also keeps players from trying to get around the drawbacks of the race to abuse its special powers.

References: #2012 FIEND FOLIO® tome, "Skulk"; #2107 MC5 MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® GREYHAWK Appendix, "Skulk"; #9516 FORGOTTEN REALMS Faiths & Avatars, pages 71-75, "Ibrandul."



Jermlaine

I don't know where they came from, but this poison-gas spell is gonna send them right back there.

- unknown adventurer, somewhere deep under the Hellfurnaces

The actual history of the jermlaine is complex. Details are currently unknown to all residents of the Flanaess, except for certain high priests of Pyremius. It is generally believed that jermlaine are related to minor goblinoids like mites, snyads, and gremlins, but this is not the case.

Jermlaine were originally gnome slaves of a secret society of Suloise wizards who dwelled in caverns under the Hellfurnaces, which in the ancient days of the Suel Imperium were less volcanic

and usually identified as part of the Crystalmists chain. This society of wizards, the Inheritors of the Red Gloom, was at constant odds with the Suel Imperium. The Inheritors closely followed the teachings of the Suloise deity Pyremius, who represented selfish personal achievement and the gaining of power at all costs. The particular methods approved of by Pyremius to gain power (fire, poison, and murder) later became divine portfolios under his control, and many of the Inheritors were-as they are now-evil fire elementalists (as per the *Tome of Magic*) or dual-classed mage-thieves trained in assassination (use the assassin kit from PHBR2 *The Complete Thief's Handbook*). The Inheritors often worked in concert with the great red dragons of this region known as the Fiery Kings, against whom the Suel Imperium fought many wars. (See DRAGON Magazine issue #230, page 8-16, "The Orbs of Dragonkind.")

Certain gnomes, corrupted by their masters, secretly wished to pursue the teachings of Pyremius themselves to achieve a greater command of magic. The Inheritors would have none of this, but the wicked gnomes managed to establish priests of Pyremius among their own kind through prayer and devotional acts. They eventually escaped their masters and took up residence in the mountains immediately next to what is now Jeklea Bay. There they conducted hideous experiments on captive Suloise citizens, some of them Inheritors who were kidnapped by the gnomes or their agents.

One result of these experiments was the creation of a slave race that served as spies and guards for the evil gnomes. This race, though minute in size, was extraordinarily clever and capable, combining features of the Suloise captives with flesh from the gnomes themselves. (It is said that the deity Pyremius served as the model for this race's facial appearance.) The gnomes were themselves destroyed by spellcasters of the Suel Imperium about the year -1,600 C.Y., almost 2,400 years before the present day in the Flanaess. However, their servant race survived and scattered, spreading throughout the mountain tunnels and caverns. These creatures are today called jermlaine, which is Oeridian for "troublemaker"; the word is the same in the singular or plural form. Jermlaine have numerous other names, the print-

Jermlaine

Starting ability score range:

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength	2	8
Dexterity	13	19
Constitution	8	14
Intelligence	3	18
Wisdom	3	
Charisma	3	:(18)*

* Jermlaine PCs have a maximum Charisma of 8 to any beings but other jermlaine. Their size, peculiar language, and reputation hinder their leadership abilities when applied to other races.

Class Restrictions:

Class	Max. level
Priest	
Cleric	2
Rogue	
Thief	16

able ones including bane-midges, jinxkins, and gremlins ("gremlin" being a modern corruption of "jermlaine").

Ability Score Adjustments: A player must choose to run a jermlaine PC before ability-score dice are rolled. Strength is then rolled using 2d4, Dexterity is 2d4+11, and Constitution is 244+6. Other ability scores are rolled using 3d6 without modification.

Thieving Skill Racial Adjustments: Pick pockets -30%; open locks -20%; find/remove traps +5%; move silently +40%; hide in shadows +45%; detect noise +30%; climb walls -35%; read languages-(nil, skill cannot be learned).

Class Mixing: A jermlaine PC may become either a single-classed thief or a cleric/thief; all other classes are barred.

Suggested kits: A kit can be received only if the jermlaine PC is a single-classed thief.

Thief-scavenger, shadow, tunnel rat (PHBR10).

Hit Dice: Jermlaine PCs receive hit dice by class.

Typical alignments: Most jermlaine are neutral evil, but some are lawful evil, chaotic evil, and true neutral, and a few are lawful neutral.

Natural Armor Class: 7, because of their small size and swift movements.

Age categories: Starting Age = 2 + 1 d3 years; Maximum Age Range = 24 + 3d6 years; Average Maximum Age = 35 years; Middle Age = 12 years, Old Age = 16 years, Venerable = 24 years.

Average height and weight: 10+2d4 inches; 1 d6+4 pounds (same statistics for either sex).

Movement Base: 15. Jermlaine normally move about by running on their short but speedy legs. They have tremendous reserves of energy and cannot imagine or tolerate simply walking.

Appearance: A jermlaine is about 15" tall, humanlike in form but with long muscular limbs covered with baggy skin, a smooth pointed head, over-large ears, and a big belly. The skin is gray-brown and warty, looking like dirty rock; the joints are swollen a bit, and the limbs have a twisted look. Fingernails and toenails are thick, dirty, and clawlike, but the fingers are very thin and dexterous. Wrinkles on the forehead make it appear the jermlaine is wearing a pointed, skin-colored cap. Random tufts of rough hair appear on the lower arms, thighs, and sides of the head. A typical jermlaine looks like a miniature angry old man with a huge beer belly, a comical look undone by its nasty behavior.

Habitat: Jermlaine are especially common in the vast network of caverns and tunnels under the Hellfurnaces, where they originated. They also appear in many smaller underground regions and ruins across Oerth, even in arctic and tropical areas. Thanks to their cleverness and small size, they have spread to numerous other worlds by gates, spell-jammers, and other means; adventurers in the underdark of Faerun, for instance, are unhappily familiar with them. Jermlaine are often found in association with rats, giant rats, or osquips, sharing their tunnels and combining their attacks and defenses.

Society & Religion: Jermlaine live in clans, groups of interrelated, extended families ranging in size from a dozen to about 50 members. A clan includes about 4d4 small families, each led by a male elder. The strongest and cleverest of the elders becomes the clan chief, by common vote of the elders. Females teach their children many methods of ambushing and humiliating "giants" (humans, demihumans, etc.).

Each clan inhabits a cunningly hidden and heavily defended lair, a series of tiny, filthy tunnels near a larger underground area. Jermlaine tunnels are about 1 foot in diameter, with a wide variety of minor treasures and furnishings inside the individual family chambers, which can be several feet across.

Languages: Jermlaine PCs begin the game speaking their own language, which sounds like the high-pitched twittering and squeaking of rats. They can communicate with rats in this manner,

though this is an extremely limited "language." Jermlaine have no concept of reading or writing, but they are capable of drawing pictures to describe what they have seen or wish to do.

Jermlaine do understand a number of other languages perfectly well, though they cannot speak them clearly because of the size and shape of their vocal organs. Up to two extra languages may be understood at the game's start, such as common and the racial languages of dwarves, drow, gnomes, orcs, goblins, or similar subterranean creatures found in the DM's campaign. Additional languages may be learned (but not spoken or written) as per the usual rules.

Special Advantages: Jermlaine have infravision to 30 feet. Their senses of hearing and smell are extremely keen. They can detect *invisible* or hidden creatures within 30 feet of them using these latter two senses alone, but cannot detect ethereal, out-of-phase, or astral beings. Even if blind, a jermlaine can accurately identify an individual person or monster by its odor (if within 30 feet) or voice (if within hearing range) if such a being was ever encountered before. General classes of beings (humans, drow, ropers, bulettes, etc.) can be identified instantly, so a jermlaine can sniff the space under a door to see if any being awaits on the other side. At the DM's option, however, some dissimilar creatures might smell exactly alike.

Their gnomish ancestry makes jermlaine somewhat resistant to magic. They use Table 9 from the *Player's Handbook* for determining their saving-throw bonuses against magic based on their Constitution scores. This bonus does not apply to poisons, but it does affect saving throws against wands, staves, rods, and spells.

Thanks to their small size and quickness, any attack that would inflict half-damage to a victim who makes a saving throw against it will have no effect at all upon a jermlaine PC who saves against it.

In addition, jermlaine who are able to move silently cause opponents to apply a -5 penalty to their surprise checks. The ability to remain undetected 75% of the time is reflected in the thief skill scores given for this PC race.

Jermlaine PCs cannot gain the special magic-draining ability of evil jermlaine elders (who are always NPCs). This is a gift from the deity Pyremius.

Jermlaine can carry diseases, but

they get sick only if such illnesses are caused by magic (e.g., *cause disease*). The DM must decide if the diseases a jermlaine carries can be communicated to other party members; the game mechanics for diseases carried by rats is suggested for use here.

Special Disadvantages: The tiny size and low Strength of a jermlaine PC will certainly work against it in many circumstances, particularly in combat and issues of encumbrance. These events must be handled by the DM. Note that nearly all magical items and normal weapons are too large for jermlaine to use.

The eyes of a jermlaine are weak. As a result, it will be half-blinded by direct sunlight or *continual light* spells, suffering a -2 penalty on attack and saving-throw rolls.

A jermlaine is considered a "person" for purposes of the *charm person* and *hold person* spells, and so is affected by them.

Jermlaine cannot read or write, nor can they learn to do so. They also cannot speak normal human or demihuman languages. They can use writing implements to draw pictures, however.

Weapon Proficiencies: Jermlaine NPCs regularly manufacture needlesharpened darts of wood or bone, each about 3-6 inches long; which they can hurl up to 120 yards thanks to their relatively strong arms and lightning-fast hurling motions (short range: 0-40 yards; medium range: 41-80 yards; long range: 81-120 yards). These darts cause 1-2 hp damage. Jermlaine also use miniature wooden pikes, each about 18 inches long, often made with metal tips (1-4 hp damage). Lastly, they can make their own miniature swords, which inflict damage as daggers (1-4/1 -3). These swords can be used to cut straps, chop ropes, or stab foes. It takes a full day to make one weapon of any type.

A jermlaine may also carry a leather club, with which it can strike at a prone human, demihuman, or humanoid who lacks head protection like a helmet. Each strike against an AC 10 head has a cumulative 2% chance of knocking the victim unconscious for 2-8 rounds. The DM should adjudicate the likelihood of a jermlaine getting that close to a victim's head.

Groups of jermlaine often use nets, trip cords, pits, acid and flaming oil poured through murder holes, and other "dirty tricks." These do not require proficiencies to learn, but do require coordinated clan preparation and ambushes.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Players should select proficiencies for their

jermlaine PCs with care, remembering their small size, living conditions, and habits. Agriculture, herbalism, and brewing are possible, though these would apply to underdark food crops like fungi. As with most races here, etiquette is hopelessly unlikely. Underground survival skills like hunting are good choices, but not astrology, charioteering, navigation, weather sense, etc. Fire-based skills are possible, and a general weapon-making skill could cover all weapon with which jermlaine are familiar.

Starting Possessions: Jermlaine PCs start the game with no money at all, though they can have several tiny spears and darts. The only clothing most jermlaine know is a loincloth or kilt held up with a piece of string or a thin leather belt. They do not wear hats or shoes. Jermlaine have no use for armor, shields, or helmets, which would be too small and thin to affect their armor class or deflect attacks. Miniature armor would also encumber them and slow them down, which jermlaine cannot tolerate.

At the DM's option, each jermlaine PC begins the game knowing the location of 1-3 minor, hidden treasures in the local area. These valuables can range from a single bag of small gems, dropped by a fleeing adventurer, to several scattered bodies slain by underdark monsters, each corpse holding a valuable item that might be unusable to the jermlaine but valuable to someone else. This knowledge can be used to bargain with other party members or NPCs, or kept in reserve until needed by the PC, such as a potion.

Role-Playing Suggestions: Jermlaine PCs function best as scouts, spies, and saboteurs in subterranean environments. They cannot speak, write, or read, which will challenge their players to find ways to communicate well with their adventuring parties. Additionally, these PCs might frequently cope with the drawbacks of their small size and low Strength scores. This can add a mildly comic element to the game, regardless of a jermlaine PC's alignment.

It is suggested in AD&D 2nd Edition game descriptions of jermlaine that they have a deeply rooted sense of inferiority over their height, and they feel a need to humiliate larger beings (whom they call "giants"). Jermlaine NPCs certainly enjoy harassing large beings for the feeling of power it gives them, so they are perfect if tiny bullies. Anyone who teases a jermlaine for his height is begging for trouble.

Other information: Jermlaine cannot become psionic. Their unarmed combat techniques consist of punching and slapping, one another in clan disputes—blows that are ineffective when used against beings larger than rats.

Jermlaine are omnivores and enjoy much the same food that humans and rats would eat (though in small amounts). They can eat rotting food, carrion, or garbage without discomfort, and a jermlaine PC could easily live off the scraps from the rest of the party's meals. Fungi, molds, insects, arachnids, and dead humanoids, adventurers, or monsters (especially lizard meat) is also eaten. Jermlaine have a great weakness for sugar, candy, and dried fruit—a nice role-playing hook.

In the ADBD 1st Edition game, jermlaine could throw their darts only out to 12'. This was changed to 120 yards in AD&D 2nd Edition statistics, about equal to medium range for a longbow. Obviously, jermlaine can now throw things very fast and hard.

References: #9019 D1 *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*, "Jermlaine"; #2012 FIEND FOLIO tome, "Jermlaine," pages 53-54; #2103 MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Volume Two, "Jermlaine"; #2140 MONSTROUS MANUAL tome, "Gremlin, Jermlaine."

Su-Doppelganger

I confess I was not particularly interested in the rumors about "albino doppelgangers" at first until the body of one was unceremoniously deposited at the gate of my estate. If was brought to me by adventurers hoping I would need it for "spare parts," probably in some necromantic research they must have imagined all wizards perform. I gave them each a gold piece to be rid of them, then was about to have the carcass incinerated when I was struck by the body's blue eyes. I knew perfectly well that albino creatures have pink eyes, and common doppelgangers have gray eyes. Yet, despite its ivory skin, this was certainly a common doppelganger's corpse—or so I thought until I noticed other peculiarities about it. I then bad my golems bring the body at once info my main study, where I set about making a most thorough examination, the results of which were astonishing. . . .

Doppelgangers presently inhabit many worlds, and they were known to many ancient societies. It is generally believed that they were artificially created to serve as spies and assassins in one or more very ancient wars fought among humankind; a wizard or demigod is usually thought to have been

their creator. Following that war, the doppelgangers are assumed to have infiltrated humanity at large and spread out across the multiverse. Such spare bits can be gleaned by any researcher from libraries, divination spells, and so forth, but little hard information besides that . . .

The doppleganger family contains several subraces native to certain worlds, such as the greater doppleganger of Faerûn and the uran doppleganger I wish to announce to the Academy today that the Flanaess has its own variation, which I shall henceforth call the su-doppleganger, or Suloise doppleganger This su-doppleganger is at the root of the "albino doppleganger" rumors we have heard.

From my researches, I believe that the su-doppleganger is a near-perfect duplicate of the common, "true" doppleganger. However, it was developed entirely from Suloise humans—perhaps volunteers perhaps not—shortly before the Rain of Colorless Fire. No written evidence exists of its creation by Suloise wizards or the Imperial government, but my divinations and analyses indicate that the su-doppleganger was most likely designed by wizard/priests in the service of Syrul, the deity of lies, treachery, and deceit. It is my supposition that su-doppelgangers were intended to infiltrate the Imperial government in its latter days, as the war with the Baklunish grew more fierce and chaos spread across the empire. As you are aware, noble houses in the Suel Imerium frequently struggled for control of the throne using every avenue possible to them, and artificial races are said to have been engineered before in the empire. It is possible that su-doppelgangers were actually created by the last emperor as a weapon against the Baklunish, but the Suloise were as great an enemy to themselves as they were to any other race, and the truth of the matter is now lost to us.

I presume that a handful of su-doppelgangers spread out from the ruined empire after the Rain of Colorless, though a few may have left earlier, either on missions against the Baklunish or sensing the disaster that would soon engulf their realm. They almost certainly travelled among groups of normal humans, their identities concealed. It is not unreasonable to conjecture that they have spread to the very corners of our world and likely beyond. . .

-from a speech by an unnamed wizard, given in Rauxes about 220 c.y.

Ability Score Adjustments: Initial ability scores are modified by a +1 to Intelligence.

Thieving Skill Racial Adjustments: None possible.

Class Mixing: None possible. Su-doppelgangers can take only the fighter class, using its experience-point table for gaining levels. However, the fighter class here is modified as per the Su-doppleganger Table and other sections in this article. PCs of this race do not need to be trained in order to reach a new level, as they effectively train themselves once they begin their careers.



Suggested Kits: None possible.

Hit Dice: Doppleganger PCs receive 10-sided hit dice by class; see the Su-doppleganger Table.

Typical Alignments: Most su-doppelgangers are true neutral, but some are neutral evil, chaotic neutral, lawful neutral, or neutral good.

Natural Armor Class: Variable, as per the Su-doppleganger Table. Su-doppelgangers have an extremely durable and flexible hide that toughens as they learn to better manipulating their form.

Age Categories: Starting Age = 16 + 1 d8 years; Maximum Age Range = 150 + 5d6 years; Average Maximum Age = 168 years; Middle Age = 75 years, Old Age = 100 years, Venerable = 150 years.

Average Height and Weight: 65 + 2d6 inches; 160 + 6d8 pounds (unchanged form; same statistics for either sex). Su-doppelgangers can assume other humanoid shapes of various sizes, as per the Su-doppleganger Table. They are very dense, and their weights remain unchanged regardless of the forms they assume (a possible giveaway to others).

Movement Base: Variable; see Su-Doppleganger Table.

Appearance: A su-doppleganger, in its unchanged form, is a vaguely manlike figure about 6' tall, with hairless chalk-white skin of thick, leathery texture. Its limbs are almost bone-thin, with a prominent backbone and ribs visible. A "naked" su-doppleganger appears completely sexless, with long fingers and toes, pointed ears that stick out from the head at a 45° angle up, and light blue eyes. The 1 seems almost blank, with a slash for a mouth and a flat, broad nose.

A su-doppleganger prefers to assume the identity and form of persons who cannot cast magic as the su-doppleganger cannot do so, either. Warriors, rogues, merchants, a n d minor nobles are most often imitated. Any specific human, demihuman, or humanoid individual within the height restrictions given in the Su-doppleganger Table can be imitated, so long as its mind can be read to complete the disguise with numerous personality details. Details like hair, skin and eye color moles and birthmarks, scars and non

Su-Doppleganger

Starting Ability Score Range:

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength*	3	18
Dexterity*	3	18
Constitution*	3	18
Intelligence	6	18
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma**	3	18

* These ability scores do not change, regardless of the shape the su-doppleganger assumes.

** This ability score could vary within a range of plus or minus 2 points, depending on the physical handsomeness of the identity assumed. The DM should adjudicate this change.

Class Restrictions:

Class	Max. level
Warrior	
Fighter	8

bleeding wounds, voice quality, limps, deformities, missing limbs, scales, and even the short tail, horns, and hooves of a satyr can be imitated with perfection and changed in one round to another form entirely. The physical symptoms of a disease (flushed skin, rashes, pockmarks, etc.) can be imitated, but the imitated disease is not real and cannot be transmitted.

Unlike other dopplegangers, su-dopplegangers do not feel impelled to kill the persons they imitate. Instead, each will select a reasonable subject of wealth or influence, study the person by *ESP* for a week, then assume the identity of the victim and travel far away to seek its fortune. The su-dopplegangers will take with it any papers or monies it is able to steal from the victim to carry on the assumed identity. If discovered, the creature flees and assumes a new identity. It is reasonable to look at them as wayfaring con-men rather than murderers.

A su-doppleganger can reshape its flesh to imitate the appearance of close-fitting clothing and nonmetallic armor. It prefers not to imitate robes, cloaks, large hats, etc. These it will simply own and use to further its disguise, though many items of real clothing may also be owned and often used.

A su-doppleganger can also reshape the flesh on its hands to create weapons of iron hardness, though it cannot do this anywhere on the rest of its body. Only one-handed weapons of up to medium size can be imitated. Each weapon can have an edge or sharp point, but it cannot hurl or fire missiles, as from a bow or gun. (The exceptions here would be a spear-throwing stick (*atlatl*) or a sling, but not a bow, crossbow, or firearm. The latter three can be imitated but will be nonfunctional and appear entirely nonmetallic.) Weapons with chain links, like the flail, are not well copied and so are also avoided.

Habitat: Su-dopplegangers may be found in any civilized region on Oerth, nearly always in cities in positions of relative wealth, comfort, and power. They prefer human cultures but are also found in demihuman and advanced humanoid lands. Su-dopplegangers are most common in the Flanaess, but are still less common here than true dopplegangers, which are themselves rare.

Society & Religion: Su-dopplegangers are entirely integrated into the human, demihuman, and humanoid societies they inhabit. They have no true society of their own. A su-doppleganger can imitate

Su-doppleganger Table

Level	HD	AC	MV	Dmg	Size Range	Accuracy
1	1	8	12	1d6	66-78	80%
2	2	7	12	1d8	60-84	84%
3	3	6	13	1d10	54-90	88%
4	4	5	13	1d12	48-96	92%
5	5	4	14	2d6	48-96	94%
6	6	3	14	3d4	42-102	96%
7	7	2	15	2d8	42-102	98%
8	8	1	15	4d4	36-108	99%

Level: Fighter level.

HD: Hit dice (lo-sided).

AC: Maximum Armor Class possible. ("Softer" ACs can be taken if circumstances require it.)

MV: Maximum movement rate.

Dmg: Maximum damage done in hand-to-hand combat with weapons made from the doppleganger's body.

Size Range: The minimum and maximum sizes possible for the various humanoid forms the su-doppleganger can assume, measured in inches. Weight remains unchanged. Players should carefully consider the height and race of a subject being imitated; a 1 St-level su-doppleganger could not imitate a short gnome or huge ogre, for instance.

Accuracy: The probability that a person well familiar with an imitated subject will be fooled by the su-doppleganger's impersonation. This score is checked once per day of close observation. A su-doppleganger can accurately imitate only a limited number of human, demihuman, or humanoid subjects it has studied; use its Intelligence score as the upper limit of identities it can assume at any particular time. If the limit is reached but a new identity is learned anyway, the oldest of the previous roles is permanently forgotten.

either gender of a particular race, and can become pregnant in female form (but cannot cause another female to become pregnant). The child of a su-doppleganger is always another su-doppleganger to be lovingly raised and secretly trained in the use of its many powers.

Evil su-dopplegangers frequently pay homage to Syrul, but even good ones have an inclination to give this deity its due for playing a part in the creation of this race (as per su-doppleganger folklore).

Su-dopplegangers and true dopplegangers have a peculiar ability to instantly recognize one another for what they are. They leave each other entirely alone, not rendering aid to each other unless it is in their own best interests. Su-dopplegangers will willingly aid others of their kind, however, as they have a sense of kinship and are aware that they are a secretive and persecuted minority. Su-dopplegangers and true dopplegangers are also able to identify skulks on sight, and the latter can identify the former, but again they tend to leave each other alone unless it is to their benefit to cooperate on a task.

Unlike normal dopplegangers, su-dopplegangers have few objections to work (moderate work, that is). They

do prefer to gain enough power, money, and influence to have others do all the hard work for them, of course—but don't we all?

Languages: A su-doppleganger PC starts the game knowing common and five other human, demihuman, or humanoid languages. These languages should be worked out between the DM and player to fit the campaign circumstances. The PC does not have to admit to actually knowing such languages, of course. Additional languages may be learned at the rate of one every even-numbered level (2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th), because of the su-doppleganger's constant mind-reading abilities. The DM should approve of each language selected to ensure it fits logically within the campaign (sahuagin-no, hobgoblin-yes).

Special Advantages: The su-doppleganger possesses a permanent *ESP* power, usable at will, but it can read only one being's mind at a time within a 30' radius. The su-doppleganger can move about and defend itself while mind-reading, but cannot attack or activate a magical device. A su-doppleganger PC is assumed to know most of the surface thoughts of its comrades at any particular time of day, but the player should not

constantly press the DM or other players for this information, as this will instantly reveal the character's identity (and annoy the players and DM, too). Most surface thoughts are simply irrelevant, and the su-doppelganger will have read many, many minds in its life, finding the thoughts of most people quite mundane. The DM should pass along any unusual or especially interesting thoughts a su-doppelganger PC uncovers during the course of a day, but there is nothing wrong with telling the player, "Nothing new today."

If a critical bit of information is required in a crisis situation (the location of a key during a chase, for instance, or the identity of a spell about to be cast by an enemy wizard), the victim should make a saving throw vs. spells to see whether the su-doppelganger PC pries the information from his mind in one round. Only characters protected by spells or items that specifically block scrying, *ESP*, or telepathy are immune to this mind-reading.

The special ability of changing body shapes is detailed in "Appearance," above.

Because their bodies are so malleable, su-doppelgangers are not slain by having their heads or limbs cut off (as from a *vorpal* weapon); they simply form a new head or limb from their bodies. However, the loss of any significant limb or body part prevents the su-doppelganger from gaining any experience points or advancing in levels again, until that being has received a *regenerate* spell. (Putting on a *ring of regeneration* will not do.) Once the *regenerate* spell has been received, the PC may gain experience and levels again.

A su-doppelganger PC receives a +4 bonus to all saving throws because of its magical nature. It uses the THAC0 and saving-throw tables for fighters.

Su-doppelgangers are immune to all *sleep* and *charm* spells, but they can pretend otherwise if circumstances allow (for example, if one reads an attacking wizard's mind and knows what spell is being cast). They do not truly sleep, but need to rest like any other being; they can lie awake with eyes closed, fully alert while reading the minds and dreams of those around them.

Special Disadvantages: Su-doppelgangers can make only one melee attack per round, unless using a weapon that normally has more than one (e.g., a longbow).

Su-doppelgangers are affected by *hold person* spells. A *true seeing* spell or

power reveals their true shapes, but a *detect enemies* spell or power will not indicate their actual nature, though it will logically indicate any su-doppelganger planning to attack the person using the *detect enemies* power.

Because they are so attuned to human shapes, su-doppelgangers cannot create unusual functional appendages such as extra arms or legs, an extra head, wings, large fins, gills, and the like. Minor items like claws, horns, fangs, webbed fingers, long fur, and so forth are possible, however, and these might have minor game effects (damage from horn butting, claw or bite damage, improved swimming with webbed fingers, cold resistance with fur, etc.).

Weapon Proficiencies: None possible. As noted earlier, a su-doppelganger creates iron-hard constructs from its hands, imitating the shape and form of hand-held weapons.

A su-doppelganger obviously cannot hurl a weapon it has made from its own body. Standard hurled or missile weapons (throwing axe, longbow and arrows, firearm, etc.) may be picked up and used, but a nonproficiency penalty is applied (-2 to attack rolls).

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Nearly any nonweapon proficiency can be learned. Su-doppelganger PCs start with four nonweapon proficiencies and gain a new one every odd level above the 1st (at 3rd, 5th, and 7th).

Unlike other races in this article, su-doppelgangers are quite likely to possess polite, refined skills like etiquette or heraldry, as they have a strong taste for civilized life and a profound dislike of crude, unwashed barbarism. They choose their proficiencies to enhance the roles they play and to increase their chances for acceptance into society and eventual seizure of power, security, and wealth.

A su-doppelganger can imitate a particular proficiency (with only a -2 penalty) if it is reading the mind of a person with that proficiency. The proficiency is swiftly forgotten once the mind-reading stops. The DM must adjudicate these circumstances.

Starting Possessions: Su-doppelganger PCs begin the game with $5d4 \times 10$ (50-200) gp each. They are assumed to come from middle- or upper-class backgrounds, those being the backgrounds of the persons they are imitating.

Role-Playing Suggestions: Su-doppelgangers give no indication that they are anything other than what they appear to be. They are consummate

actors who seek to blend in completely with their adopted societies, playing out the roles they choose and switching roles when they are found out. (One might stay with a group, of course, if it realized it was not going to be killed or persecuted for its duplicity.)

Any player using a su-doppelganger PC should carefully consider possible problems such as what equipment the PC should take, what equipment or tools it can imitate (50' of rope? nope), and possible giveaways that the PC is not what it claims to be. (The use of metallic armor can be problematic if the PC changes size abruptly, for instance.) It is reasonable to have a list of "alter-egos" that a su-doppelganger PC can draw upon to imitate at the drop of a hat, up to the limit of its Intelligence score (see Su-Doppelganger Table).

Other Information: Su-doppelgangers are never psionic. They are omnivores who will eat anything that normal humans eat. Regardless of the identity they assume, they cannot duplicate class-based abilities such as spell-casting, multiple attacks (even as a fighter), thief skills, etc.

This race is the most problematic of the five presented here because of its mind-reading and shape-changing powers. Logic is required in working out unforeseen events in a campaign involving such a character, but the DM and players should look upon the role-playing as an entertaining challenge.

References: #2009 *Monster Manual*, "Doppelganger"; #2103 **MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM** Volume 2, "Doppelganger"; #2140 **MONSTROUS MANUAL** tome, "Doppelganger," page 60; #1109 **FORGOTTEN REALMS** *City of Splendors*, "Doppelganger, Greater" [variant spelling]; #2158 **MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM** Annual, Volume Two, "Doppelganger, Greater," page 43; *POLYHEDRON® Newszine* issue #72, "Know Who Your Friends Are," pages 8-9, and "Doppelganger, Uran," page 10; *DRAGON Magazine* issue #80, "The Psychology of the Doppelganger," pages 7-8.



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MODRON MAGIC



The Sorcery of Structure

by Monte Cook

illustrated by R.K. Post

Tarsheva Longreach, a renowned planewalker, once said that as strange and alien as the forces of chaos seemed to her, the forces of order seemed equally strange—if not stranger. Upon close examination of some of the most visible embodiments of order, a body would probably agree. See, the creatures in question are the modrons.

The modrons, known to some graybeards as modrontificus rigidulus and to others as those annoying geometric bashers, are inhabitants of Mechanus, at the center of the Planes of Law. Some primes refer to the plane as Nirvana, although it's pretty difficult to imagine why.

Modrons are creatures of blind order, each taking on a different geometric shape that signifies its place within the rigid hierarchy. A few modrons go against this hierarchy, and these outcasts are called rogues. Rules for creating rogue modron PCs can be found in the *Planewalker's Handbook*.

Most of the modrons' goals are insular and nigh indecipherable to non-modrons. For example, beyond the reasoning of anyone else, the modrons believe that it is important for them occasionally to march around the Outer Planes. Apparently they are marching about these planes, called the Great Ring by many, to gather information—but no one knows for sure. Like clockwork, the modrons go on this grand walkabout at set intervals. 'Course, chant is that they've suddenly started a new Great March out of the standard pattern. It's simply not the right time for them to be marching. Now, modrons violating standard procedure is a little like a Lower Planar fiend giving out flowers and candy, so folks are more than a little confused (more information can be found in *The Great Modron March*, an adventure anthology available now).

One thing that outsiders can understand (at least to a point) is the advancement of modron magic—a special type of sorcery, the secrets to which only they are privy. In the heart of the plane of ultimate law, the modrons of ancient times discovered a kind of magic that they call Truphysik. This highly focused sort of

enchantment allows them to create spells and devices unique to them. (A body's likely to encounter a modron with magical items, but he might not even realize that the modron's got them, since they seem "built in"—lenses of detection, eyes of minute seeing, slippers of spider climbing, gauntlets of ogre power, armor of blending, bracers of defense, etc. Modrons also use more obvious items like wands, rings, weapons, and similar devices.)

So now, since the modrons have begun their march, a canny blood might start to expect seeing them in his own kip. Those that do can learn a little something about the new kinds of magic they might be carrying from the following few pages. Remember, any bit of additional knowledge on the planes is a little bit more of an edge a body's got to keep himself alive.

Modron Magical Items

Within some of the workshops and laboratories of Mechanus, a body'll find the most interesting things. Clockwork tools and gear-driven machines the likes of which no one's seen anywhere else. Unlike some such devices created by some mad prime inventor or even a few ingenious gnomes, these items work with such precision that there's never any chance of mechanical failure—if a body treats them right.

Examples of modron devices include gear-driven machines that clean other objects (clothes, floors, etc.), open and close doors, print books, and more—not to mention, of course, incredibly accurate clocks. Below are a few examples of more powerful items, useful to planewalking adventurers.

These items are created by modrons called septons. Until now, magical item creation wasn't among their known duties—which just goes to show that even straightforward cutters like the modrons still have a few mysteries to them.

Almost all modron magical items are activated by a specific command word. This word may be the true name of the device in question. (Want to know for sure? Ask a graybeard, berk!)





Clockwork Sling

This device can be used only by modrons. Most folks agree that it looks like a tiny catapult mounted on the top of the modron, with a small bowl-like reservoir for additional missiles below it. When used, it's affixed to the modron's body, preferably near the top. Like a miniature catapult, it lobs stones or other small objects through the air with great force. It even loads itself up to five times before five more stones or bullets must be placed into its reservoir.

In battle, the modron can use the clockwork sling in addition to other attacks or actions (although if in close combat with a foe, firing into a melee presents the same sorts of problems as always—see the Combat section of the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*).

The clockwork sling functions as a magical weapon although there is no bonus to the attack roll (for determining what creatures can be struck, treat it as a +1 weapon). The damage it inflicts is identical to that of a normal sling, with a +2 bonus to the die roll.

XP Value: 900 **XP Value:** 3,000

Clockwork Spinsword

Despite its name, this weapon isn't really much of a sword. Instead, a *spinsword* is really a three-and-a-half-foot

shaft with a set of metal gears on the end, each connected to a two-foot-long blade. There are four blades in all.

When activated, the gears begin to spin rapidly and powerfully. This, in turn, makes the blades whirl in a deadly blur. The *spinsword* has no magical bonus, but it inflicts 2d6 hp damage against small and medium sized creatures, and 3d4 hp damage against large opponents. For determining what creatures can be struck by the weapon, treat it as a +2 enchanted sword.

The weapon can cut through 2" of wood per round, and even ½" of stone—although each round of cutting through stone presents a cumulative 5% chance of destroying the *spinsword*. If a canny blood stops cutting, waits a round, and then starts again, the chance for blade destruction goes back down to 5%. Non-magical shields and armor struck by the *clockwork spinsword* must make a saving throw vs. crushing blow or be destroyed.

Anyone wishing to use the *spinsword* must devote a proficiency slot toward its use, because it is so unlike any other weapon. Since it is so crude in its use, it is impossible to specialize in the use of the *spinsword*.

One drawback is that the *spinsword* makes a great deal of noise while activated. This loud, grinding sound may

draw unwanted attention toward the wielder.

XP Value: 1,500 **XP Value:** 4,500

Crystal of Clear Focus

This clear magical gem is actually meant for creatures other than modrons. The modrons that created it did so in order to provide others with an insight into the modron (i.e., "correct") way of thinking. Such an act of benevolence is uncommon among the modrons, but a body can assume that some of them believe that getting others to see their way of thinking is ultimately logical and helpful to modron goals.

Anyone gazing into this crystal for a full round, taking part in no other action, falls into a short meditative trance during that time. The very next round (and only the next round), the character is 20% more likely to succeed in a desired action. Thus, thief skills have a 20% increase, and attack rolls gain a +4 modifier. Likewise, saving throws, ability checks, and any other action gains the bonus. Only success or failure is modified by the meditation. For example, attack rolls gain a bonus, but damage rolls do not.

The crystal can be used three times each day.

XP Value: 800 **XP Value:** 2,500

Delay Fire Crossbow

These devices are small, one-use weapons. Delay fire crossbows were created for use in a modron retreat. They can be readied and placed into the ground, firing on their own and providing cover for the user's escape. Once set, the crossbow launches its quarrels either one or two rounds later, depending on the desire of the user. Each crossbow fires three bolts at a time (and then can't be used again because the magic consumes the device and it fails apart). The bolts each attack a random target within range and within a 45° firing arc with a THAC0 of 10. Characters aware of the crossbows and doing nothing but attempting to avoid the attack gain a -4 bonus to AC that round-of course, then the bashers've broken off pursuit and the crossbows've still done their job even if they missed.

Delay fire crossbows are extraordinarily effective when used in large numbers, half set to fire in one round, the rest firing in the next.

XP Value: 500 **XP Value:** 1,500

Flying Harness

This contraption is incomprehensible when a body sees it the first time. A canny basher can study it for a while, however, and eventually tumble to its use (DMs may wish to require one or more Intelligence checks). Once the canvas wings are unfolded, any medium sized creature can be strapped into this device (he must have help from at least one other individual). Upon command, the omithoptic machine begins to flap its wings and fly like a bird. It moves at speed 18 and has a maneuverability class of C.

The flying harness is particularly fragile in the air. If it sustains 1-10 hp in combat, the character must land immediately. (A modron, an alchemist, or an inventor is needed to repair the damage.) More than 10 hp damage destroys the harness and sends it and the character within crashing to the ground. Strangely, when on the ground, the harness can take a good deal more punishment (twice as much in fact). Any creature of size M can use this device, modron or not.

XP Value: 750 **XP Value:** 2,500

Lens of Protection

Most cutters've noticed that modrons often have special lenses over their eyes. While some of these simply aid the bashers in their normal vision, some give extended capabilities. (As noted above, many modrons are equipped with *lenses of deflection* or *eyes of minute seeing*.)

The *lens of protection* provides anyone looking through it complete protection from gaze attacks and sight-based dangers. This includes the blinding effects of a light spell, and even a blindness spell. It also protects against spell effects such as *eyebite* or even horrible sights that might cause the viewer to go insane. In fact, the modrons developed the lens so that they could safely view chaotic events without harming their psyches-modrons are always looking for ways to avert the horrible afflictions that cause some of their number to go rogue.

The problem with the lens is that rarely does anyone have more than one. This leaves most creatures with one eye left exposed-although one-eyed creatures, like monodrones and nonatons, are perfectly safe. Two-eyed creatures have only a 50% protection from the above stated affects and spells. If the 50% protection fails, then the effect should be handled normally (with saving throws, if applicable).

XP Value: 2,000 **XP Value:** 6,000

Limb Extensions

These odd devices don't look like much, but they really work. The modron straps the contraptions to his wrist or ankles (assuming such terms apply). Ten times each day, they can be commanded to telescope outward with small hands or feet on the end, effectively extending the limb(s) as needed. Each can extend up to 30 feet. Once the desired extension is reached, they remain that length until fully retracted.

The arm extensions have hands on the end that the modron controls. They are fairly dexterous and strong able to manipulate small objects and even wield weapons (use the same value as the modron's). To use them, the modron's real hands must be free. The leg extensions allow a modron to walk through deep liquids or step over hazardous substances.

Non-modrons can use these items as well, but at half their normal Strength or Dexterity scores.

XP Value: 2,200 **XP Value:** 7,000

Magnetic Clamp

This device allows modrons to attach things like bags, sheaths, quivers, etc. to themselves easily and cleanly. It's simply a magical stone that is attracted to metal with a Strength of 9, with a sturdy metal clamp that can hold most anything that could fit in a cutter's hand.

Non-modrons can use such a device as an aid in climbing a metallic wall or in

retrieving dropped metal objects if the clamp is attached to a length of rope.

XP Value: 275 **XP Value:** 1,000

Mirrorball

Some folks like these things more for how impressive they look than for their actual usefulness. The modrons, however, focus entirely on the device's function.

A *mirrorball* is a 4-inch silver sphere that floats and bobs around its owner. The surface of the sphere is highly reflective. The magic that powers the device keeps the *mirrorball* maneuvering so that the owner can see what's behind him within a 180° arc. Even though the mirrored surface is curved, no significant distortion is presented, so as long as a cutter glances into the sphere occasionally, he has virtually 360° vision. The constant bobbing of the *mirrorball* comes from the device's attempt at always showing a complete view of what's behind the owner without blocking any forward visibility.

Chant has it that one in ten of these items has an additional magical function. These special *mirrorballs* reflect spells from their surface like a *ring of spell turning*. This effect can apparently be triggered anywhere from 1-10 times each day, depending on the individual device.

Normal Version

XP Value: 500 **XP Value:** 1,500

Spell-Turning Version

XP Value: 1,200 **XP Value:** 4,000

Truebridge

When not activated, this modron device looks like a square plate of refined steel, about 18" to a side, and about an inch thick. The plate weighs approximately 12 lbs. When activated, more steel plates, apparently imbedded in the original, begin to extend out, and then plates extend out from them, so that eventually, the whole thing is 3' wide and anywhere from 5' to 30' long (depending on the command given by the user).

The weight of the device does not change, but it retains a great deal of strength-the entire truebridge, no matter what the size, has the durability of a one-inch thick steel plate. It can support up to 1,000 lbs. or more safely. Modrons in the past have used these magical items to create small bridges, erect low barricades or defensive walls, or as ladders to scale vertical surfaces, because the truebridge can be commanded to form small handholds on its side.

XP Value: 1,000 **XP Value:** 3,000

Winch of Giant Strength

This is a tiny set of powerful gears with a rope and wheel (to wind the rope around) connected. The rope is thin but very strong. Once put in place, the winch cannot be moved again by any force unless the proper command word is given. With another command word, the winch automatically begins pulling in the rope with the strength of a hill giant. This is useful not only for hoisting heavy objects into the air also, but for opening locked or stuck doors (in effect, pulling them off their hinges), and other matters. Modrons not known for their great strength utilize this device to perform feats otherwise beyond them.

XP Value: 1,300 **XP Value:** 4,000

Modron Spells

Modron magical skills aren't limited simply to creating enchanted items. The modrons have developed new spells that they can use to make the most of their learned knowledge. While there is no known school of magic that focuses on the modrons' Truphysik, the spells that they've developed with their insight into the craft are unique and useful (if, perhaps, a little odd).

Set the Path

2nd-level wizard spell

Range: Caster

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 3 rounds

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: Caster

Saving Throw: None

Much of the modron way of thinking involves the clarity of order. Set forth a good plan, don't deviate from it, and everything will work out. The modrons' foes often use this sort of thinking against them, since they're not good at reacting to unforeseen circumstances.

Nevertheless, this spell allows a modron to set forth a course of action and then follow through with focus and skill. When cast, the wizard states what his actions will be in the next three rounds. Once the magic is set into motion, he cannot deviate from this plan no matter what happens, and no matter what he wishes. For example, the caster might say that on the first round, he opens the portcullis blocking entrance to the next room and goes in. The second round, he attacks the guard inside the room. On the third round, he leaps over the pit in the middle of the room and reaches the far wall, where the object of his desire rests.

The benefit given by the spell is that all actions committed to at the casting of the spell gain a bonus of +3 (or +15 percent) to any applicable rolls. In the example, if the door is assumed to be barred, the caster gains a +15 percent to his bend bars/lift gates roll. Then on the second round, he gains a +3 to attack and damage rolls as he strikes the guardian. On the third round he gains a +3 to his Dexterity as he makes an ability score check to leap over the pit.

Of course, the above plan is based on many assumptions. The only thing that can cause a deviation from the declared plan is a failure to perform a stated action that then prevents the following actions from being attempted. If the bend bars/lift gates roll fails, the character is stuck outside the room, and must try again. If successful, the spell takes him into the room to attack the guard but then wears off before he reaches the pit (and since the spell is over, he's no longer obligated to leap over it). If his blow against the guard missed in the second round, however, he still has to attempt to jump over the pit, because the guard being alive doesn't preclude this. It might mean that the guard attempts to stop the caster or continues to attack him from behind, but the caster can't do anything about that.

Further, if (after casting the spell) the above caster discovered that the portcullis was already raised, or there was no guard, he still must spend the round miming the action he had set out to do. The absence of the opportunity to take a stated action is not the same as a failure. If circumstances or the action of another force the caster deviate from his stated course, he still makes all possible attempts to do what he planned in the order that he planned it—even if the action is impossible or nonsensical. Casters cannot put contingencies in the plan ("if I kill the guard, then I jump over the pit") and must specify the order in which actions will be taken.

The material component for this spell is a small, perfectly straight iron rod that is three inches long.

True Arrow of Law

3rd-level wizard spell

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 round/level

Casting Time: 3

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: Special

This spell creates a weapon extraordinarily useful to the modrons, particularly as they make their Great March through so many other, potentially hostile planes. Upon casting the spell, the wizard creates one or more arrows of pure white energy. Such arrows can be placed into any kind of bow, including a crossbow.

The arrow must be used within the time span of the spell's duration, or the arrow disappears and the spell is wasted. It must be fired from a bow or crossbow to be used (throwing it simply doesn't work). When fired, it has a range commensurate with the weapon that launched it, and it always strikes the potential target. The effects of the arrow depend on the targets ethical alignment.

If the character is Chaotic, the orderly energies of the arrow inflict great pain, inflicting $1d8+2$ hp and the forcing the target to make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or be stunned for 1d3 rounds, unable to act.

If the target is of Lawful alignment, the arrow's magic doesn't harm him but sustains him, healing 1 d6 hp damage (if the character is hurt) and raising morale by a +2 bonus for the next 1d10+5 rounds.

Neutral targets struck by the arrow fall under the sway of the forces of law for a short time. In effect, such characters are charmed (as a charm person or *charm monster* spell) to think of any Lawful being as a friend for 3d10 rounds.

High level wizards can create more than one *arrow of law* with this spell. For every five levels of the caster, he can create one arrow, rounding down. Therefore, casters of levels 5 to 9 create one, 10 to 14 create two, and so on. The additional arrow(s) can be created at any time during the spell's duration, but none last beyond the end of that time limit.

The material component for the spell is a normal arrow—although only one is needed, even if more than one *arrow of law* is created.

Correlate Data

4th-level wizard spell

Range: Caster

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 4

Area of Effect: Caster

Saving Throw: None

As the modrons go about their Great March, they are presented with a great

deal of information. A body's got to presume that they're on the walkabout to gather as much of the chant as they can, so they've got to be able to both observe and bring together vast amounts of information as they pass through an area. This spell aids them in this goal.

When cast, *correlate data* allows the wizard to bring together every detail that he has experienced in the last 24 hours—every sight, every sound, every bit of chant that he's heard . . . everything. Not only is this information then stored away in his memory so that he can recall any of it with perfect clarity but also he can gain insights about what he has experienced.

When the spell is finished, the wizard should make an Intelligence check. If successful, he learns something from what he has perceived. The actual revelation is up to the DM. The DM should feel free to provide the caster with whatever he wishes, but the amount by which the wizard made the Intelligence check by should indicate the amount of information (roughly).

For example, if the caster has just spent the last 24 hours locked within a prison cell in a mighty fortress, watching the guards come and go, he might learn that the cell that he is in has a structural weak spot on the floor (perhaps he observed that his captors avoided this spot when they brought him his meals). Just the right amount of pressure in just the right spot might be what he needs to escape.

Or, if traveling through a wild woodland, the caster might observe that there are just a few too many birds and other small animals than there should be in this forest. The exact percentage of increased animal life indicates that a black dragon must have recently moved into the area (probably making its lair near the river the caster saw a few hours ago, which was almost certainly the type which would create an underwater cave system upstream about two or three miles), making some of the area's large predators its own prey.

Basically, the information can be as detailed as the DM wants and can assume huge leaps in logic (and even knowledge that the caster doesn't know or doesn't remember learning, like what sorts of rivers create underwater caves). Alternatively, the DM can limit the information to just what the caster directly observed.

Harmony

5th-level wizard spell
Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: 5,000 cu. ft.
Saving Throw: Negates

This spell utilizes the harmonious aspect of the force of law. Essentially, everything within the spell's radius becomes harmonious, calm, and peaceful for the duration. Strong winds die down, earthquakes are calmed, and even intelligent creatures cease all violent actions.

All beings of greater than animal Intelligence are allowed saving throws vs. spell (modified by Wisdom) to resist the spell's effects, although the DM may wish to adjudicate based on the beings intentions. Only the truly aggressive, angry, or driven of creatures may wish to resist the spell, depending on the situation. A creature leaving the area of effect retains its calm demeanor for 1 d4 rounds.

Calmed creatures will not take violent action unless threatened. They also make only slow, simple movements—most (75 percent) actually sit or lie down on the ground peacefully. During the duration of the spell, all affected are pleasurable relaxed. If any targets are calmed for the entire duration, they're fully rested and even have a 50 percent chance each to heal 1 hp (if hurt).

Only the spell's relatively small area of effect is calmed. Earthquakes and harsh weather still occur outside the area, but their effects cannot be felt within the spell's domain—trees blown over and falling into the area of effect fall harmlessly to one side, and tumbling boulders sent in by an avalanche come to a gentle stop.

The material components for the spell are two tiny, silver gears that fit perfectly together.

Modrons in Other Settings

In terms of worlds other than the PLANESCAPE settings, the modrons are extra-planar entities that come from the plane of Mechanus. Though Prime Material settings like the FORGOTTEN REALMS® or GREYHAWK® settings won't be affected much by the modrons marching around the Outer Planes, they can still make interesting encounters for PCs of any world.

Gates, rituals, and other devices to bring fiends into a Prime Material

campaign can just as easily bring modrons to a prime world. While not as destructive or murderous as fiends, modrons are cold and utterly heartless. If someone gets in their way, they won't hesitate to eliminate them. Modrons might come to a prime world like Athas, Krynn or Aebyrnis to establish an observation post (information is important to the modrons), obtain a magical item or artifact on Toril or Oerth, or eliminate some chaotic stronghold on Mystara. Most of the time, however, the modrons' motivations are completely incomprehensible to humans and demi-humans—so who knows why they might come?

In the adventure anthology *The Great Modron March*, Prime Plane PCs can be incorporated in many ways. Any character who's accidentally blundered through a portal and found himself in Sigil can be used in the first adventure of that product, and since all of the scenarios in the book are more or less linked a DM can then use the product to take some Prime Material characters on a wild ride through the planes.

Alternatively, a powerful wizard could send the PCs to the planes to find the modrons for some reason—maybe even to get hold of some of the secrets of the magic discussed in this article. 'Course, when the PCs show up and find themselves following the modrons around the planes on their Great March, that just makes things all the more interesting.

Of course, extra-planar adventures aside, the magical items and spells in this article can be used in any campaign without ever mentioning anything about the modrons. Perhaps they're the province of a group of lawful wizards who gained the knowledge from a rogue modron long ago, or it was somehow passed on to them by the modrons in some ancient pact. Ultimately, the idea of law-based magic, as opposed to chaos magic, should fit into virtually any fantasy setting.



Sages have discovered that there is actually a modron below the status of the monodrone, that being the montedrone. This creature writes role-playing games for TSR.

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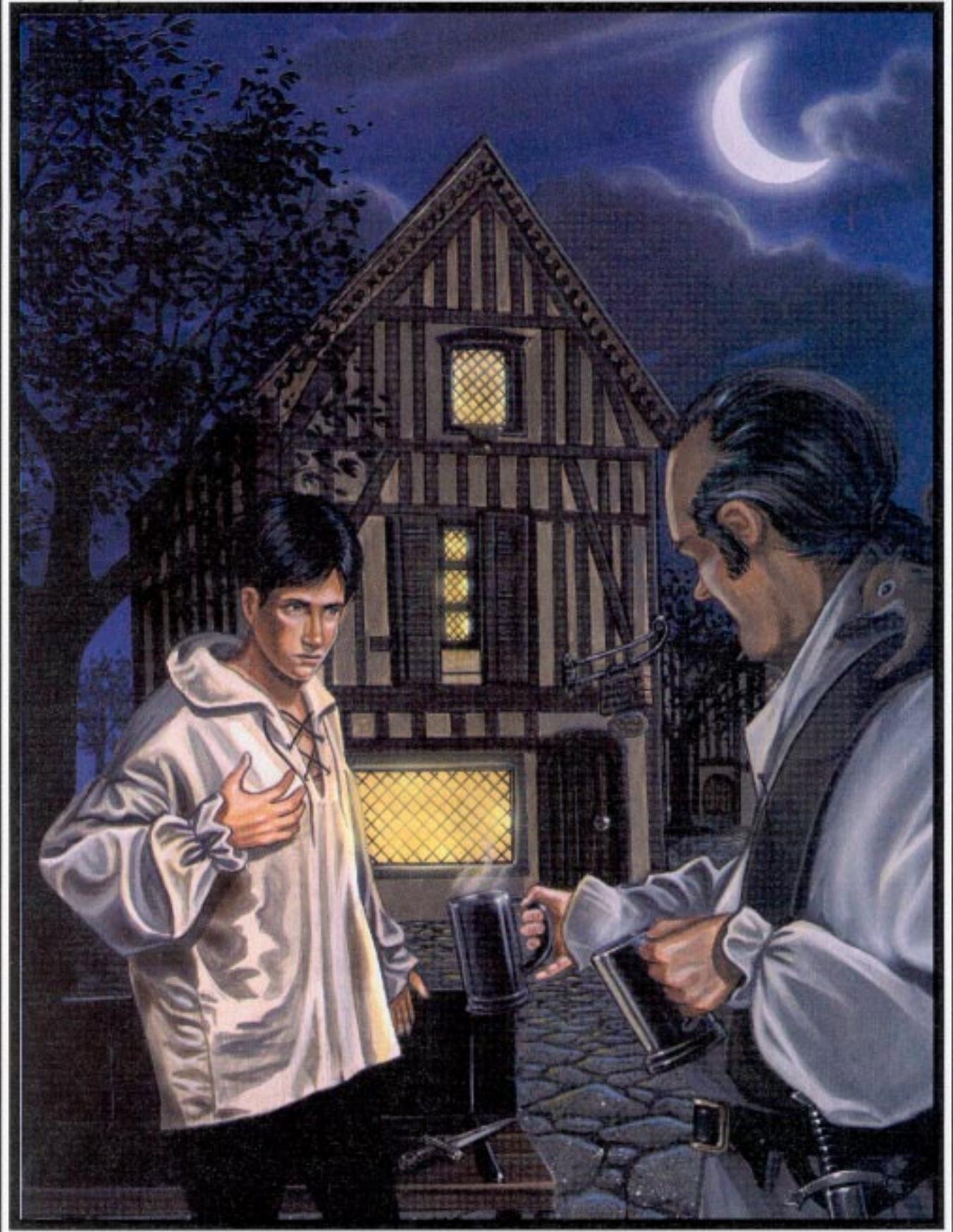
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hawk screamed high overhead. Rab felt a pang of fear, and the squirrel on his shoulder tried to hide under his wide-brimmed straw hat. Her claws pricked his skin, making him wince.

"What's the matter?" Darek asked, glancing back at him. "You look like you're ready to climb the nearest tree."

fear fear fear hide hide run hide

Rab shook his head, then gently reached up and took the squirrel from his shoulder. She was a depressingly ordinary red squirrel with bright black eyes and a bushy tail. At the moment she was badly frightened.

"It's all right, girl," he whispered soothingly, stroking her soft coat. She was surprisingly light. "Everything's going to be fine." He looked up at Darek. "It's the familiar bond. She's scared of the hawk."

Darek looked up at the clear blue sky and the hawk circling above them. "You watch. With my luck, I'll get one of those for a familiar, now that you have a squirrel. We won't even be able to stay in the same room together. If I don't bond with the dragon, that is."

Rab glanced uneasily at Darek, who was still staring up at the sky. The hawk circled once more, then glided out of sight. The bright sun continued beating down on the scrubby foothills, and uncertain puffs of hot air carried the smell of slowly cooking grass as they walked. Sweat trickled down Rab's face. He was glad he had remembered to wear a hat.

Both he and Darek were just over sixteen, but that was all they had in common physically. Rab was short and stocky with dust-brown hair, muddy hazel eyes, and two front teeth that stuck out much too far for his taste. Rab had also been pudgy as a child, something adolescence had helped with but hadn't cured entirely.

Darek, on the other hand, had skimmed through puberty with hardly a snag. His hair was so black it was almost blue, and it contrasted pleasingly with large, pale gray eyes. He was almost a head taller than Rab, and his body was filling out after a brief bout with adolescent skinniness. His ready grin and easy laugh combined with his looks to make him popular with almost everyone in the village. Rab, however, comforted himself with the fact that catching a girl's eye invariably made Darek blush and stammer. It was, as far as Rab was concerned, a saving grace in their relationship.

"Are you still sure you want to do this, Dare?" Rab asked, still hugging the quivering squirrel. "Trying to bond a dragon—"

"My dad hung around a wolfs den until he bonded Bloodtooth," Darek said stubbornly. The king raises griffins so his children always bond with one of them. I don't see why this is any different."

"Yeah, but my dad says the bond is better if you just wait and let it happen. Bloodtooth is mean to almost everyone. Dad thinks its because the bond was forced."

"So he should have waited for a mouse?" Darek snorted and continued up the game trail. "Waiting around is an innkeeper's solution. It's not mine."

Rab opened his mouth for a sharp reply, then decided it wasn't worth an argument and bit his tongue. The

Innkeeper's Solution

Steven Piziks

Artwork by Chrz'stina Wald

words: however, left a sour taste in his mouth as he followed Darek up the trail.

"What's it like, Rab?" Darek asked suddenly, without turning around. "Bonding, I mean."

Rab looked down at the squirrel in his arms. She stared back at him for a moment, then squirmed away and scampered up to his shoulder, where she chattered at him and poked her warm nose into his ear. It tickled, and Rab tried not to laugh, his sour mood forgotten.

free safe safe nice comfort free

"She likes me," Rab said. "I can't describe it better than that."

"Have you picked a name for her yet?"

"No."

"At least you've got one now." Darek picked a burr off his shoe and threw it away. "A familiar, I mean. Everyone else seems to find theirs by the time they're fifteen. It wasn't so bad being late, because you were late, too. Now I'm the only one left, except for the little kids."

"I only got my familiar two days ago," Rab reminded him. "You'll bond."

"Damn right I will." Darek flashed a grin over his shoulder. "I'm going to bond me a *dragon*."

There was that word again. Rab shivered despite the oppressive heat. "Look, Dare-we don't even know if the cave is still there. It's been, what, three years? There might have been a cave-in or something. And even if there hasn't, just because Caidin says he saw a dragon in the hills doesn't mean there is one-or that it would lair up in that old cave. You-

Darek rounded on him. "So that's how it is, is it? You don't care now that you got your familiar, do you? We'll get back in time for your bonding celebration tonight-a big one because your dad's the innkeeper-and I'll have nothing. Not that my dad would care if I *did* come back with a familiar, even a dragon. You don't care about me at all."

Rab came to an indignant halt and the squirrel dug her claws into his shirt. "That's not true, and you know it," he said hotly. "I'm out here helping you look for a familiar, aren't I? Is it my fault I bonded before you did?"

Darek pursed his lips and looked away. "I guess not. Come on. The cave isn't much farther."

What's his problem? Rab wondered as they continued climbing the trail. *Is something happening at home?*

Rab tried to carry on with this line of thought, but he was halted by the realization that he barely knew Darek's father, although Darek knew his. Rab and Darek spent more time around the inn than at the smithy. The few times Rab did visit, Darek's dad invariably warned them not to get too close to the forge. And Darek's mother wasn't well. Hadn't been for as long as Rab could remember. Darek said she had never really recovered from giving birth to him.

A hot wind stirred the scrubby forest, and the squirrel drove her sharp little claws deeper into Rab's shoulder. A sense of unease quietly stole over him, sending the other thoughts away.

wait wait uncertain little fear little fear

"The cave's just up ahead." Darek stopped and gestured. "I remember that big rock."

"It's awful quiet," Rab whispered. "Have you noticed there aren't any birds around? Or rabbits?"

Darek's eyes shone with excitement. "I'll bet its because the dragon scared them away. Let's go!"

He slipped quietly up the trail. Rab went after him, fighting an increasing anxiety. The squirrel shifted restlessly for a moment, then suddenly bolted down his body to vanish into the undergrowth.

run hide run hide fear fear fear FEAR

Rab caught a glimpse of brown grass rushing past his nose before the safety of a tree appeared ahead. His heart was pounding hard enough to leap out of his chest, and his claws dug lightly into dry bark as he scrambled up the trunk and hid in a small hollow that smelled of damp moss and lichen.

"Hey," Darek called in a low voice. "Are you coming or what?"

Rab blinked and the world snapped back into focus. "Weird. I was actually inside my squirrel's head." He turned to face Darek. "She's scared of something, Dare. Really scared."

Darek grinned. "I'll bet it would be something to get inside the head of a dragon!"

The trail made a bend around the hill and passed close to a clump of bushes. Behind them, Rab could make out the dark outline of the cave's entrance. He swallowed. Darek had found the place when they both were ten, and the two of them had spent many hours pretending they were smugglers or pirates. As they grew older, however, the games had lost their appeal. Neither he nor Darek had visited the cave in a long time.

Darek crept closer. "Look!" he hissed, pointing to the ground. Only a blind man would have missed the fact that something large had flattened the grass and gone through the bushes into the cave. The track also appeared out of nowhere, indicating that whatever made the trail could fly. As if to prove the point, a great sigh blasted from the cave's interior with a noise ten times louder than the bellows at the village smithy. Rab's heart began to pound again, and he could feel the squirrel shivering in her mossy hollow.

monsfre monster big fear hide run run run HIDE

"Dare," Rab whispered hoarsely. "Dare, you don't have to do this. Let's go back. Maybe your dad'll tell us where that den is, and you can get a wolf like Bloodtooth. Or maybe that hawk we saw earlier will bond with you. Or maybe-"

"I'm going in," Darek whispered back. "It sounds like the dragon's sleeping. Dad told me all about the time he bonded with Bloodtooth. He said he called to her with his mind over and over, but it didn't work until she was asleep. I'll have a dragon familiar in no time at all." A hard, determined expression set his handsome features. "Are you coming with me?"

Rab licked his lips. "I-I don't-

"Fine. You wait here. That's the innkeeper's solution, isn't it? Just wait for everything to come to you. I'll do this alone." And he was gone before Rab could reply.

Rab chewed his thumbnail, torn between fear and loyalty. *Now what? What if the dragon wakes up? No one's*

ever tried to bond a dragon' before, let alone force-bond one. What if it doesn't work? He glanced around nervously, as if an answer might be written on the bushes. C'mon, Rub. Dare shouldn't be in there by himself. A real friend wouldn't let him go in there alone. A real friend-

A loud snort broke his chain of thought. Rab froze. Not a sound emerged from the cave. Rab didn't even dare to breathe. Then a low, throaty chuckle made the very ground tremble, and Darek started to scream, a wail of bone-chilling horror.

Rab bolted. He ran until his lungs burned and his legs throbbed. Derek's scream tore down the hill after him, shrill and terrified. Rab ran and ran, but he couldn't outrun that scream. It wasn't until he was halfway to the village that the horrible noise came to an end.

When he returned half an hour later with a group of frightened villagers armed with axes and pitchforks, the cave was empty.



"A toast, good innkeeper!" Red Gus called with a wave of his cup. "A toast for the young lady and her new familiar!"

Rab waved at the man, then topped another tankard from the huge barrel behind the bar. He handed the tankard to Delia, his daughter-in-law. She added it to her collection and slipped expertly into the crowd. Only then did Rab take up his customary mug of apple cider and call for quiet.

The common room fell silent. Near the fireplace, a blonde girl in her mid-teens looked expectantly at Rab and stroked the feathers of a handsome brown eagle gripping a perch hastily cobbled together from a pair of axe handles. Bonding gifts lay heaped one table, and the rest were crowded with celebrants and well-wishers. The scent of fresh-baked breads and sweetmeats mixed with the more familiar smells of ale and woodsmoke.

"I would indeed like to call for a toast," Rab boomed, sending a wink to the girl. "But first, I have an announcement to make." He licked his lips, surprised at how nervous he suddenly felt. This is my last night as innkeeper."

A storm of startled comments arose, and Rab put up a hand to calm it.

"All right, all right. It shouldn't be a surprise to any of you. My father left this place to me when he retired twenty-five years ago, and its time I left it to my son. At one time, I had thought to leave the inn to Keyne, my oldest—" he lifted his mug to a chunky, muscular man who waved in return "-but he wanted to be a butcher. So. Alric and Delia have been running the place in everything but name for a long time, and I've already discussed it with them. The inn is theirs."

Rab raised his cup again, this time to Alric and Delia, who joined hands and smiled self-consciously.

"As for me," he continued, "I'm old, I'm fat, and I'm done."

A wave of laughter and applause. Rab waited for it to die down.

"But tonight," he said, "is Trista's night, not mine. So I propose a toast to my eldest grandchild. May she and her new familiar soar forever through clear blue skies. To Trista!"

"To Trista!" shouted the crowd. Cups and tankards clattered as Rab beamed at his granddaughter. She grinned at him in return.

Youth, he thought with a twinge of nostalgia. Well, I had my turn. Now it's hers. He glanced proprietarily around the common room, already feeling as though he'd lost an old friend. The stout wooden walls and scarred oaken bar had been a part of his life for as long as he could remember. It's the right choice. I become fired so easily nowadays, and I know Nola's not getting on well, though she tries to hide it. She drink that pain tea more than is really good for her.

Shouts of laughter bubbled around a table as someone told a joke. It seemed to Rab that most of the village had decided to attend Trista's bonding celebration. The common room was crammed with people, and the rafters were positively overrun with familiars. There were no carnivores, however-Rab had a firm rule about that. Trista and her eagle, as guests of honor, were the single exception, though the huge bird was definitely making the other familiars restless. Chika, Rab's squirrel, remained uncharacteristically quiet on her perch above the beer barrel.

uncertain uncertain hush hush hide

"It's all right, girl," Rab said, giving her a quick pat on the head. "Trista's eagle will behave."

Chika chattered at him, obviously unconvinced. She moved a bit stiffly now but was still as bright-eyed as the day he had bonded her over fifty years ago.

And what a day that was.

At that moment the main door opened. Rab glanced around worriedly. The inn was full to capacity, and he doubted there was room for newcomers. He might have to-

The cider mug fell from his nerveless fingers and shattered with a pop on the flagstone floor. The newcomer, oblivious to Rab's reaction, ran a nervous hand through glossy black hair and let gray eyes wander over the crowd before he headed toward a miraculously empty chair. Rab stared in disbelief, then blinked hard and looked again in case he had been mistaken. But there was no mistake. The newcomer was Darek, and he didn't look a day over sixteen years old.

If can't be, he thought. It can't.

Rab shoved with single-minded determination through the common room without taking his eyes off Darek, who was staring around the inn from the vantage point of his chair.

Its not Darek, Rab thought. Its just a stranger with a strong resemblance. Yes, that's if. And that means there's no reason to talk to him, so why don't you go back to the bar, get a drink, and go lie down?

But his legs still carried him forward, and he eventually found himself standing next to the stranger's chair. Darek-no, the stranger-brought his head around and their eyes met. Rab swallowed. They were the same pale gray eyes he remembered.

"Are you the innkeeper?" the newcomer asked.

"Darek?" Rab blurted. "Dare?"

A moment passed while the stranger stared at Rab, who began to feel very foolish. Then the young man leaped from his chair in an attempt to bolt for the door, but Rab managed to snag his arm.

"It is you," Rab almost hissed. "Darek Smithson."

"Let me go," Darek almost begged, eyes flicking about the room.

"Dare, its me-Rab. Don't you recognize me?" He managed a grin. "I can't be that fat."

"Rab?" Darek blinked. "I-oh Gods, it really is you. No one else calls me Dare." He sank numbly back to his chair. "I thought-I was hoping-you'd be dead by now."

Rab licked his lips, uncertain what to say. He found his heart was pounding and there was an odd taste in his mouth.

"Is there a place we can talk privately?" Darek asked suddenly.

Rab cocked his head toward the kitchen door. "Out back," he said. "Follow me."

Darek nodded and got to his feet. They made their way to the kitchen and out the back door.

This isn't happening, Rab thought. I must have drunk some of Nola's tea, and it's giving me strange dreams. Any moment now Darek'll disappear, and a purple horse will want to engage me in conversation. But when he glanced over his shoulder, Darek was still there.

Outside, the sun had already set and a yellow harvest moon hung heavily over the rear courtyard. The air was crisp and slightly chill after all the bodies in the common room. Voices and laughter filtered out of the inn. Rab lead Darek to a bench beneath a maple tree, noticing the youthful, flexible ease with which Darek moved. He reached out to touch the young man's shoulder. It was warm and solid.

"I'm real, Rab," Darek said quietly.

"Dare." Rab found a slight catch in his voice. "Dare, what's going on? You-you're dead."

"I wish I were."

"But what happened?"

"You don't want to know, Rab." Darek shifted on the bench. "Gods, look at you. A grandfather, I'll bet. And the inn is yours?"

"It was. I'm retired now." Rab paused, then exploded into words. "Dare, what's going on? It's been fifty years. I'm old. I have six grandchildren, and some days my bones ache so much I can hardly get out of bed. Then you come sliding into my inn looking not a day older than . . . than—" his voice dropped to a whisper "—than the day we found the dragon."

"I know. I'm sorry." Darek looked away.

"Dammit, Darek," Rab almost shouted, "what happened?"

"All right, all right. Gods, I was stupid, you know?" Darek sighed and closed his eyes. "My biggest dream come true. This would show everyone, I thought, especially Dad. He used to brag all the time about how he bonded with Bloodtooth, and-Rab, are my parents still . . . ?"

Rab shook his head. "Your mother passed away about a year after-you know. Your father about fifteen, twenty years back."

Darek looked up and nodded. "I guess I figured they'd be dead, especially Mom." He paused.

"And the cave?" Rab prompted.

Darek shrugged. "I went inside and saw a dragon."

"Just like that?"

"Just like that. Big green, and five times as big as a horse. It-she-was asleep. I was so scared I could hardly breathe, but I called to her with my mind and put all my energy into it, like Dad said he did with Bloodtooth. Nothing happened for what felt like a long time, then she opened one eye and gave this growling kind of laugh. I almost fainted."

"I remember that laugh," Rab said. "I dreamed about it for months. So then what happened?"

"She took me," Darek replied simply. "As her familiar."

Rab stared at him, stunned. "What?"

"She took me as her familiar. I felt her mind invading mine, and I couldn't keep her out. That's when I started to scream. I screamed until finally she ordered me to stop, and I had to. Then she told me to climb on her back. She knew you were there and that you had probably gone for help. We flew away. You can't imagine what my life has been like since then."

"Impossible," Rab said flatly, not wanting to believe it. "Only humans take familiars."

"That's what I thought, but it's not true. Any intelligent, thinking creature can. Did you know that there's a kind of fish that breathes air? They take familiars, too. Smaller fish, usually."

Rab shifted uncomfortably on the hard bench. "So how are you still so . . . so . . . ?"

"So young?" Darek laid his hand next to Rab's on the bench. It was still smooth and supple in contrast to Rab's gnarled, brown-spotted one. Rab felt a pang of jealousy. "The familiar ages at the same rate as the Master. You know that. How's your squirrel, by the way? Ever give her a name?"

"Chika," Rab said. "It's her favorite word. Her only word, really."

Darek flashed his grin and Rab was suddenly transported back to his youth, to when he and his best friend explored smuggler's caves and pirate coves.

"I like it," Darek said. "The name, I mean."

Rab snorted. "You still say 'I mean' all the time. I'd forgotten about that."

"Dragons don't change much," Darek pointed out. "Neither do their familiars."

"But why would a dragon want a familiar?"

"I tried to kill myself less than a month after she bonded with me," Darek replied, ignoring the question. "I've tried it more times than I can count, in fact. But every time I do, she stops me. She sees everything I do, just like you can see through Chika's eyes, and she used to know my thoughts until I learned to hide them. She can't hear what I hear, though. Dragons are deaf, did you know that? They're sensitive to vibrations—she felt our footsteps outside the cave long before I even came in—but they can't hear. They can't even understand the concept. Of hearing I mean."

Rab nodded. "Interesting." Then he fixed Darek with his best grandfather stare. "But you changed the subject. Keyne, my oldest son, used to do the same thing when he was your . . . when he was young. Why would a dragon want a familiar?"

Darek looked away again. "Scouting."

"Scouting?" A cold tension stole over Rab.

"Listen, all humans-and a few other creatures-have an inner spark of magic, right?" He held up a hand when Rab started to interject. "I'm not changing the subject. I'm explaining. Anyway, it's what lets us bond with a familiar. The spark, I mean. Except dragons don't have one. They get their power by eating creatures that do. Humans, especially."

A chilly breeze wafted by, and Rab shivered. He watched in silence as Darek stood up and restlessly paced the courtyard. Chika slipped out of a little opening Rab had made for her in the kitchen door and climbed up to Rab's shoulder. He scarcely felt the pricking of her claws or her warm, light weight on his shoulder. Darek didn't seem to notice her at all.

"The problem is that humans are dangerous," he continued. "You've heard stories of the hero who slays a dragon or of armies that bring one down? Many of them are true-humans are both predator and prey. So when my mistress needs more power, she has to make sure it's safe to attack. You know-no armies nearby, no warriors who could ride to the rescue. She likes small towns or villages best."

"No," Rab whispered.

Darek looked unhappily at the old innkeeper. "Yes. She's looking at this village-my home village. She sent me to see what the defenses are like. So far, I haven't seen anything that could stop her."

"Can't you reason with her?" Rab said hoarsely. "Get her to look somewhere else?"

Darek shook his head. "Would you listen to Chika if she tried to persuade you not to chop down a certain tree when you needed it for firewood?"

"I can't imagine her even trying."

"Exactly." Darek stopped pacing and suddenly knelt in front of Rab, who felt something cold and hard slip into his hand. Rab glanced down. The object was a knife. "Rab, are you still my friend?"

Rab looked at him, bewildered. "Of course I am."

"Then help me," Darek pleaded. "And help yourself."

"What?"

"It's the only way to save the village," Darek said. He got up again, leaving the knife in Rab's hand. "It can be done. My mistress was in a hoard-fight once, with another dragon that had a familiar, a kid maybe ten years old. My mistress breathed fire on him. The kid, I mean." He laughed, a dry sound that reminded Rab of dead sticks. "You probably thought my screaming was bad. Anyway, when its familiar died, the other dragon just fell flat on its face, stunned. My mistress didn't kill it-she said they don't do that-but it took me two days to gather up all its treasure. It didn't move once in all that time." He sat down on the bench with his back to Rab. "The familiar's death is the master's wound. You know that."

Rab looked at the knife in his brown-spotted hand, then at Darek's back. "I can't."

Darek turned and looked at him with pleading gray eyes. "Please, Rab. I've seen death and other more horrible things, and it's not ever going to stop. I asked my Mistress once how long dragons live. She just looked up at the sky and said, 'When the sun stops rising, that day I will stop living.'"

"But . . . but she'll see me and make you stop me," Rab hedged. "Isn't she watching right now?"

Darek shrugged. "Probably. But she can't hear us. All She can see is that I'm talking to an old man. She's intrigued by the human need for talk, but soon she'll grow bored and order me to do something else. That's why you have to move now. I'll turn my back so she can't see." He did so, and Rab looked down at the knife in his hand.

"I can't do this, Dare," he said, setting the knife on the bench.

Darek jumped up and rounded on him. "No, of course you can't," he snarled. "Innkeeper's solution-just sit and wait until it's too late. Remember that?"

The old words stung, and Rab clenched a fist. "I remember capturing a squirrel," he snapped, "instead of being captured by a dragon."

The blood drained from Darek's face. He stared at Rab for a moment, then sagged down to the far end of the bench, head bowed. Chika's sharp ears picked up a faint, irregular tapping, and Rab realized that tears were hitting the wooden bench. Rab's brief flare of anger faded and he felt instantly sorry.

"Dare," he said, putting a quiet hand on Darek's shoulder. "Dare, I didn't mean that."

"I've been sixteen my whole life," Darek said. His voice was thick and uneven. "I never have anyone to talk to. I'm alone every day, except for her." He looked up at Rab and swiped at the saltwater on his face. "Help me, Rab. And help the village. It used to be my home too. I don't want to watch her burn it down and make me sift through the wreckage for coins while she tears up the corpses. Please, Rab. She's even hiding in the same cave as before, so it'll be easy to find her once you've helped me."

Rab struggled to his feet. Chika still clung to his shoulder. "I need time to think, Dare. Please understand. I'll be . . . I'll be right back."

"Don't take too long," Darek called after him softly. "She's hungry. And she'll feed tonight."

Rab headed for the back door. *I'm old, dammit. The younger ones should deal with this. This isn't fair.* He almost ran into the kitchen, trying to get away from Darek, wanting to immerse himself in something normal, something familiar.

When he entered the kitchen, the noise level from the common room told Rab the party was still in full swing, though the cookroom itself was quiet. It smelled of onions and bread dough, and the old flagstones were smooth under Rab's feet. Heat left from the day's baking soaked into his bones, but it didn't soften his brittle nerves. He suddenly realized how happy he had been

just a few moments ago. Now he only felt scared. Scared and alone while other people enjoyed themselves.

Is this how Darek feels? he thought. Is this what the last fifty years have been like for him?

"Trista's so happy," said a voice. "And so proud. An eagle!"

Rab turned and saw Nola resting on a stool near the fireplace. Her familiar, an aging gray cat, gazed into the dying coals.

"Yes," Rab said absently. "So proud." For a moment he considered telling Nola everything, wanted to tell her everything. But she wouldn't understand. He wasn't sure he did. He tried to imagine thrusting a knife into Darek's back, feeling the warm blood gush over his hands.

Keyne does it a dozen times a day to animals that don't want to die, while Dare is looking for death. He shuddered. I still can't. But if I don't, that dragon is going to slaughter us all. Me, Nola, Trista. Everyone.

"I think I'm going to bed," Nola continued. She gestured at a cup lying next to a small herb packet on a nearby table. "I had to take my pain tea, and its making me sleepy."

Rab came over to her and leaned down to kiss her on the forehead, feeling a sudden, familiar swell of love. She had always been there for him. Chika clambered down his arm to the table and sniffed animatedly at the herb packet. "Then good night. I'll be in later."

He gave her a hand up, but Nola waved away further help and limped slowly toward their bedroom, a pantry they had converted when it became clear that Nola could no longer manage the stairs. Rab watched her go.

At that moment, Trista's eagle screamed, a high, free sound. Chika froze in fear on the table.

danger danger danger hide hide hide

"It's all right, girl," he said, picking her up and stroking her soft coat. "Everything's going to be fine." *Except it isn't, because I can't kill my best friend.*

Rab glanced into the common room full of friends and family, then set Chika back on the table. As he did so, his hand brushed the herb packet and knocked it to the floor. He stared at it for a long time, then glanced into the common room again.

But maybe I can give him what he wants.

A few minutes later he was back outside with a mug of heated cider in each hand and Chika on his shoulder. Darek was still sitting on the bench.

"Have you decided?" Darek asked hopefully.

Dammit, I look at him and could swear I was sixteen again. I thought you might like a drink. It's getting chilly.

"What is it?"

Rab drew back his lips in a half-smile. "It's an old family recipe. We call it Innkeeper's Solution."

Darek looked at him for several moments, then accepted the cup and drained it in one draught while Rab took a sip from his. The cider tasted strongly of cinnamon but left a bitter aftertaste. An owl hooted in the background, and Darek set his mug aside.

"My dad hated me," Darek said. "Did you know that? He blamed me because Mom was always sick. I guess I should feel sad that they're both dead, but I don't. We

weren't really a family." He yawned cavernously, then looked at Rab. "I want to know about your family, Rab. Who they are, what they're like. Would you tell me?"

"If you want."

"Yes."

"All right, then." Rab looked at the sky over Darek's head. The stars were coming out in hard, bright points. "I met Nola-my wife-when she came to the inn asking my father for a job." Out of the corner of his eye, he could see Darek's eyes droop. "I was eighteen then, almost two years after the cave."

Darek's shoulders went limp. Rab took another sip of warm, bitter cider.

"Nola was-is-beautiful, and it was more than a month before I could screw up the courage to talk to her. A year later, I screwed up the courage to ask her to marry me."

The owl hooted again. Rab kept talking, talking about his wedding and Keyne's birth and the year Alric almost ran away from home, until Darek slumped sideways and slid bonelessly off the bench. His breathing slowed, became ragged, then stopped altogether.

A lump rose in Rab's throat. His voice broke, and the narrative trailed off. He looked down at Darek for a long moment, then bent over with creaking joints and gently rearranged Darek's limbs. Again, Chika's sensitive ears caught the irregular tapping of tears, though now they were dropping on courtyard stones. She poked her soft nose into Rab's ear and snuffled softly, echoing the sorrow he felt, though Rab knew she didn't understand it.

Rab sighed and touched Darek's smooth cheek with one gnarled finger. *Why are you crying now, old man?* he thought, brushing the tears away. *Dare died over fifty years ago. You both know that.*

He straightened and sent a quick glance toward the hills before going back inside to find Keyne. Tonight the innkeepers solution would need some help from the butcher.



Steven Piziks is an English teacher in southern Michigan, where he lives with his wife and newborn son. His short stories have appeared in Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine and in Sword and Sorceress, and he just sold his first novel. When not writing, he plays the folk harp, dabbles in professional oral storytelling, and spends more time online than is probably good for him. This story is dedicated to Ted Reynolds, who was tired of seeing stories that portray dragons as misunderstood, persecuted beings and wanted to see a truly evil dragon instead.



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Hoondarrh

by Ed Greenwood

illustrated by Storn Cook

Most folk who dwell up and down the Sword Coast have heard of the Red Rage of Mintarn. That may make the venerable red dragon Hoondarrh one of the most famous wyrms in history—though most folk think he's no more than a fancy-tale concocted to scare children.

Yet the Sleeping Wyrm of Skadairak is very much alive. Few villages may be torn apart under his talons these days, and fewer ships burnt to ashes, as the rich and satisfied Hoondarrh begins his second Long Sleep, but his relative absence from the scene doesn't make him dead or a mere legend.

The confusion surrounding Hoondarrh is due largely to his connections with two other famous dragons: Skadairak, whom he slew to gain his present lair; and Angkarasce the Lost, whose hoard Hoondarrh seized. (Angkarasce was a white dragon whose sorcery and wealth were unmatched in the early days of human settlement of the Sword Coast, and who wore a cloak of splendid legends because of it. He is long dead, consumed by his own sorceries as he sought to enspell himself into immortality.)

Some say Hoondarrh is Skadairak, or his son; others believe that there is

something on the isle where Hoondarrh lairs that makes dragons sleep and then awaken revitalized, in new bodies—and that the Red Rage of Mintarn is really Angkarasce the Mighty in a younger body of a different breed, but with the same fell old wisdom and sorcery.

Growing as confused as the bards and sages of the North? The best way to learn the truth (something Volo never did) is to follow the known life of Hoondarrh down the years. With Elminster's aid, we can trace the career of a dragon whose toll of slain adventurers still rises with each passing decade.

Hoondarrh was born somewhere in the eastern Sword Coast North in the late summer of the Year of Scorching Suns (460 D.R.). The first hatchling of a brood whose parents quarreled, leaving one dead and the other sorely wounded, Hoondarrh was always large, vigorous, and aggressive. He slew and devoured his fellow hatchlings, and soon he grew bold enough to challenge his remaining parent.

Hoondarrh lost that fight but escaped with his life, fleeing westward into the chaos of chill mists, icebergs, and desolate islands that cloak the northernmost

Sword Coast. There he devoured many creatures, growing in size, cunning, and strength, until a fateful night in the Year of Fire and Frost (600 D.R.), when he swooped down on a human expedition struggling in the snows to find a pass through the Spine of the World, and devoured the lot of them. On the body of one expedition member, the wizard Tharilim of Calimport, was an enchanted gem: an emerald as big as a human fist, the Ongild (named for the Halruaan wizard who had enchanted it). This gem has the powers of a *ring of regeneration*, and it empowers anyone bearing it to cast four 7th-level wizard spells as if the bearer were an 18th-level Wizard (Elminster believes they are *delayed blast fireball*, *prismatic spray*, *reverse gravity*, and *spell turning*), which return by themselves 24 hours after casting. The Ongild is still lodged somewhere in Hoondarrh's innards, walled away in a canker, and he can call on its powers even today.

At the time, the Ongild's powers both astonished the dragon and gave him fresh confidence. After experimenting with his new-found magical might (slaying at least one young dragon in the process), he set forth to challenge his surviving parent.

He won the battle this time and found himself owner of a small hoard in a crumbling mountain cave-just as an orc horde boiled down out of the north. Hoondarrh swooped into their midst, slaying and devouring at will. At first he simply lost himself in the exultation of killing, but then he undertook either to oblige the horde or to lessen it so that no orcs reached his new-won lair.

He succeeded in the latter goal, but his repeated attacks attracted the notice of another wyrm, Naroun the Great White Ghost, a legend among orcs for his habit of gliding along very low above the snows, snatching up prey with his talons as he came upon them. Naroun attacked the intruder, and the white wyrm and the red cartwheeled across the sky for two days before the Great White Ghost died in a collision with a mountain-peak, and the bloody, sorely-wounded Hoondarrh could collapse on a nearby ridge, to heal.

He lay there for days, twitching feebly, as the Ongild did its work-only to be rudely interrupted one morning when the ridge slid out from under him in an avalanche that carried him down into a cramped bowl valley-and laid bare one side of a long-buried cavern crammed with sparkling gems and heaps of ancient coins. The bones of a dead dragon were stretched out atop all this wealth, and Hoondarrh thrust them aside to claim the pile as his own bed.

From magical items among the hoard, as he lay there healing, Hoondarrh learned the bones were those of the legendary Angkarasce the Lost. Many of the magical items buried under the resting Hoondarrh were metal orbs that stored spells, and from them the red dragon gleaned a roster of spells he could cast, to augment the four spells of the Ongild.

Hoondarrh realized he had at a single stroke become richer than most dragons ever become-and that the riven cavern, raked by the howling storm winds of winter, was no longer a suitable lair. He had to find or make a better home, a place to keep safe his new-found hoard.

Elminster believes that gaining this truly awesome hoard early on kept Hoondarrh largely free of the gnawing hunger for wealth that dominates most red dragons, replacing it instead with a desire for security.

It is known that when the red dragon was healed, he brought down the roof of the cavern to bury the hoard once more. Then he set forth on a long and bloody exploration of the Sword Coast

North. For years he flew far and wide, battling dragons wherever he found them, but not bothering to pursue those who hid or fled. He was searching for the right lair, learning all the while who dwelt where in this vast land of snows and mountains and endless forests.

The growing settlements of men fascinated Hoondarrh. After destroying a few with almost casual ease, he discovered that lying hidden and watching the deeds of men (with the aid of a long-range *wizard eye* spell gleaned from one of his orbs) was far greater entertainment-and alerted him to when herds of livestock would be driven north into his waiting jaws.

From this time spent lying on mountaintops overlooking Waterdeep and other human cities, dates Hoondarrh's love of pranks, bold deceptions, and treachery among humans and demihumans. Occasionally he grew restless or hungry, and erupted from his rests into wild flights of slaughter and devouring, usually ranging up and down the islands off the Sword Coast from the Moonshaes to the Nelanther. The big, brawling red dragon became a familiar sight in coastal skies-a sight that evoked terror.

Often Hoondarrh wheeled above ships of cowering men bellowing with sky-shaking laughter at their terrified antics, and sparing them-but when he became enraged, he'd attack the strongest castles with his talons and spells, bringing mighty fortresses crashing down into ruin.

Thankfully, Hoondarrh usually flew inland when hungry. In his explorations, Hoondarrh had discovered the great fun of flying low over the Shaar with jaws agape to scoop up wild horses and other roaming herd beasts by the ton. Orc hordes occasionally provided him with more local gluttony, but the red dragon hunted the Coast itself for food less and less often.

What Hoondarrh was still seeking, as the centuries passed, was a lair. He found it one spring day in the Year of the Singing Arrows (884 D.R.), when the great red wyrm Skadaurak awakened from a Long Sleep in his cavern on the island that bore his name (the northernmost of the two islands northwest of Mintarn).

Skadaurak had been sleeping for almost 1,000 years, employing Saldrinur's *Slow Gem*, a Halruuan magical item that plunges its wearer into *temporal stasis* of a set duration (usually two or four centuries, though the user may set any time).

Such a Sleep may be interrupted by any number of preselected alarm conditions. Its maker, Saldrinur of the Seven Spells, used it to live far beyond his normal span, to a time in which safe and secure alternatives to lichdom had been mastered, and escaped into one of them (Elminster will say no more of this, beyond the curt advice: "Even diligent readers should always be chasing some secrets").

By use of this enchanted jewel, Skadaurak also sought to live on until magic to rival that of Netheril rose again among the ambitious, creative, ever-striving human wizards, and he might find a sorcerer who'd enspell him into immortality in return for the magic he'd amassed. During his extended slumbers, the Red Terror of Mintarn had become a legend of the dim past, with most folk believing him long dead if they remembered him at all.

They were not far wrong. When he dug his way out of his mountainside cavern and shook out stiff, long-unused wings to fly inland to find food, Skadaurak found instead an old red dragon of unusual size and vigor plunging down out of the sky at him.

He flapped hastily aloft-straight into spell after rending spell, followed by the teeth and talons of Hoondarrh himself. The younger red dragon tore apart his sleepy rival and descended without delay to examine the newly-revealed lair.

It seemed perfect, and it even came furnished with a respectable hoard; much smaller than that of Angkarasce, but even more rich in magic. Hoondarrh explored it and soon found the *Slow Gem*. Since acquiring the fabled hoard of the Lost Dragon, Hoondarrh had been too rich to care about mere wealth, but here was something that made him hungry again. To live forever . . .

First he needed to make this lair as secure as any lair could be. He set to work enlarging it and ferrying his wealth hence, and so he spent two solid years before being attacked by adventurers.

Their fate was no grander than to be a quick meal, but their attempt reminded Hoondarrh that the grasping little annoyances known as men were perhaps his deadliest foes. He set about delving out caverns all around his true lair, and flying far afield in search of wizards and artisans, employing spells to spy such folk out and communicate with them from a safe distance.

On the island north of Mintarn, several "false lairs" came into being:

newly-dug caves baited with excess treasure and well furnished with traps installed by the mages and dwarven stonecutters Hoondarrh had hired. These artisans were given free rein in developing fiendish waiting deaths for human-sized intruders.

A special team of mages were even paid their own weights in gems to acquire some of the beasts known as deepspawn, and so arrange the rearing of these strange monsters that they spat forth rothé, horses, and cattle. The 'spawn were installed in caves on the neighboring island, to furnish Hoondarrh with everyday food.

When he was satisfied that the defenses of his lair were strong (a conclusion reached after two unsuccessful pirate raids and a stealthy dragon attack that ended in bloody disaster for the mercury dragon attempting it), the Red Rage sent away the last of his artisans.

Sealing his cavern with boulders and spells, Hoondarrh fared forth across Faerûn, spending a leisurely two seasons hunting down and devouring all of his former employees he could find, to keep his secrets as safe as possible. He'd forgotten that humans could write things down and so pass trouble on down the years.

One winter day in the Year of the Empty Hand (896 D.R.), the folk of Mintarn were startled by the thunderous arrival of a huge red dragon in the meadows above their harbor. Desperate to protect their meager livestock, they tremblingly took up arms-but they were astonished when the dragon let it be known he'd come to bargain: if they paid him a gold piece per inhabitant per year, he'd let them all live, and even protect them against pirates.

They accepted-as the elders muttered, what else could they do?-and received another surprise when the dragon told the crew of the first tribute-ship to stop by his other isle on their way home, and take for their own not more than two cows each.

Sages have debated the motives behind the unusual kindness of Hoondarrh for years, but according to Elminster, the Red Rage dealt with the folk of Mintarn as he did solely to gain a reputation. As he happily raided coastal shipping and lands, the folk of Mintarn told all whom they traded with of his vast wealth and trap-guarded lair . . . and the greedy adventurers started to come.

Such visitors provide Hoondarrh with entertainment and magic. He enjoys

watching intruders get maimed in his traps before he devours them, and also likes to gather magic items of any sort, from *gather belts off heather falling to rods of lordly might*-and gains a fairly steady flow of such baubles from the adventurers he's lured into his waiting claws. Only Hoondarrh knows the ways around all of the traps on his island, and the traps that in turn guard those ways around.

In the meantime, he undertakes decade-long sleeps, using the jewel wrought by Saldrinar. Between slumbers, he entertains himself by watching from afar the activities of men (in particular, in the city of Waterdeep). He rewards humans and others whose jests, pranks, treacheries and intrigues amuse him by paying them handsomely-though he'll hunt anyone who dares to steal from him clear around Toril if need be. Always he seeks word of wizards working on magics concerned with eternal life or enhanced longevity.

Though the Red Rage suspects the elves of Evermeet and the human mages of Halruaa and Thay have progressed in such studies beyond all others, he fears to approach lands bristling with powerful, well-organized mages, and thus far-only tries to pry into goings-on in those places by hiring spies.

Ambitious adventurers are advised that Hoondarrh the Mighty pays well, but he has a habit of devouring agents who fail him, irritate him, or whom he thinks are learning too much about him or his lair. They are further warned that his isle boasts a collection of traps unsurpassed in all Faerûn, and has claimed the lives of even powerful mages who prudently sought only to escape it soon after their arrival.

Now a venerable wyrm of increasingly lengthy sleeps and lessening energy, Hoondarrh dreams of a mate and offspring-and becomes increasingly impatient for the achievement of immortality, for he dare not allow himself intimacy until he is secure in its everlasting protection.

A fighter of almost unmatched experience and cunning, the Red Rage of Mintarn is known to have defeated foes as formidable as a quartet of beholders who sought his treasure and tried to trick him into a prepared killing-ground with news of immortality spells they were willing to trade.

Hoondarrh also possesses a knowledge of the lay of the land of western Faerûn (as seen from the air) matched by no other living being, and is said to

be an increasingly accomplished caster of the many spells he's inherited from his various hoards, knowing how to combine magics to devastating effect.

Hoondarrh's Lair

The Red Rage maintains at least two sleeping-caverns stocked with food-producing deepspawn and treasure-one on a remote island near the Icepeak, and another somewhere inland in the mountains of the Sword Coast North. His main lair on the isle of Skadaurak, however, is a vast complex of subterranean rooms-in fact, a recently-built "dungeon." It has no less than three shafts where a large red dragon can fly in and out with wings spread; one of them turns back to angle almost straight up into a mountain peak, and there end in the main treasure cavern.

The rest of the island is honeycombed with trap-filled false lairs. Some of these are even home to a few bold brigands, whom Hoondarrh suffers to live because they amuse him with their furtive diggings, and have learned not to dare any open assault on his main caverns. From time to time he snatches one up and dumps the man in Baldur's Gate or Waterdeep or Athkatla, to baffle tales of the vast and rich lair that sprawls through the very heart of the isle of Skadaurak, and so lure more adventurers hence.

Though Hoondarrh is not known to possess any sentient servants, his lair seems alive with golems and gargoyle-like automatons of various sorts-and even with captive monsters who are kept ravenously hungry.

Hoondarrh's Domain

From his lair, Hoondarrh roams Faerûn more or less at will, avoiding magic-strong realms such as Evermeet, Thay and Halruaa. He also largely avoids combat with other dragons, though he'll humble or cripple a persistent foe. If pressed, he'll try to "flee" out over the Sea of Swords and trick his foe into diving at him before using a wing-bind spell-so they'll plunge helplessly under the waves and drown.

He enjoys roaming the backlands and the Shaar, chasing down food-but his domain is the coastal islands up and down the Sword Coast. He delights in toying with ships south of Mintarn, and only his Long Sleeps have kept humans from abandoning water travel in the region.

The Deeds of Hoondarrh

The favorite prey of Hoondarrh is a creature who's tried to cheat or outwit him. He is contemptuous of most good-aligned dragons, and delights in surprising wyrms of all sorts with the strength and variety of his own magic. If he's not sleeping at the heart of his lair, Hoondarrh spends most days farscrying events in western Faerûn- and so is almost never surprised by events or intruders.

Currently Hoondarrh has his eye on certain ambitious rising mages in Tethyr and among the noble families of Waterdeep. Surely some of them will agree to develop spells to keep a dragon young and vigorous for extra years, in return for financial sponsorship and timely magical aid-if only he can trust any of them, and find a way to make that trust binding.

Over the last four decades, the Red Rage has thrice sent illusions that he can speak through, in the shapes of attractive humans, to meet with selected individuals of rising magical power. In such guise he always purports to represent this or that fictitious dragon and requests that the mage develop specific draconic-assistance spells (a magic to swiftly heal torn wings or to regenerate scales) in return for wealth and his protection or at least spellhurling aid. Hoondarrh feels that anything so blunt as a revelation of his goal of immortality can wait until he's addressing a trusted ally with whom he's worked successfully for a decade or more.

One prospect rejected the offer with a frantic whirlwind of fearful and angry spells. Another, obviously but shyly smitten with the attractive agent, cited overwhelming present pressures of work and oppressive local politics, requesting that he be contacted later. Subsequent overtures yielded a variety of excuses, but never a definite acceptance or refusal. Eventually Hoondarrh allowed himself a snarl, then moved on.

The third wizard, Elquaern Hunabar (of the noble Hunabars of Waterdeep) accepted the offer and set to work. Three spells were duly produced, but the Red Rage detected a flaw in one enchantment, and suspected that the others also contained deficiencies-small, covert weaknesses. He requested a face-to-face meeting of dragon and mage. Several times the offer was politely accepted, but then delays were always requested. Hoondarrh made thoughtful preparations for the long-

awaited encounter . . . preparations he suspected were more than matched in thoughtfulness by his counterpart.

The meeting finally occurred in the Caraww, a large but shallow cavern in the rising hillsides just west of Rassalantar. The gaping-mouthed cave had long been known as a haunt of bears and the occasional leucrotta, but no one had suspected that a dragon made its lair there.

When Elquaern left his bodyguard and grimly scrambled up a bracken-cloaked slope into the Caraww, a seemingly-solid side wall of the cavern faded away like smoke to reveal a mound of loose coins and the head of a green dragon peering around it. More of Elquaern's patron, who introduced herself as Galarrdratha, became visible as the sorcerer stepped forward. All pleasantries ceased abruptly when the dragon calmly asked Elquaern what treacheries he intended, citing the suspicious details of his enchantments-details that a dragon could not help but notice seemed intended to give an informed human some measure of control over any wyrm casting them.

The proud young Hunabar wasted no breath on a reply but activated a spell trigger enchantment that cloaked him in multiple defensive magics, then let fly at Galarrdratha with two magical rods. Their fury caused the illusory wyrm no damage, accomplishing little more than sending stone shards slashing about the cavern-but Elquaern's defenses saved him from any harm, so the watching Hoondarrh used a spell of his own to bring down the ceiling of the Caraww.

No more has been heard since of Galarrdratha the green dragon, or of Elquaern Hunabar, but the much-enlarged Caraww is sometimes used by shepherds seeking shelter for their flocks against driving storms. Hoondarrh's discreet inquiries continue . . . as does his use of aliases.

Hoondarrh's Magic

The Red Rage of Mintarn commands a vast arsenal of spells gained from his hoards, and over a score of portable magic items his spells can trigger, to give him magic well beyond the spell levels a venerable red dragon can normally attain.

One spell he's known rarely to be without is a *mirror fireball*. His favorite attack is to breathe fire at foes from one direction while casting a *mirror fireball* to burst at their backs.

Mirror Fireball

(Evocation)

Level: 5

Range: 30 yds. + 10 yds./level

Components: V

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: 40' radius

Saving Throw: 1/2

This spell brings into being a burst of flame that explodes into a sphere of roiling fire. It deals 9d8 hp damage to all creatures in contact with it who fail their saving throws (those who succeed are assumed to have dodged or found cover, and the damage they take is reduced to 9d4 hp).

A *mirror fireball* ignites all combustible materials within its blast radius, and melts soft metals such as copper and gold.

It bursts out of empty air without warning, at any point within spell range that Hoondarrh desires-but almost always in the path of a gout of fire breathed out by the dragon, so as to sandwich foes between the breath weapon and the fiery blast.

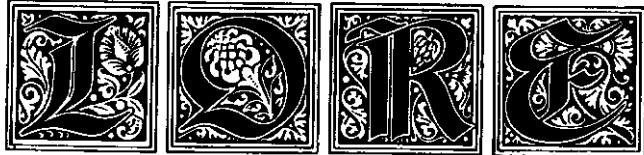
Hoondarrh's Fate

Very few dragons have managed to attain immortality, but if no one slays the Red Rage of Mintarn in the next 30 years or so (and he practically goads sorcerers and adventurers to do so), he stands a good chance of becoming some sort of ghost dragon. He's only a few spells away from being able to put such a disembodied essence into control of a dragon-like mechanical construct or zombie dragon body . . . but he is proceeding cautiously for fear that the Cult of the Dragon will learn of his state and swoop in at a crucial moment to seize control over him.



Ed Greenwood insists there is no truth to the rumors that he entertains buxom swordswomen and wild-haired wizards at his home. "I'd not be the during fool who described Elminster's hair us wild to his face," he says, "and all others, without exception, meet me up at the cottage."

ARCANE



GREYHAWK® Grimoires II

by Robert S. Mullin

illustrated by Michael L. Scott

The original "GREYHAWK® Grimoires" article in *DRAGON Magazine* #225 detailed the spell tomes of Vecna, Iggwilv, and Acererak; three Oerth wizards who are well known to GREYHAWK enthusiasts but, for some reason, were overlooked in the spell department. This article introduces a second trio of Oerth spell books, this time featuring the works of Jaran Krimmehah, Keraptis, and Slerotin.

Jaran Krimmehah is better known as the Mage of the Valley, a figure who remained a complete mystery until the release of the *GREYHAWK Adventures* book and WG12 *Vale of the Mage*.

Keraptis is best known from S2 *White Plume Mountain*, a classic adventure if there ever was one.

Finally, there is Slerotin. This mage received only brief mention in the Glossography booklet (page 27) in the original *World of GREYHAWK* boxed set, but as the Sulouise Empire's last Mage of Power, he seemed worthy of inclusion in this article.

Exalted Dweomercraft

Legend has it that Jaran Krimmehah (or Jason Krimmehah [sic], as some historians refer to him), the Mage of the Valley,

was born in Rauxes, the capital city of the Great Kingdom, to a noble family. He is a cousin, in fact, to the Overking himself—though which Overking is a matter of conjecture. (Some scholars say the House of Rax, others say the House of Naelax. This history assumes the latter.) It is said that Jaran's aptitude for magic was apparent at a young age. Due to his lineage, he received magical training from the best instructors in the land—the Court Wizards of Aerdy. But Jaran Krimmehah was ambitious, even when compared to other wizards, and these aspirations soon changed the course of his life forever.

In cy 516, Jaran attempted to usurp the Malachite Throne, but the attempt did not go as planned. It seems that his backers, though loyal, had no real power, so when the coup attempt was made, it was quashed almost as soon as it began.²

It is common knowledge that the Naelax Overkings are afflicted with an inherited madness, an insanity that has long plagued the folk of the Great Kingdom and its neighboring countries. But on the day that Jaran Krimmehah was to receive sentence, it was this madness

that saved him. While his conspirators were summarily executed, Jaran, the most dangerous of the lot, was simply banished from the Great Kingdom and forbidden to return. His name was stricken from the official Royal History of Aerdy, and no citizen of the Great Kingdom would speak his name on penalty of death. In effect, Jaran ceased to exist in the eyes of Aerdy historians.

Thereafter, Jaran departed the Great Kingdom, taking on the name of the Black One, for his failure to seize the crown left him in a dark mood. For approximately 25 years, he wandered the Flanaess, never remaining in one place for very long due to fear (and paranoia) that the Aerdy Overking would change his decision and send assassins after him. But in cy 541, he came upon a secluded valley north of the Grand Duchy of Geoff, an unclaimed territory he could call his own.

Before long, the local elves, gnomes, and primitive humans proclaimed him their leader, and gave him a new name: the Exalted One. In return for their loyalty, Jaran promised to protect them from the outside world. Thus, the valley was renamed the Valley of the Mage, a name that remains to the present day.

But the story of the Exalted One does not end there. In cy 570, Tysiln San, a drow female exiled from Erelhei-Cinlu, was captured in the Dim Forest by a patrol of valley elves and brought before the Exalted One to receive judgement. In an unexpected turn of events, Tysiln fell madly in love with the Mage of the Valley and immediately swore fealty to him. Recognizing the boon of such a woman at his side, the Exalted One decided to test her in various ways, so as to gauge both her loyalty and her ability. In the end, Tysiln passed all of the Exalted One's tests and was accepted into his realm as his apprentice, lover, and most trusted advisor. With her loyalty intact, he eventually named her First Protector, charging her with the responsibility of valley security.

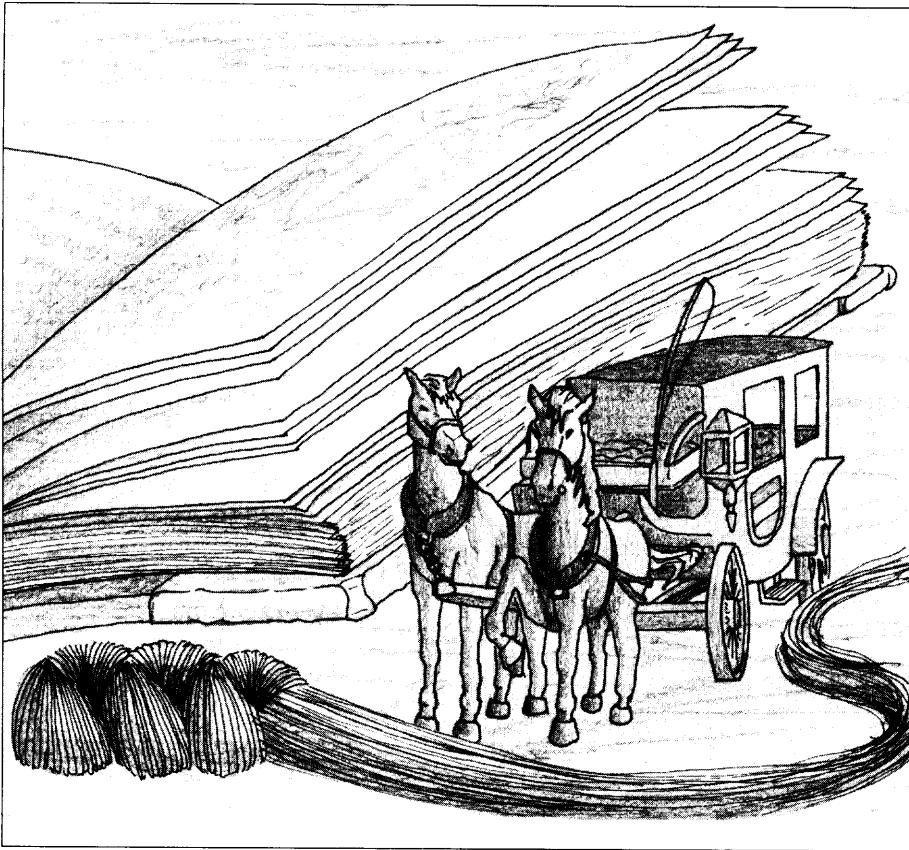
In the years that followed, Jaran and Tysiln conducted numerous magical

1. The Valley of the Mage entry in *From the Ashes* states that Jaran is a distant relative of the House of Rax. According to his character profiles in both *GREYHAWK Adventures* and *Vale of the Mage*, the Overking to which he is related was still in power when Jaran resided in the Great Kingdom. The *Vale of the Mage* profile notes his use of potions of longevity, but it also states: "he appears to be about 40 years old, but his actual age is more than double that." Even if he is triple that age (120 years old), the

last Overking from the House of Rax died prior to cy 446 (the year Ivid I ascended to the Malachite Throne), more than 140 years ago. Thus, it should be apparent that Jaran simply isn't old enough to be related to the House of Rax when it ruled. Given this, it is likely that Jaran is perhaps 100 years old and that he is a cousin to one of the Naelax's Overkings (probably Ivid III).

2. In the original *GREYHAWK Grimoires* article, the fifth paragraph in the "History" section of Acererak's

Libram notes a rivalry between Shanadar Vantros and another mage. Astute readers may have realized that Jaran is that rival. However, a time line error crept into the article's previous paragraph, making the rivalry impossible. The paragraph should read: "... for the next 60 years, the libram..." Thus, the next sentence in the paragraph should read: "But in cy 512, Acererak's Libram ..." These adjustments make the time line in Acererak's Libram compatible with Jaran Krimmehah's time line.



experiments together, combining his expertise with Aerdy methodology and her knowledge of drow magical techniques. One such experiment resulted in the manufacture of a tome of magical lore entitled *Exalted Dweomercraft*.

At the time, *Exalted Dweomercraft* was their crowning achievement, for it contained the pair's favored enchantments. It was a work they expected to aid them in protecting the valley from unwanted visitors. But as happens so often, desires can go awry.

The Exalted One distanced himself from the daily process of ruling his little domain, charging such things to his First Protector and her subordinates, and to the leaders of the various communities and settlements throughout the valley. In fact, there was a period of time when he wasn't present at all, preferring an extradimensional abode over his citadel in the heart of the valley. Even in cy 580, when a group of fugitive Bisselite necromancers invaded the valley in an attempt to usurp his control, he displayed only mild interest, leaving his subjects to deal with the problem. But when the Greyhawk Wars came to pass, he could no longer afford to look the other way, to ignore his promise to protect the denizens of the valley.

When hordes of humanoids and giants swept down from the Crystalmist

Mountains to overwhelm the Grand Duchy of Geoff and the Earldom of Sterich, and sorely press the staunch folk of the Yeomanry, some few humanoids and giants saw the Valley of the Mage as an easy target as well. Though repulsed, two gnomish border communities-Barkburg and Roothome, respectively-suffered considerable losses to both manpower and property, most of which occurred when the giants began collapsing the gnome warrens with thrown boulders and similar "artillery."

With the Exalted One and his troops focused on the invasion from the south and west, their attention on the eastern border lapsed, enabling an unknown assailant to penetrate the valley's defenses. And so it was that in cy 584, *Exalted Dweomercraft* mysteriously vanished from the Exalted One's citadel.

Upon discovering this, the Mage ordered his subjects to search the valley high and low, leaving no rock unturned, but in the end, no trace of the book or the thief was found.

Shortly thereafter, the tome appeared briefly in the city of Hookhill, but vanished again just as quickly. By the end of cy 584, rumors of the book surfaced as far north as Chendl, as far east as Dyvers, and as far south as Niole Dra, but none could be confirmed. While the

present location of *Exalted Dweomercraft* is unknown, it has been whispered in some quarters that the Exalted One will look fondly upon those who return the book to him, and with much ire on those who would knowingly keep it from him.

Appearance

This tome is simple in form and design, measuring roughly 20" long, 14" wide, and 6" thick. The white vellum pages are bound to a single piece of thick black leather that forms the spine and covers. Silver corner pieces adorn the covers and a silver key-lock clasp holds the book closed when not in use. Finally, the title of the work, written in drow script, is pressed into the front cover and inlaid with silver.

Contents

Exalted Dweomercraft contains the following wizard spells: *burning hands*, *change self*, *charm person*, *chill touch*, *detect magic*, *grease*, *read magic*, *unseen servant*; *continual light*, *darkness*, 75' radius, *ESP*, *glitterdust*, *know alignment*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *spectral hand*, *summon swarm*, *web*; *fireball*, *flame arrow*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *monster summoning I*, *protection from normal missiles*, *spectral force*, *unmask***, *vampiric touch*; *detect scrying*, *dimension door*, *enervation*, *Evard's black tentacles*, *ice storm*, *improved invisibility*, *monster summoning II*, *Tysiln's wondrous carriage**; *monster summoning III*, *passwall*, *reflection***, *summon shadow*, *wall of force*; *anti-magic shell*, *flesh to stone*, *true seeing*; *delayed blast fireball*, *exalted eye***, *reverse gravity*; *demand*, *incendiary cloud*, *symbol*; *Jaran's prismatic blade*: *shape change*.

Spell Notations

Throughout this article, the following notations apply:

CWH Indicates a spell detailed in the *Complete Wizard's Handbook*.

S&M Indicates a spell detailed in the *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Spells & Magic* book.

ToM Indicates a spell detailed in the *Tome of Magic*.

*Indicates a new spell detailed in this article.

** Indicates a spell that originally appeared in *WG12 Vale of the Mage*.

*** Indicates a new version of an existing spell.

Tysiln's Wondrous Carriage

(Evocation, Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 4

Range: 10 yards

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 hour/level

Casting Time: 4

Area Of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

This spell creates a translucent force-energy vehicle that glows with a ghostly, emerald light. The vehicle forms anywhere within the spell's range, as desired by the caster. Also, the caster may determine what the vehicle will look like, but it must be some type of carriage, wagon, buggy, or the like. Thus, the caster may create a fancy cabriolet, a stagecoach, a covered wagon, or even a chariot, but it must be a representation of an actual wagon-like vehicle in both size and appearance.

Accompanying the carriage is a team of four illusory horses, and like the vehicle, the horses shed an eerie green radiance, but all must be of the same type (e.g., prancing horses, draft horses, etc., as the caster desires).

At the caster's mental command, the carriage will move (up to MV 30), though he must be a passenger in order to do so. If the caster vacates the carriage thereafter, it will come to a halt, but not so quickly as to harm or eject any remaining passengers. This movement rate can be maintained over any terrain, so long as there is room to accommodate the carriage; it cannot pass through solid matter. Furthermore, the ride will always feel smooth, as though the vehicle were traveling on a paved road, even if moving over rough terrain.

The caster need not concentrate to maintain the spell, though one round of attention is required to make the vehicle move, change speed or direction, or stop. Otherwise, the caster may perform other actions, including spellcasting, reading, or the like.

Due to the carriage's force-energy composition, passengers are partially shielded from outside attacks, receiving a +4 bonus to their AC and saving throws. Note that the force energy employed to create the vehicle is not equal to a *wall of force*, so even if the vehicle is entirely enclosed (e.g., a stagecoach, carriage, etc.), occupants never receive more protection than the +4 bonus, though it will negate *magic missiles* directed from a source outside the carriage.

The glow produced by the carriage extends to a distance of 30 feet in all directions (but not through solid barriers), and can be seen up to 100 yards away in dim light, 500 yards in complete darkness. It is a soft, non-blinding glow that allows reading, inspection of small items, and the like, and which negates any magical *darkness* with which it make contact, without harming the vehicle itself. Magical *darkness* cast directly upon the carriage automatically fails to take effect, as will a *dispel magic*, but a *disintegrate*, *limited wish*, or *wish* will destroy the vehicle and the horses at once. Also, spells and magical devices that can absorb or destroy force energy (e.g., *wand of force*) will affect the carriage. The carriage cannot pass through magical barriers of any sort, but is not harmed by such magic if contact is made. Other magical attacks and effects will not harm the vehicle or horses, but can affect its passengers, as noted above. If the vehicle is destroyed or the spell's duration expires while it is moving, passengers suffer 1d4 hp damage per 5 steps of movement (round to nearest whole) due to inertia. Thus, if the vehicle is moving at maximum speed (MV 30) when the spell ends, its passengers suffer 6d4 hp inertial damage.

The material components for this spell are a miniature model of the vehicle to be created (carved from a green gemstone worth at least 500 gp) and a lock of green-dyed horse hair from the type of horse the spell is to create.

Jaran's Prismatic Blade

(Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 9

Range: 0

Components: V

Duration: 1 round/level

Casting Time: 7

Area Of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: Special

This spell condenses the colors and powers of a *prismatic sphere* into a sword-shaped blade, which appears in the caster's hand. The caster may use the *prismatic blade* as a weapon, attacking at his normal THAC0 and without proficiency penalties. On any successful hit, the target is affected as if contact had been made with a *prismatic sphere*. Thus, the target suffers 70-140 hp damage, must save vs. poison or die, save vs. petrification or be turned to stone, save vs. wand or go insane, and save vs. magic or be transported to another plane.

As with a *prismatic sphere*, creatures with fewer than 8 Hit Dice or levels who gaze upon the *prismatic blade* are blinded for 2-8 turns due to the brilliant colors. Obviously, the caster is immune to all effects of his own *prismatic blade*, and need not worry about accidentally harming himself. The blade cannot be passed to another creature, however; attempting to do so causes the creature to be affected as if hit by the blade.

While the blade is in effect, the caster cannot cast other spells, save for those that are verbal only, nor can he perform actions that require both hands. (He can, however, execute actions that require only one hand).

A *prismatic blade* can be destroyed by the same spells that bring down a *prismatic sphere*, and as each spell negates a color, the *blade's* efficiency is reduced accordingly. Note that such spells must be directed at the blade itself. Unlike *prismatic sphere*, however, these spells need not be cast in any special order to be effective. Likewise, a *rod of cancellation* will destroy a *prismatic blade* on contact.

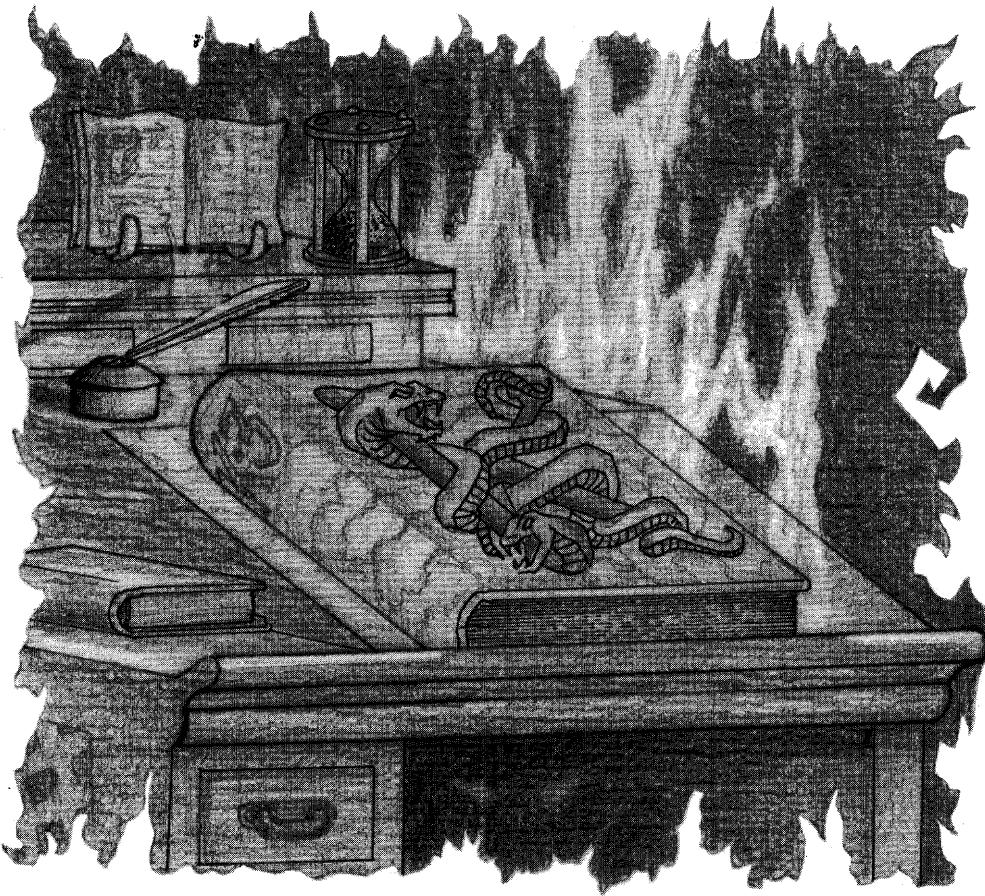
The Pyronomicon

Nearly 1300 years ago, in a time when the Flan tribes still dominated eastern Oerik, the archwizard Keraptis rose to power in the lands abutting the southern Rakers, and while most historians agree that the mage's kingdom encompassed what is now known as the Bone March, a few scholars believe the territories that later became Ratik and the Pale were part of this empire as well.

Yet, as is well documented in the little known Legend of Keraptis, the archwizard was a cruel man, so brutal in fact that, near the end of his reign, he demanded his tormented subjects turn over to him one-third of their newborn children as part of their taxes. The peasants did not take this atrocity lightly, and under the leadership of the high priest Gethrun Shoiraine and his ranger followers, the kingdom of the tyrant-mage was sundered.

During the resulting chaos, Keraptis and his gnome bodyguards escaped to the south, but in his haste to evade capture, Keraptis was forced to leave behind several objects of particular value. Among them was *The Pyronomicon*, a huge tome devoted to the lore of Elemental Fire, which Gethrun claimed as his share of the spoils.

Despite his inability to use the spells it contained, Gethrun retained the book



some 50 odd years before turning it over to the elves of the Gamboge Forest. The elves, in turn, held the tome for more than 500 years, until the coming of the Oeridians.

The Oeridians, in their efforts to subdue all who would stand against them, roused the ire of a great red wyrm that had been lairing near the border where the Rakers, the Gamboge, and the Flinty Hills meet. It seems that a large Oeridian force lured the dragon out and away from its abode while a much smaller unit emptied out the place. In its rage, Harak col Hakul Deshaun-as the Oeridians later named the dragon, which loosely translates to "he who comes with fire and fury"-rampaged across the countryside, destroying anyone it found. Eventually, its wrath fell upon the elves of the Gamboge, and when all was done, Harak col Hakul Deshaun was the new owner of *The Pyronomicon*. For generations thereafter, the land within 50 miles of Harak's lair was carefully avoided by humans and demihumans alike, and in time, the legacy of Harak col Hakul Deshaun became little more than myth. This situation could not last forever, of course, and soon enough, the abandoned lands were reclaimed and settled anew.

In CY 189; a large and powerful band of adventurers from the Great Kingdom, having learned of the legend, pushed all the way to the great wyrm's lair intent on dispatching the dragon once and for all, but when they entered the place, it was completely empty. Apparently, Harak col Hakul Deshaun, crafty even by dragon standards, had already relocated to parts unknown; an assumption based on the fact that, without a corpse or sign of struggle to say otherwise, the dragon could not be presumed dead. And with the disappearance of the dragon, so too did *The Pyronomicon* vanish from the chronicles of men.

The Pyronomicon's absence from recorded history lasted roughly 200 years before turning up again circa CY 390. This time, the owner was Foltyn, a capable Water Elementalist residing on a small island along the east coast of the Nyr Dyv. Though brilliant within his specialty, Foltyn was not known for his common sense, and he foolishly announced to the world his intention to destroy *The Pyronomicon* before the Joint Courts of Urnst during Richfest, when both Luna and Celene were full. Needless to say, it seemed like every powerful Fire Elementalist in the Flanaess descended upon Foltyn's island

abode exactly one week before the Midsummer festival, and in a spectacular, fiery display that lit up the night sky over an area some 100 miles in diameter, Foltyn and his island were wiped clean from the face of Oerth.

Although there is no record indicating which Fire Elementalist made off with the tome, it eventually found its way to the city of Greyhawk in CY 403, and into the possession of the sage Warfel II, the head of a generations-old family of scholars. When Warfel II died some years later, *The Pyronomicon* was passed on to his eldest child, Warfel III, who passed it down to his eldest child who, in turn, passed it on to the next generation, thus quieting the tome's storied existence.

So it was until CY 576, when a new wrinkle appeared in the tapestry that is *The Pyronomicon*'s history. Warfel VI reported that, while poring over an old adventure journal, the very shadows within his study began to coalesce and solidify at a frightening pace, eventually leaping off the walls as twisted and deformed gnomes. With no reason to expect an attack in his very home, Warfel was quickly overwhelmed by the diminutive invaders and rendered unconscious. Upon waking, he found that his entire abode had been ransacked, but upon further inspection, nothing had been taken, save for *The Pyronomicon*.

This strange twist of fate did not end there. Elsewhere in the city, and at roughly the same time Warfel's home was assaulted, a trio of powerful magical items (a sword, a hammer, and a trident, respectively) mysteriously vanished from the magically-protected vaults of their owners. In place of each weapon was a taunting riddle daring the owners to retrieve the items from a hidden location beneath haunted White Plume Mountain. Even more shocking than the weapons' theft was the individual claiming responsibility. The archwizard Keraptis, thought to have died more than a millennium before, had apparently returned, for the riddles bore his personal symbol.

Not surprisingly, Warfel assumed the theft of *The Pyronomicon* was linked to the theft of the weapons, so when adventurers were recruited in order to recover the weapons, the sage made sure that they kept an eye out for *The Pyronomicon* as well. But of those few intrepid adventurers who escaped White Plume Mountain with their lives, none

indicated that *The Pyronomicon* was there, or even Keraptis for that matter. Consequently, as of cy 585, the location of *The Pyronomicon* remains a mystery.

Appearance

The Pyronomicon is a massive, heavy tome measuring a full 3' long, 2' wide, and 1' thick. The covers and spine are constructed of thick but supple red dragonhide, and its vellum pages—which are affixed to the spine in some mysterious fashion that cannot be discerned without dismantling and thereby destroying the book—are stained a deep, fiery orange. In contrast with the page coloration, the inscriptions set down therein are bright yellow and written in cuneiform style.

Stamped into the center of the front cover and inlaid with red-tinged glasssteel is Keraptis' personal symbol: an encircled and snake-entwined capital letter K.³ Oddly enough, the tome features no lock or clasp to prevent the overly curious from perusing its contents.

Obviously, *The Pyronomicon*'s great bulk does not lend itself very well for use as a traveling spell book by most spell-casting creatures, as it approaches 100 lbs. in weight. Still, one of the more interesting aspects of the tome is that it is protected by several hundred "layers" of anti-fire/heat enchantments which render it completely immune to such forces, even direct exposure to the plane of Elemental Fire itself. In fact, these dweomers are so potent, they extend to anyone touching the tome with bare flesh.

Contents

Many scholars believe Keraptis was (or is, assuming the reports about his return are true) a Fire Elementalist, for the contents of the book are devoted exclusively to the study of elemental fire. In fact, half of the tome deals with the nature of the elemental plane of Fire and its denizens. Several additional chapters provide a thorough examination of the City of Brass (including a fairly accurate map of the city; see ALQ4 *Secrets of the Lamp*) and its inhabitants. The remaining pages detail an extensive selection of fire-based spells. Add to that the books appearance and Keraptis' choice of residence, and the assumption that he was a Fire Elementalist seems to ring true.

In any case, the spells it contains are as follows: *affect normal fires, burning hands, dancing lights, detect magic, fire burst (ToM), Keruptis' fantastic famulus*, Keraptis' flaming missiles**: read magic, flaming sphere, pyrotechnics; explosive runes, fireball, fireflow (ToM), flame arrow, Melf's minute meteors; conjure elemental-kin (fire elemental-kin only) (S&M), fire aura (CWH), fire charm, fire shield (warm version only), fire trap, wall of fire; conjure elemental (fire elementals only), Keraptis' flamecone***, proofing vs. combustion (S&M); Forest's fiery constrictor (ToM), phantom stalker***; delayed blast fireball, Malec-Kethls frame fist (ToM); incendiary cloud; elemental aura (fire only) (ToM), meteor swarm.*

Keraptk Fantastic Famuhhs (Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 1

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 hour +1 turn/level

Casting Time: 1

Area Of Effect: 30' radius

Saving Throw: None

This spell creates a specialized type of *unseen servant*. The sole purpose of the *fantastic famulus* is to prevent flames from spreading within the area of effect. Any flame of campfire&e or less that begins to spread beyond its usual confines is immediately snuffed by the *famulus*, before any extensive damage can occur. For example, the flame of a candle would not be put out by the *famulus*, but if the candle fell over and ignited a stack of papers, the *famulus* would extinguish the resulting fire before it could grow into an inferno. Fires that are larger than a campfire are not affected by this spell, but small fires touched off by such blazes are extinguished. The *famulus* cannot affect magical fire.

When cast, the area of effect is centered on the caster, but he has the option to make the area remain stationary or move with him. Once the decision is made, however, it cannot be changed.

The *fantastic famulus* cannot undertake the tasks of a normal *unseen servant*; it is capable only of extinguishing flames. As such, it is typically used to protect the casters library or a similar location where combustible items are stored. Otherwise, it conforms to the characteristics of a normal *unseen servant*.

The material components for this spell are a bit of charred wood and a drop of water, both of which are consumed.

Keraptis' Fhming Missiles

First-Level Wizard Spell

This spell is identical to the 1st-level wizard spell *magic missiles*, except that the missiles are fiery in nature.

Keraptis' Fhnecone

Fifth-Level Wizard Spell

This spell duplicates the 5th-level wizard spell *cone of cold*, save that it inflicts fiery damage. The material components for the spell are a pinch of pure sulphur and a spark or flame.

Phantom Stalker

Sixth-Level Wizard Spell

A fiery version of the 6th-level wizard spell *invisible stalker* this spell summons a creature called a *phantom stalker* (MC14 *Fiend Folio* appendix for statistics and material components).

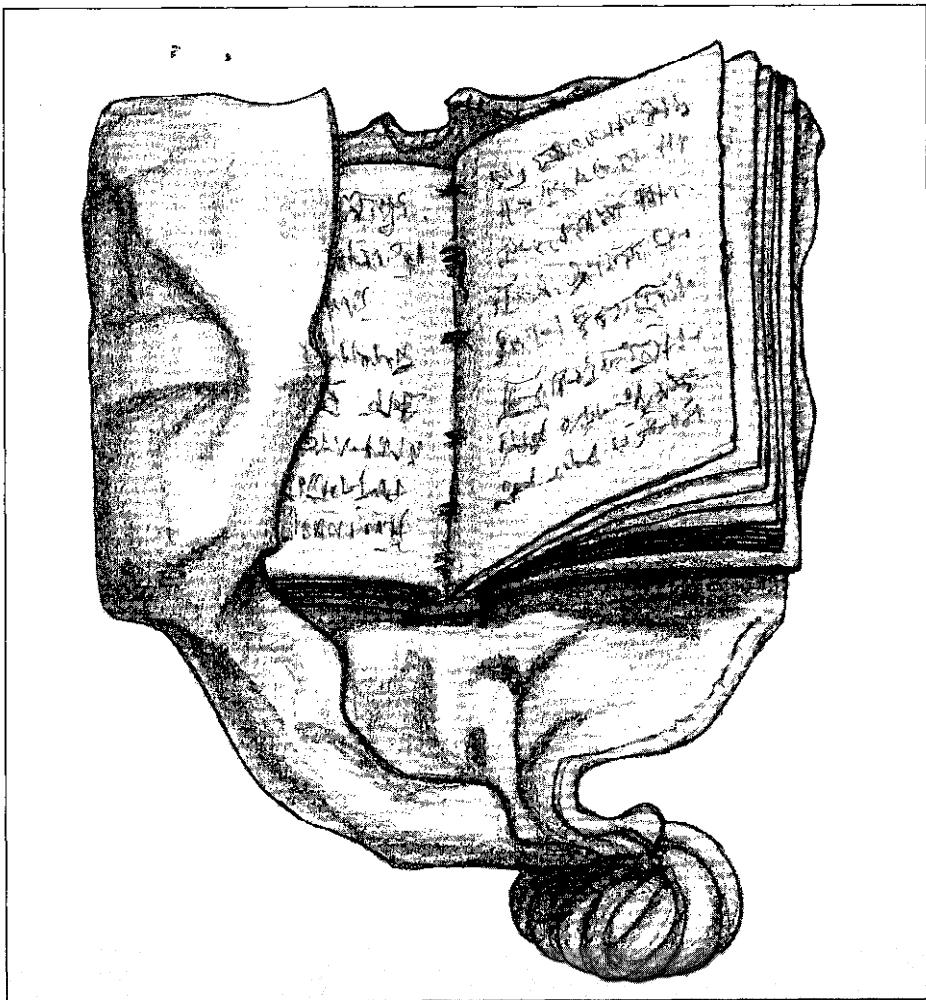
Slerotin's Manifesto

According to Suloise folklore, Slerotin was the last Mage of Power of the Suel Empire, and when the Rain of Colorless Fire destroyed the kingdom during the Age of Glory, it was Slerotin who led the Suloise people out of the Sea of Dust and into the lands of the Flan. The same account also states that, in order to facilitate the migration, Slerotin opened a magical tunnel through the Hellfurnaces, and once his charges were through, he sealed it with a spell that would last a millennium.

Although some historians question the validity of that particular tale—due mostly to their inability to believe that a single wizard could possess the magical might necessary to open a tunnel through the Hellfurnaces—there is one source that seems to confirm the story: *Slerotin's Manifesto*.

The existence of *Slerotin's Manifesto* was but a rumor until cy 326, when it was discovered in the Hool Marshes by a band of warriors from the Yeomanry. (How the *Manifesto* found its way into the Hool Marshes remains a mystery.) Needless to say, the warriors didn't know what to make of it, and gave it to a Keoish merchant in exchange for trade goods.

3. This symbol poses an interesting correlation between Keraptis and the lich Acerarak, a connection that suggests the two mages may have been acquainted, for with the exception of the initials they used, their symbols are identical down to the last detail. This seems to imply that they were influenced by a mutual experience, as the symbols are too similar to be dismissed as coincidence. Perhaps they were part of a forgotten wizard society whose members all used the same serpentine configuration in their personal symbols, or maybe both wizards received magical instruction from the same teacher. The debate continues.



The merchant, who recognized the *Manifesto* for what it was, immediately headed for Nolie Dra where he expected to sell the tome to the local Wizards' Guild for a hefty profit. Unfortunately, he never completed the journey, for he was slain by bandits while skirting the edge of the Dreadwood, and the *Manifesto* was stolen.

For more than a century thereafter, the *Manifesto's* history became a jumble of confusion, for it seemed to zig-zag across the central Fianaess due to a series of thefts, trades, and monetary transactions. This randomness ended in CY 441 when the book came into the possession of Linia Hoistreth, the Lady Sage of Safeton. Already a specialist in Suloise history, Linia found the *Manifesto* to be an indispensable component to her work. In fact, much of what present-day scholars know of *Slerotin's Manifesto* is due to the Lady Sage's meticulous notes.

Linia owned the book until her death in CY 492, whereupon her library (including the *Manifesto*) was donated to the locale Sages' Guild. Due to a inventory

error, however, the *Manifesto* was misplaced and ended up in a forgotten warehouse in Safeton's Wharf District.

Slerofin's Manifesto remained stored away until CY 524, when the elven wizard/thief Sylvanon Sunshimmer finally caught up to it after tracking it for more than a century. Using magic to bolster his thief talents, Sylvanon easily penetrated the warehouse and made off with the tome. Unfortunately for Sylvanon, his victory did not last, for two months later, an unknown thief stole it from his quarters while the elf was out for his evening meal.

For several decades thereafter, rumors maintained that the book never left the Wild Coast region, though there is evidence that it was in Highport for a time. Despite all this, its next confirmed appearance was not in the Wild Coast at all, but in the city of Scant in Onnwai. Confirmation came in CY 577 via Archmage Bigby, a longtime resident of Scant. In a report to the Circle of Eight, Bigby stated: *Slerotin's Manifesto* does indeed exist and is held in the temple of Wee Jas here in Scant. I was given leave to confirm

the tome's authenticity, but nothing more. If the situation changes, you will be informed."

The history of *Slerotin's Manifesto* ends there, but with the coming of the Greyhawk Wars and the subsequent fall of Onnwai, most scholars assume the book is now in the hands of the Scarlet Brotherhood. If this is the case, then the *Manifesto* has come full circle, having returned to the Suel people. If not, then there is no telling where and when it will turn up next.

Appearance

Slerotin's Manifesto is an odd-looking tome, being 2' long, 1' wide, and 3" thick. The covers and spine consist of the thick, mottled green hide of a common troll. The pages, also troll skin, are sewn together with troll hair and attached to the spine via troll sinew, and the words thereupon are written with troll blood. In fact, close examination reveals that the entire tome is made of troll parts; there is no lock, clasp, edging.

Although the book's materials approach the macabre, their use was a stroke of genius on Sierotin's part. Due to many permanent enchantments, the troll parts have retained their regenerating ability (though it won't become an actual troll). Thus, unless subjected to fire or acid, the *Manifesto* always repairs itself when damaged, which has enabled it to endure the passage of time.

Contents

Slerotin's Manifesto is divided into three distinct sections, each devoted to a separate topic, though the entirety of the work is written in the Ancient Suloise language.

The first section functioned as a personal log, and gives a highly detailed chronicle of Sierotin's involvement in the Suloise migrations. Although the section provides much insight into the trials and tribulations the Suel tribes faced, the bulk of it is tedious reading to anyone save the most resolute historians.

The second portion of the tome involves various techniques for building stone constructs (e.g., stone golems, caryatid columns, etc.), though most of the information takes the form of general observations regarding the subject. However, this section closes with a complete formula for the construction of a shape-shifting juggernaut (*MONSTROUS MANUAL™* tome, pages 165 and 171).

The final section contains a large but fragmentary selection of spells, suggesting

that the Manifesto was not Slerotin's primary source of spells, despite the inclusion of one spell of his own devising. They appear in the following order: *detect magic, detect secret passages and portals* (S&M), *magic missile, read magic, continual light, vocalize* (CWH) *web, alacrity* (ToM), *dispel magic, far reaching I* (ToM), *bands of Sirelyn* (S&M), *dispel magic, explosive runes, infravision; dig, dilation I* (ToM), *divination enhancement* (ToM), *ultravision* (S&M); *conjure elemental, far reaching III* (ToM) *passwall, stone shape, transmute rock to mud: augmentation II* (ToM), *disintegrate, greater sign of sealing* (S&M), *trollish fortitude* (S&M); *prismatic spray, teleport without error: an antipathy/sympathy, prismatic wall, sink; foresight, meteor swarm, prismatic sphere, Slerotin's fortitude**

Slerotin's Fortitude

(Alteration, Abjuration)

Level: 9

Range: Touch

Components: V, M

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 10 cubic feet/level
Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, the caster can alter the molecular structure of nonmagical, inorganic matter so as to make it impervious to harm from both physical and magical attacks.

The caster is able to affect up to 10 cubic feet of material per level of experience, though the matter in question must be of the same general type. For example, a stone wall could be rendered invulnerable to damage, but not an iron door set into the wall. A second casting would be necessary to include the door. Note that if several doors exist in the same wall, several *fortitude* spells would be needed. Furthermore, the frame, hinges, locks, etc., are protected only if they are of the same material as the door.

Slerotin's fortitude can be removed only by a full *wish*. However, more than one *fortitude* can be cast on a single area so as to make it more difficult to bring down. Thus, a wall that is under the effects of three *fortitude* spells requires

three separate *wish* spells to return it to a normal wall. No other spell or force can harm such a protected area. Materials subjected to this spell are impervious even to spells like *disintegrate* or *earthquake*.

An area affected by *Slerotin's fortitude* spell will radiate strong magic if detected.

The material components for this spell are a diamond of at least 1,000 gp value, one ounce of powdered steel or other strong and hard metal, and a drop of water. These components are necessary for every 10 cubic feet to be fortified, but the quantity of components should be modified if lesser amounts of material are to be affected.



"GREYHAWK Grimoires II" is dedicated to everyone who supported the original "GREYHAWK Grimoires" article in DRAGON Magazine issue #225, especially those whose encouraging letters appeared in subsequent issues.

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The Spirit of the Age

by Jon Pickens

A fascinating new tool for creating a fictional world is the field of study called *generation analysis*. This is, in short, the study of the way each succeeding generation in a society develops its own attributes. This discipline seeks to understand how each generation affects the following ones and how the patterns formed by these generations define the nature and course of an entire society. Pretty heady stuff for all of us amateur world-builders!

A recent and fairly accessible work in this field is the book *Generations* by William Strauss and Neil Howe. The book, which is available in libraries and the better bookstores, outlines a basic theory and applies it in fascinating detail to thirteen generations of American history, from the Puritan settlements to Generation X.

This article simplifies and summarizes enough of the theory to define some basic terms, sketch the basic generational patterns, and then apply those patterns to the NPC trait list found in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*. By the time we are done, the NPCs of a certain age group (cohort) that we roll up will have the salient characteristics that mark their generation; that is, the Spirit of the Age. (Not only that, the computer programmers in the audience can add the final table presented here as a new filter for their character generation programs.)

The Lingo

A generation is made up of a cohort of individuals; those born in a roughly 20-year timespan. (Strauss & Howe use a 22-year span, but I have rounded it down for simplicity.) The members of a single cohort have the same concerns and are driven by the same mix of intellectual concepts and social issues. For example, in the time of Galileo, the question of whether the heavens revolved around earth was a major issue; everyone was familiar with the debate, regardless of which side they favored. Those in different cohorts (such as flower child vs. beatnik) may have difficulty understanding each other. They just don't speak the same language.

The Four Cohorts

According to Strauss and Howe, a human society at any given time is stratified into four cohorts. Their order and function in a society determines the character of that society. The cohorts appear in the same repeating cycle, with the fourth cohort ultimately regenerat-

ing the first. What drives the pattern of society is that only three cohorts affect a society at any one time (the fourth cohort being the youngest generation, dependent on the others and thus unable to affect the society as a whole). At any time, the dominant spirit of a generation will be that of its *leader cohort* (roughly the 40- to 60-year-olds). Lesser influences are contributed by its *elder cohort* (60+ years) and young adults, or *rising cohort* (20 to 40 years old). The pattern formed by the combined interplay of the three oldest cohorts determines the overall pattern of the society (which in this article I call The Spirit of the Age). Sample societal patterns based on the dominant (leader) cohort are given in **Table 1**.

The historical cycle of generations follows a four-stroke pattern, as each of the four cohorts becomes dominant. Each cohort's dominant period follows naturally from that of the previous leadership cohort. Strauss and Howe name these cohorts as follows: *Idealist*, *Reactive*, *Civic*, and *Adaptive*. The odd

Table 1: Generational Cultures

Type	Effect	Example
Idealist	Flowering Culture & Rhetoric	Ancient Greece
Reactive	Pragmatic Management	William the Conqueror
Civic	Civic Institutions & Flowering Technology	Ancient Rome
Adaptive	Genteel Mediators	<i>Star Trek: Next Generation</i>

Table 2: Age Groups and Generational Characteristics

Place	Age	Function	Idealist	Reactive	Civic	Adaptive
Elder	60+	Stewardship	Visionary	Reclusive	Busy	Sensitive
Middle	40+	Leadership	Moralist	Pragmatic	Powerful	Indecisive
Rising	20+	Worker	Narcissistic	Alienated	Heroic	Conformist
Young	0+	Dependent	Indulged	Criticized	Protected	Suffocated

cohorts are active, the even ones are passive. The Idealist and Reactive cohorts (the first two) are most concerned with issues of morality and of ideas, while the Civic and Adaptive cohorts (the last two) are most concerned with issues of society and of pragmatic results.

In the *Idealist* period, the spirit of the age is adventurous. As in the spring, new ideas, concepts, and philosophies sprout; new intellectual life is everywhere. The clash and clamor awakens the society to new possibilities.

In the *Reactive* period, the ideas that became dominant in the Idealist period are tested by the harsh sun of experience. The strong ideas survive; the weak wither. Order is imposed upon the previous babble of ideas.

In the *Civic* period, the whole society reaps the rewards of this consolidation. Everyone pulls together, and great social and structural projects are conceived and brought to fruition.

In the *Adaptive* period, the emphasis cools from the rapid expansion of the society to its maintenance and the exploration of its more esoteric nooks and crannies. The society's energies are diverted into complex art, high fashion, and labyrinthine social rules as the great passions that drove the previous expansions wither before the gentility of excruciatingly correct manners and Byzantine diplomatic maneuvering. Ultimately, decadence or outright decay sets in, sowing the seeds of the next great moral renewal by the following Idealist generation.

The Cohort's Role in Society

Societal functions, according to Strauss and Howe, are organized by age; that is, members of each age group have a characteristic task. The oldest age group represents the elders, who act as advisors to the leadership cohort. Second is the middle age group, who provide active leadership in the society.

The third group is the rising age group, who are the young adults of the society. They provide most of the societal drive as they prepare to become the future leaders.

The last is the young age group, which is dependent on the others. The characteristics of the young do not have any impact until they become the next rising cohort. Each cohort changes as it ages, as is discussed in the next section on the life cycle of the cohort (**Table 2**).

The Life Cycle of the Cohort

Each generation's cohort, as it passes through the stages of dependency, working, leadership, and stewardship, has its own characteristics. This section summarizes the attributes of each generation as it ages. Note especially how each cohort attempts to correct what it considers the excesses both of the previous generation and its own previous stage of development.

In youth, when dependent, the typical Idealist is indulged by the Adaptive

parent. As they advance into early adulthood they tend to be centered upon themselves (*narcissistic*) and concerned with their own inner development. By the time they become leaders, they tend to be moralists, guided by the intellectual lessons they have absorbed and assimilated. Their intensity heightens to a visionary archetype as they reach the age of stewardship.

The Reactive young tend to be overly *criticized* by their Idealistic parents, who measure them against "the way things ought to be." This treatment results in young adults who feel lost or alienated, and have a need to find their own way. By the time they become leaders, they have found their way, which is based on practical realities and what their experience shows to work, rather than the ideals of the previous generation. In the



Table 3: Combined Age Group/Cohort Chart

	Idealist	Reactive	Civic	Adaptive	
Elder	Sensitive	Visionary	Reclusive	Busy	
Middle	Moralist	Pragmatic	Secular	Indecisive	Spiritual
Rising	Alienated	Heroic	Crisis	Narcissistic	Awakening
Young	Protected	Suffocated	Conformist	Indulged	Criticized
Current Baseline	1980-2000	2000-2020	7940- 7960	7960- 7980	

stewardship years, they tend to withdraw, becoming reclusive as the dynamic Civic generation takes over the leadership position.

The Civic young are *protected* by the Reactive parents, in contrast to the criticism the latter received in their youth. As workers, they are imbued with the best guidance the pragmatic Reactive leaders and the visionary Idealist elders can give them; their role models are of the heroic mode. By the time they reach leadership positions, they are the most powerful and forceful of the generations, united in purpose and vision. As they move into stewardship positions, they remain unusually active in public affairs.

The Adaptive young are *suffocated* by the dynamic Civic parents. As workers, they become conformist. In reaction to their own experiences, they tend to indulge their children, the next generation of Idealists. While their society runs smoothly at this stage, by the time they reach the leadership age, the mature adaptives tend to be indecisive, a condition partially remedied by the activity of the Civic elders. As they move into stewardship positions, the Adaptive elders develop a great sensitivity and understanding that allows the next great wave of Idealism to flower.

The Structure of Society

As a cohort ages, it moves upward and to the right on a timeline graph of succeeding generations. Each cohort's dominant traits at a given age help define the nature of the current society. The generations take the name of the cohort in the middle (leadership) age category. Thus, the Idealist age has *moralist* leaders.

The Idealist society has sensitive and tolerant elders. These support the moralist leadership. The workers tend to alienated and the young protected. A typical society of this type is Ancient Greece.

The Reactive society has visionary elders, *pragmatic* leadership, heroic workers, and suffocated young. The Normans who conquered England under William the Conqueror are a typical example.

The Civic society has *reclusive* elders, *powerful* leaders, conformist workers, and indulged young. Ancient Rome at its height provides a typical example.

The Adaptive society has busy elders, *indecisive* leaders, narcissistic workers, and criticized young. This mature society is beginning to show cracks in the pavement, and a simpler age has become much more complex. The Federation of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and the Byzantine Empire are examples.

Table 3 summarizes these periods and adds two crisis points, which are discussed below.

Crisis Points

At certain times, crises arise that challenge the society as a whole. To a great degree, the nature of these events flow from the character of the previous generations. The four-stroke cycle has two alternating crisis points.

First, a *secular crisis* usually occurs between the Reactive and Civic generations. This is a crisis of society, often from deep divisions in the body politic. These might lead to events such as the American Civil War or the signing of the Magna Carta, which redefined the relationship of the king and barons in medieval England.

The second type of crisis is a *spiritual awakening* that usually occurs between the Adaptive and Idealist generations. This might trigger such events as a Children's Crusade or the founding of a wave of new monastic orders. **Table 3** illustrates the process of rising generations and includes Strauss and Howe's baseline for our own "real world" cycle.

Note: Crises may not happen, or may happen at the "wrong" time, which can modify the cycle. Strauss and Howe discuss the "mistiming" of the American Civil War, which causes their model to skip a beat-and a generation-with significant implications for WWII.

Applications to World-Building

How can we apply this to fantasy world-building?

In the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*, Table 70 lists primary and secondary character traits to be assigned to NPCs. To apply generation theory to the primary traits, we must identify which traits are dominant in a cohort and which are much rarer. The method is first to construct a matrix, then to weight the chances for the traits that should be dominant in a cohort of a given age of society.

Table 4: provides a fully constructed basic matrix. This is the structural core of this article and has been provided so readers can easily see how our master table (**Table 5**) has been put together, and tell at a glance how the final percentages were weighted.

Since there are 20 basic traits, each should start with an average weighting of 5%. A strongly dominant trait should have double weighting, so a 10% weighting has been given for the most

dominant traits on the list. Important but less dominant traits have been given a weighting of 7% or 8%, while a trait that is very uncharacteristic of the cohort has been given a rating of 3% or less.

Starting with the cohort of Idealists, the traits from the *DMG* list that should be most stressed are *curiosity* and *optimism*, for this cohort is the soul of exuberant inquiry. These weightings are thus set at 10%. The next most important traits (set at 8%) are *argumentative*, *opinionated*, and *violent*, since we also want these to be times of passion and turbulence. Not to be forgotten are the traits *courageous* and *naive* at 7%, since we also want to make these traits important.

The more neutral traits for this cohort are *capricious*, *careless*, *friendly*, *suspicious*, and *uncivilized*. While these may not be uncommon in this cohort, they are not really what this particular cohort is about.

The remaining traits are recessive; we really don't want to see much of them in our Idealist cohort. These are *arrogant* at 3%, and *exacting*, *generous*, *greedy*, *moody*, *pessimistic*, *quiet*, and *sober* at 2%. Some might raise an eyebrow that *arrogant* doesn't join *argumentative*, *opinionated*, and *violent*; however, this cohort is one of open inquiry. New ideas are exploding in all directions, and none has yet been adopted as the wave of the future. Likewise, notice that both *generous* and *greedy* are recessive; the Idealist cohort is the least materialist of the four cohorts.

Having walked through the first part of our matrix, the traits of the last three cohorts are generated in a similar fashion. The entire percentage-weight table has been included so that the basic structure of the final table is apparent. Readers who want to tweak the weightings themselves should feel free to construct their own tables.

Finally, to make a playable table, we simply convert the percentage weightings to 1d100 dice rolls, and *voilá*, we have our master table, **Table 5**, which is the one we will use for making up NPCs.

Using Table 5

The first step to using this table is to chose a point in the cycle that matches the local society in the campaign setting. This means matching the local leadership cohort (the 40- to 60-year-olds) with the appropriate model from generation theory.

For example, consider a fantasy country that mirrors Spain during the

Table 4: Percentage Weightings of NPC Traits by Generation

Trait	Idealist	Reactive	Civic	Adaptive
Argumentative	8	5	3	2
Arrogant	3	8	5	2
Capricious	5	2	1	8
Careless	5	2	1	10
Courageous	7	5	8	2
Curious	10	5	2	5
Exacting	2	10	5	3
Friendly	5	2	7	10
Greedy	2	5	10	8
Generous	2	5	10	5
Moody	2	5	2	8
Naive	7	3	5	1
Opinionated	8	3	5	5
Optimistic	10	1	10	2
Pessimistic	2	8	2	8
Quiet	2	5	2	10
Sober	2	5	7	3
Suspicious	5	10	5	3
Uncivilized	5	8	5	3
Violent	8	3	5	2

Table 5: NPC Generational Traits Table (d100)

	Idealist	Reactive	Civic	Adaptive
Argumentative*	01-08	01-05	01-03	01-02
Arrogant*	09-11	06-13	04-08	03-04
Capricious	12-16	14-15	09	05-12
Careless*	17-21	16-17	10	13-22
Courageous	22-28	18-22	11-18	23-24
Curious	29-38	23-27	19-20	25-29
Exacting*	39-40	30-37	21-25	30-32
Friendly	41-45	38-39	26-32	33-42
Greedy*	46-47	40-44	33-42	43-50
Generous	48-49	45-49	43-52	51-55
Moody*	50-51	50-54	53-54	56-63
Naive*	52-58	55-57	55-59	64
Opinionated*	59-66	58-60	60-64	65-69
Optimistic	67-76	61	65-74	70-71
Pessimistic*	77-78	62-69	75-76	72-79
Quiet	79-80	70-74	77-78	80-89
Sober	81-82	75-79	79-85	90-92
Suspicious*	83-87	80-89	86-90	93-95
Uncivilized*	88-92	90-97	91-95	96-98
Violent*	93-00	98-00	96-00	99-00

* These are “negative traits” for those using optional systems that use positive and negative traits as part of the character-building process.

Inquisition (as we see it from modern times):

It looks as though this can be safely classified as a Reactive society. The great moral teachers of the past (the elders) have sorted out the issues of moral rectitude. The current leadership is left the task of separating the heretical goats from the righteous lambs. They are more concerned with practical results (like the cleansing of the flock) than with such abstract ideals as justice.

(The practice of killing the prisoners and letting God sort them out is a matter of record.) The young adults are fired with zeal to destroy the heretics (or rescue the victims), while the youngest cohort is raised strictly according to rules mandated by the leadership, as they apply the wisdom of the elders. (Note that not all Reactive societies will be this repressive, but this model was chosen in order to most dramatically illustrate the point.)

Next, let's look at our newly devel-

Table 6: Simple Demihuman Cohort Spans

	Rising	Middle	Elder ¹
Dwarf	55	110	167
Elf	75	155	233
Gnome	45	90	133
Half-Elf	27	56	83
Halfling	22	44	67

1. These values are from Player's Handbook Table 12, Old Age column

Table 6A: Modified Demihuman Cohort Spans

	Rising	Middle	Elder ¹
Dwarf	83 ²	167	250
Elf	117	233	350
Gnome	67	133	200
Half-Elf	41 ³	83	125
Halfling	33	67	100

1. These values are from Player's Handbook Table 12, Venerable column

2. Interestingly, this value is so far above the dwarf adventurer starting age as to make adventuring the equivalent of running away from home. This possibly indicates an extremely conservative culture with exceptionally long apprentice periods, or perhaps an expected period of travel/questing before returning to settle down as a full member of society.

3. Use the human norm age of 20 in human societies. Cultural ambiguity has always been a hallmark of the half-elf. These individuals fare even worse in elven cultures, where their much shorter lifespans leave them even more culturally isolated.

oped Inquisition generation gap: Don Luis Alphonse (age 48) and his son Enrique (age 28) are so close that we'll even give them the same basic trait roll of 80. Luis is a Reactive, so his basic trait is Suspicious (column 2, roll 80). However, Enrique, in the next younger cohort, is a Civic, so his basic trait is Sober (column 3, roll 80). Thus, where Don Luis would impatiently call out the guards and demand an interrogation, his son would be more likely to weigh the factors he can see and carefully think through a reasoned decision. He is also quite likely to play the hero's role by defying his father if he thinks Don Luis is wrong. No wonder they don't always see eye-to-eye!

Fantasy World Longevity

Many races in fantasy literature and gaming are exceptionally long-lived. Elves measure their years by the hundred, and creatures such as liches or ancient dragons may measure theirs by the thousand. Even the human norms in the *Player's Handbook* are shaded on the heroic side.

In the case of long-lived races, the simplest way approach cohorts is to simply extend the the cohort age span in proportion to the racial lifespan, based on the human norms. Assume that the elder period starts at the Old Age category from **Table 12: Aging Effects** in the *Player's Handbook*. (Since the human

values match the Strauss and Howe generational model at the 60-year mark, this is a reasonable starting point.)

The divisions between youth and worker, worker and leader have been-worked out from the Old Age value and rounded as necessary. The results are summarized in **Table 6**.

Nothing prevents a DM from creating a model more suitable to his campaign world. For example, the DM might assume that the demihumans generally fade rapidly through the elder stage, and base the Demihuman Cohort table on the Venerable age values from **Table 12** instead of the Old Age values. Further, the adventurer's starting ages given on **Table 11** of the *Player's Handbook* can be factored in, although in this case, the concept of a cohort must be understood as more culturally driven than strictly age-driven. These variations of human cohort values are given in Table 6A.

In the case of an individual with a magically extended span, the most practical solution is to freeze the cohort behavior at the elder stage, treating the individual's further development as a unique case.

Those interested in following up the effects of aging on an entire human cohort past the 100th year should try the following: Project what general mistakes and excesses are likely, given the

cohort's past. Decide how a cohort member is likely to modify his behavior based on those mistakes. Factor in the impact of the cohorts from the previous and succeeding generations. Finally, assign a key word to describe the cohort's most striking characteristic.

Making Fantasy World History

Of course, generational differences are useful not only for detailing a specific character, but for generating the history of an entire country in a fantasy game world. The following is a brief (80-year) outline of a Viking culture for a fantasy world. Exact dates can be determined and dropped into place to match the timeline elsewhere.

Let's say our settlement, Norwald, has been founded on a new and savage continent by an expedition that quit its homeland, Vinland, after a dispute with the king. The kingdom is in an Idealist period.

Although the disagreement was noisy and almost came to blows, the elder advisors prevented actual bloodshed. in this secular crisis, only a few of the moralist leadership accompanied the soon-to-be Jarl of Norwald. The majority of the colonizing expedition were young alienated warriors and their families. A few elder statesmen went with their kin. Great pains were taken to make sure that the children would survive the journey.

An exceptionally hard early winter killed the eiders, most of the leadership, and many of the young. The first years were very hard. Over time, the few leaders who survived as elders become known to current history as the greatest warriors and wisest councilors in the history of Norwald.

The Norwald and Vinland then entered a Reactive period. in the old country, the some of the visionary eiders wanted to expand the new settlements, while others wanted them to become a source of profit and power under the king. The second group of eiders viewed this as necessary because the lands usually raided by Vinland had begun reorganizing their lands for defense by building forts and mobile detachments of knights to drive off the Vinland raiders.

The pragmatic king, more greedy and intolerant than those of the previous generation, spent most of his time playing political factions off against each other and looting the country for his own benefit. The Jarl of Norwald, however, organized his settlement, recruited disaffected people from the homeland, and took great strides toward making the new settlement prosperous.

The king reacted badly, and a series of pirate raids against Norwald ships escalated into a full-scale invasion of the new land. The strengthened settlement successfully resisted the king. With the death of the king in battle came hard news: The other kingdoms Vinland had been raiding were sending a large force to conquer the mother country. The warriors of Norwald sailed to the rescue, and for the next three years shielded Vinland from a series of expeditions aimed at its destruction.

The Jarl of Norwald was offered the crown of Vinland, but refused, returning to the new land. A surviving nephew of the old king took the crown but, jealous of the Earl, began plotting the conquest of Norwald. This resulted in another war that, in a climactic battle, left both rulers dead and both lands exhausted.

The next generation (Civic) was one of rebuilding. The discredited elder warlords of Norwald were dismissed by a younger generation tired of war and soon retired from the scene. Since the original Jarl's line had been extinguished in war, the leaders of the new generation of Norwald warriors created a Council of Jarls.

The mother country remained a kingdom and went back to its usual raiding practices. Trade between the two turned to rivalry, although no further fighting broke out. The period was ending when the establishment of mines in a chain of mountains near Norwald led to the discovery of a kingdom of dwarves, locked in a subterranean struggle with the outposts of a large underground empire of drow elves.

By the next generation (Adaptive), exposure to dwarven culture revealed some curious parallels between the dwarven deities and those worshiped by the humans. New quasi-religious orders sprang up, as well as berserker cults based on the wolf bear, boar, and wererat (a spiritual awakening).

At this time, new wars between the countries south of Vinland gave the mother country some respite, as well. The new berserker cults of Norwald began supplying warbands to the contending kingdoms. These bands quickly developed reputations for ferocity unequalled in the period. Over time, some bands lost their mystical trappings and turned into well-equipped, hard-bitten mercenaries, while others became the stuff of legend.

While the Norwald leaders didn't exactly approve of the young generation going off to fight wars in foreign lands, they were divided about how to deal the changes in their society. Much of their time was spent wrangling over land rights and the status of clan and family.

The elders remained active, recalling the glories of previous days, developing the art of rune magic, and constructing immortal ballads and stories. They spent much time with the young while the rising adult warriors were away . . .

From this point, the history can be continued through as many generations as desired. Random campaign event tables, such as those in the *BIRTHRIGHT® Legacy of Kings* campaign, can be used to help generate details, or the DM can make up his own. Another helpful source is the book *Setting Up A Wargames Campaign* by Tony Bath, which has many additional ideas.

Naturally, not all countries will be in the same generational cycle at the same time. This can be used to predict the probable outcomes of past wars. For example, what would happen if a Reactive culture went to war with an Adaptive culture? Visionary elder statesmen, pragmatic generals, and heroic soldiers against busy elder statesmen, indecisive generals and narcissistic soldiers. I'll take the Reactives, thank you.

(Those of you now fully convinced of the inevitability of impersonal historical-

forces should read *The Hero in History* by Sidney Hook, which covers the other side of the issue.)

Further Reading

Those wanting a more detailed look at generational theory (and a fascinating trip through 13 generations of American history) should look for the book, *Generations*, by William Strauss and Neil Howe, published by William Morris & Co., New York, 1991.

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Campaign Classics



The Roof of the World

by Wolfgang Baur

illustrated by R. Ward Shipman

The yikaria, better known us the yak-men, are powerful villains of Zakhara, always working behind the scenes to destroy the Enlightened rulers of the Land of Fate. Now their homeland has been explored, described, and charted-at no little peril to the sages, barbers, and storytellers involved-and their plots and schemes may be unmasked and their villainy revealed far beyond Zakhara's boundaries.

This article describes the homeland of the yikaria and provides rules and setting information for introducing the yak-men to the BIRTHRIGHT®, FORGOTTEN REALMS®, GREYHAWK®, and PLANESCAPE® campaign settings. Note that this article uses concepts introduced in the "Scions of the Desert" article by Jim Parks (DRAGON® Magazine issue #232). The yak-men are described both in the Land of Fate boxed set and in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual, Volume Two.

The empire of the yikaria lies high in the World-Pillar Mountains. Although only one in a long line of Zakharian empires, it has lasted longer than any other, its dynasties' succession ensured by devotion to an undying god, a power whose name the yikaria alone know. All others call this divinity the Forgotten God. Its small but stable empire has lasted for 900 years.

Ruled by an emperor and his invisible but influential consort, the Lands of the

Yak are aloof from the concerns of sultans, caliphs, princes, and puppets, but they are shaped by the demands of power and of their ancestry, just as much as is the Grand Caliph in Huzuz. Just because the communities of the Enlightened ignores the yikarian mountain strongholds doesn't mean that the yikarian emperor ignores his lowland cousins.

Provinces of the World-Pillars

The yikaria are an entire race of abominations, all descended from the Forgotten God, a long-lost sorcerer whose blood magic forever altered him and all his progeny. While the Forgotten God was cursed by his rejection of the Lorgiver's teachings and his blood sac-

rifices, he has taken careful steps to build a realm despite his curse. The oldest and strongest yak-men serve as his governors and vassals: the Seven Sages. Many of the younger yikaria become monks who serve in the Forgotten God's temples. Yak-men are loyal to their elders, and all learn early about the treachery and deceit of the Enlightened.

The Yikarian Empire lies northeast of the Haunted Lands, between the eastern jungles and the Bahr Al-Kibar, the Great Sea. The desolate plateaus and valleys of the World-Pillar Mountains are not heavily populated; their expanses are roamed primarily by snow leopards, mountain goats, and small herds of musk oxen. A few yeti, humans, and yak-men prosper in the harsh climate. The provinces are larger than Anuirean provinces because of their relative infertile terrain.

The eight provinces of the yak-men are shown on the map (page 91). Each province is ruled by a governor appointed by the Forgotten God itself; each is expected to tithe one-fifth of its income to the Gate of Heaven each year. Failure to do so results in the harsh punishments, including deaths by impalement, quartering, and pressing for minor infractions, and the razing of entire towns for major offenses. The Emperor is not a lenient ruler.



The listing of the provinces accompanying the map assumes that the DM has granted regency and bloodline powers to the rulers of the Land of Fate (see "Scions of the Desert").

The high plateau of the Enlightened Ring province leads down by several mountainous passes to the coastal lowlands of Red Goat and Sun's Eye. Towering above it all are the ramparts of the Gate of Heaven; despite its altitude, the imperial province retains vegetation and bearable temperatures for almost five months of the year. The city of Nathong rests at an elevation of nearly 7,000 feet, yet its gardens are among the most pleasant of the empire. The blessing of the Forgotten God is generally credited with keeping Nathong green and livable. Less generous souls claim that it is the magic of the Emperor's blood sacrifices that keep the palace climate (and incidentally that of the surrounding mountains) temperate.

The World-Pillar Mountains are among the highest mountains of Toril, ranging from 7,000 to 17,000 feet high, with passes in the 4,000 to 5,000 feet range. The cold heights are moderated by the warm sea breezes off the Great Sea. Rainfall is heavy in the northwestern lowlands, creating the Blackwash fens at the meeting of the River Ruin and the Foreigners Sea. The River Ruin is dry for half the year, running fast and strong only during the rainy season and the spring runoff from the peaks. As a result, the fens are brackish, and their water level is determined as much by the tides as by the river. The river itself is used to float goods down to the Great Sea in the spring; caravans bring slaves and trade goods up the dry riverbed in the dry seasons, using it as a makeshift road. Their tracks are washed away each winter and spring.

Prophets, barbers, merchants, and spies-gossips all-claim that the yak-men have also established a small trading post in the eastern jungles, at the mouth of one of the great rivers that flows down from their mountain fortresses. Any such outpost would be far from their strongholds and in much wetter, more forested terrain than they are used to, but it would provide a way to reach an entirely new set of targets-those of the Foreigner's Sea and all points east and south. The existence of such a fort is merely conjecture, however, and thus does not appear on the map provided.

Yikarian trade goods include yak butter, fine rugs, excellent incense, bells,

and cast bronze. Dwarven and human slaves create spearpoints, arrowheads, and armor for sale to Kara-Tur to the east and to the Free Cities to the southwest. Desert tribes sometimes serve as intermediaries, carrying great shipments of goods. Some say that the al-Badia give the yikaria slaves in exchange for these goods, but nothing can be proven.

The Governors

Each province of the Yikarian Empire is ruled by one of the Seven Sages, the long-bearded yikarian sons and daughters of their enigmatic god. These honored governors live in great castles, where they command small armies of invisible servants and oversee the administration of the various provinces.

The Seven Sages have a great love of secrecy. They are never referred to by their real names, but only by nicknames: the Mountain Prince, Old Goatbeard, the Little Fox, the Cloud Wizard, the Elder, Mother Millstone, and the Coral Princess. When traveling to visit one another, they ride enormous, night-flying rocs, the better to hide from enemies. They prefer to keep their appearances, conflict, and alliances shrouded in darkness.

The **Mountain Prince** is an old, scarred warrior who often marches at the head of the yikarian armies (MYk/F15/NE). He rules the Bronze Falcon province, where the threat from the eastern jungles is greatest. He taught the emperor the art of swordcraft, and is believed to have his confidence.

The **Old Goatbeard** is both a priest and a rogue, and a master shapeshifter (MYk/P12, M12/NE). He rules the Red Goat province, where herds are plentiful. He is best known for keeping a large number of courtesans and courtiers at a small but excellently-built palace on the shores of the ice-cold Lake of the Emerald Eye, where water sacrifices are often held. A few of the yikaria also know that he often smuggles goods through the Blackwash, much to the annoyance of the Coral Princess.

The **Little Fox** is the youngest of the Seven Sages and a warrior of the highest peaks outside the Enlightened Ring (FYk/F12/NE). The eyries of the marrashi clutter the Ghost Leopard peaks; they are invaluable as scouts over the foothills near the River Ruin.

The **Cloud Wizard** is the greatest sorcerer among the governors (MYk/M16/NE). He rules Fiend's Wing from a palace carved into a cloud-island mountaintop, and his is a close ally of the marrashi

(some believe he created them). In addition to his responsibility for teaching young yikaria how to wield magic, he creates magical toys and diversions for the amusement of the Emperor during the mid-winter festival.

The **Elder** is said to be the Forgotten God's first son (MYk/P14/NE). He rules the Enlightened Ring, the rich-mineral but dry plateau immediately surrounding the Gate of Heaven. His slaves are largely dwarves, who toil long years underground without seeing the light of day.

The **Mother Millstone** is the keeper of the greatest temple of the Forgotten God, and is the god's highest-ranking priest (FYk/P19/NE). She rules the Yaks Horn (the driest mountain terrain) as well as the Lowlands near the Haunted Lands; none of the rivers she governs runs for more than a few months, but the mud flats bordering the Haunted Lands are home to strange monsters and peculiar magical materials. Rumors say that Mother Millstone has found a way to harness the spirits of the desert.

The **Coral Princess** rules the ring of mountains around the small natural harbor called Pearl Bay. Her seat of government is Lipo, a small town that profits from trade between the Empire and the cities of the barbaric north. Remarkably, she is an albino, and untested as a wizard, but her skills at disguise and blood-theft are described as exceptional (FYk/P10, M10/NE). She is the most liberal of the yikarian governors, so many pilgrims come to her, seeking intercession with the Forgotten God at Lipo's grand temple, the Shrine of the Jade Monolith.

Sacrifices to the Yak God

A few sages claim that the Forgotten God is a sorcerer who has overcome a divine curse by gathering his own group of followers, and that he has shaped those followers into his own image. Others claim that the Forgotten God is in the same category as Shajar, Ragarra, and Kiga, the forgotten gods of Nog and Kadar.

The Forgotten God's worshippers call on the mercy of the Sages by ringing huge temple bells, before the great storms that rage in the high mountain peaks. The temples are the homes of the yikarian monks, who sometimes intercede between the yikaria and the cruel whims of the governors. The storms are said to be the sure sign that they are travelling from one stronghold to another on their enormous steeds.

The Roof of the World

90 Miles

The Great Sea



Lipo

The Black Wash Fens

Sun's Eye

Ghost Leopard

River Run

Fiend's Wing

Gate of Heaven

O' Nathong

Red Goat

Enlightened Ring

Yak's Horn

Haunted Lands

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Gate of Heaven (4/5)	LE (4)	FG (4)	SK (5)	
Sun's Eye (3/4)	CP (3)	FG (2)	SK (4)	
Fiend's Wing (3/4)	CW (2)	FG (1)	CW (4)	
Red Goat (3/5)	OG (3)	CW (5)		
Yak's Horn (3/4)	MM (2)		SK (4)	
Enlightened Ring (2/4)	IE (1)	FG (2)	CW (4)	
Bronze Falcon (2/4)	MP (1)	FG (2)	CW (4)	
Ghost Leopard (1/4)	LF (1)		CW (4)	

Abbreviations: LE = Lotus Emperor, MP = Mountain Prince, OG = Old Goatbeard, LF = Little Fox, CW = Cloud Wizard, IE = the Elder, MM = Mother Millstone, CP = Coral Princess, SK = Storm King, General of the Lotus Emperor.



The expansion of the empire is in part driven by the yak-men's relentless search for sacrifices, for they constantly make offerings to their god in the "manner elemental": these offerings are either burned, drowned, buried alive, or thrown off a mountaintop, depending on which elemental form is being observed. Some say that these sacrifices allow yak-men temporary access to elemental magic; others claim that the sacrifices merely strengthen the Forgotten God's hold over his followers.

Strongholds and Sanctuaries

Yikarian cities are unlike cities in the lowlands; they are not small, scattered buildings or even tightly-packed collections of two and three-story buildings. Instead, they contain enormous white-washed stone buildings, with long hallways leading off into individual rooms—but without private quarters. It is as if the yikarian castles were fused into their surrounding villages.

Of course, some divisions exist; just as not everyone can enter every room of a human household, so some areas of a yikarian stronghold are reserved for yikarians alone, or for the exclusive use of priests, or for the members of the ruling council. Human slaves have their own quarters, generally in the lower levels; yikarian priests live and work in the temple proper, sleeping there at night. Craftsmen and workshops have their own quarters of the town, but space is still shared among all the members of a given trade or guild; often rival merchants use the same workspace at different times of day. Yak and goat herds are led through the halls to the butcher's quarter, but no individual owns the stables; if anyone is fool enough to ask, most yikarians (and their slaves) would reply that all these things belong to the Forgotten God, or that the Gods chosen emperor rules it for him. Disputes are resolved by the ever-present priests.

The provinces without temple holdings are called Strongholds. Those with temples (generally at the highest point of the structure) are called Sanctuaries. In either case, their tall walls and maze-like interior are completely unlike any other human or humanoid architecture.

The Emperor of the Lotus Throne

The Emperor of the Yikaria is a young yak-man, ritually sacrificed to the Temple of the Faceless God once every 20 years. Called the **Lotus Emperor** or the Emperor

of the Lotus Throne, he serves as the High Priest of the Forgotten God (MYK/P10, M10/NE), and his decrees are backed by all the strength of the yikarian ancestors and of their empire's founder. His nobles comprise the Lotus Court; the greatest of them are the Lords of the Nine Heavens. However, only two of these Lords amount to much more than toadying lackeys: the emperor's consort, and his greatest general.

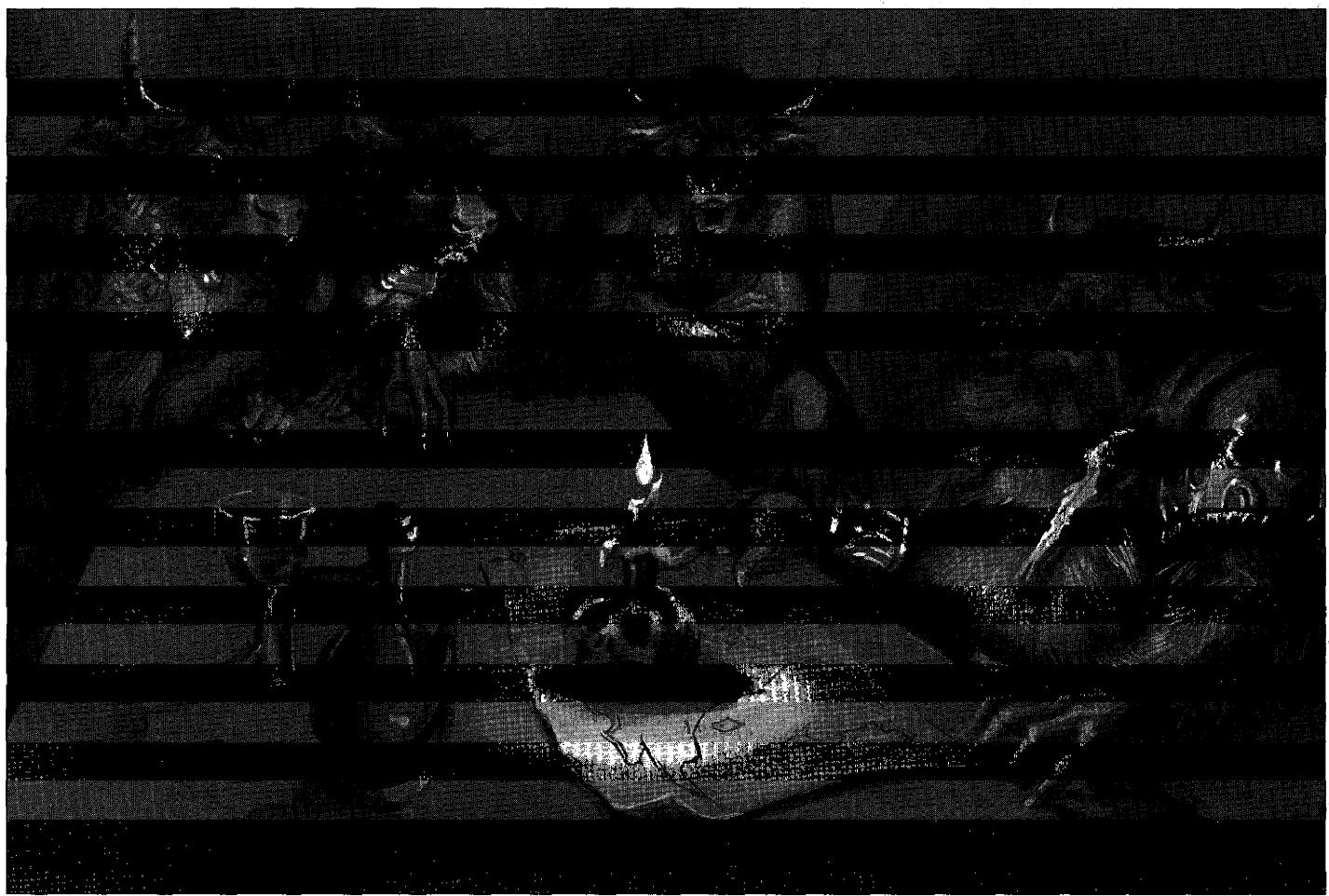
The emperor's invisible consort is Tamalynda, a High Lady of the marrashi, a fiendish archer whose arrows cause a wasting disease (*See Assassin Mountain or MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual, Volume One* for details of the marrashi and their arrows). Called the **Whisperer**, she is a wellspring of deception, pride, and mistrust. Her troops are the Forgotten God's enforcers in the highest peaks. She serves as the Forgotten God's lieutenant in his absence.

Just as the imperial consort sits at the Emperor's right, a great warlord called the **Storm King** sits at his left. As the Imperial Warlord, the Storm King is the Emperor's adviser, imperial executioner, and, often, the successor to the throne. Many such warlords have tried to hurry along their succession through rebellion, poisonings, or palace coups, but the Storm King seems content to bide his time and serve loyally. He often rides to quell uprisings among the various provinces, or spirits himself away on secret missions to the south or east. The Whisperer's followers quietly spread the word that the Storm King's seeming lack of ambition is a fault in any potential claimant to the throne. The Storm King seems indifferent to the consorts rumor-mongering, which makes her all the more nervous.

When the Emperor or the Court travel, they are always accompanied by a cloud of marrashi. The Emperor and the Storm King always ride enormous griffons; The Emperors nobles follow in flying chariots of bone, pulled by enslaved djinn. The emperors entourage never numbers less than 30 nobles and 1,000 servants.

The Heart of the Empire

The Lotus Emperor rules from the imperial city of Nathong (pop. 7,000 yikaria, 34,000 human slaves, 8,000 dwarven slaves, 1,000 marrashi, 100 dao), a city that some claim sails above the highest peaks, among the clouds. Perhaps this was true in a distant age, when the Forgotten God himself ruled the empire, but the city has not left its



present high plateau for at least 500 years, when the earliest maps mark it at its present location. Nevertheless, it is an impressive city-from a distance, Nathong appears to be a mountain in its own right. On closer inspection, it is a single gigantic building, filled with hundreds of halls, thousands of rooms, deep tunnels, and high-flung bell towers.

The Emperor's Quarters (never called a palace, though certainly one in size) occupy a quarter of the city, and several thousand dwarven slaves work there, attending on the Emperors pleasure and increasing his wealth. The Tower of the Faceless God is the highest point of the Emperor's Quarters; the great bronze bell at its peak is said to weigh two tons.

The marrashi have a tower of their own, where the Queen-Consort resides, and where the archers perch and practice. Disobedient slaves are brought to the Whisperer's Tower to be transformed into servants of the crown.

The Emperor's army of warrior monks is almost 5,000 strong, containing 1,800 human heavy infantry, 800 human archers, 400 yeti auxiliaries, 500 marrashi archers, and 400 dwarven

artillerist/sappers. These troops are dispersed throughout the borders, primarily in the Bronze Falcon, Ghost Leopard, and Yaks Horn. In addition, 900 elite yikarian Faceless Guards watch over the pass to the Gates of Heaven. The Faceless Guards are named for their blank masks, in imitation of their god; their ranks are entirely composed of yikaria. Though they fight on foot, they are every bit as powerful in the field as elite knights-and they have spellcasting ability as well.

The Yikarian navy is small but powerful; it includes two galleases and three dhouras, all based in the city of Lipo. They patrol the coastal waters against smugglers, and they ferry young yikaria to the barbarian lands to the north, as well as to secret landing places all along the Free Cities of the Northern Coast, as far south as Qudra. The larger of the two galleases is reserved for the emperor's personal use, and it rarely leaves harbor except on short jaunts to the island of the Cloud Wizard. Currently, however, twelve new keels have been laid in the Lipo shipyards; many slaves mutter and complain that they are building the very

ships that will carry the yak-men south into the Free Cities-but no one outside the Lotus Court really knows where these ships will someday travel.

The God Without a Face

Though the Lotus Emperor is the greatest ruler of the Yikarian Empire, all yak-men also owe allegiance to a great power-their blank and faceless elemental god. The Forgotten God of the yak-men is more than a distant deity or an especially strong specimen of the race; it is a demi-god of unimaginable age and might, with a keen interest in its offsprings' affairs. In short, the Forgotten God is not above meddling.

Zakharan sages believe it gains its power entirely through the success of its offspring. The greater its domain and the domains of its seven greatest vassals, the greater its magical and divine powers grow. The most convincing speculation maintains that the god was born entirely through blood sacrifice; thus the yikarian stress on sacrifices in the "manner elemental." Darker rumors claim that it devours many of its offspring to strengthen its own divine blood.

The Forgotten God

Yikarian demi-god

12th-level Sorcerer, 12th-level Priest,
18th-level Warrior

INTELLIGENCE: Genius

ACTIVITY CYCLE: Day

ALIGNMENT: NE

MOVEMENT: 9

SIZE: L (10' tall)

ARMOR CLASS: 4 base, -4 with armor

HIT POINTS: 131

SAVES AS: F18

THAC0: 3 (fists) or 2 (staff)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (fists) or 3 (staff)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2d10 or 1d8+8/
1d8+8/1 d8+8

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Spells

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +1 or better
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 20%

MORALE: 19 (Fearless)

XP VALUE: 33,000

Strength	20
Dexterity	14
Constitution	19
Intelligence	20
Wisdom	18
Charisma	15

Spells (Wizard): fire truth; *hold portal*, *phantasmal force*, *sleep*; *ESP*, *pillar of sand**, *shatter*, *wizard lock*; *haste*, *invisibility* 70' radius, *lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch*; *fire shield*, *ice storm*, *sunfire**, *stoneskin*; *death smoke**, *domination*, *passwall*, *teleport*; *chain lightning*

Spells (Priest): *bless*, *command*, *cure light wounds* (x4), *detect good*, *detect magic*; *enthral*, *heat metal* (x2), *hold person*, *silence* 75' radius, *speak with animals*, *withdraw*; *dispel magic* (x2), *meld into stone*, *speak with dead*, *stone shape*, *protection from fire*; *cure serious wounds* (x2), *neutralize poison*, *reflecting pool*; *raise dead*, *true seeing*; *blade barrier*, *weather summoning*

Spells marked with an asterisk (*) are from the *Arabian Adventures* rulebook.

The Forgotten God has a blank face. It seems to speak normally, yet no mouth appears when it does, and its spellcasting is entirely silent (no verbal component is necessary for any of its spells). It wears long robes in most temple statues, but it rarely appears among its descendants. The only exceptions are when appointing a new governor or choosing a new Lotus Emperor.

The Forgotten God carries a magical staff tipped with an egg-sized fire opal, called the Staff of the World Pillars. This staff combines all the functions of a *ring of regeneration*, a *staff of withering*, and a *chime of interruption*. It has no charges but

is powered by the belief and sacrifices of the Forgotten God's followers. If it were ever stolen, it would have 40 irreplaceable charges, and each function of the staff would require 1 charge to use.

Allies and Enemies

Rumors fly constantly about an alliance between the Brotherhood of Fire and the Forgotten God, and speculation about a Kadarosto link to the Forgotten God is common currency in the Ruined Kingdoms, with some going so far as to suggest that the City Most Sinister was built by the god himself. More probable is a link between the Everlasting and the Yikarian Empire; both groups employ the marrashi, but no more details are known of their possible connections.

Closer to home, it is clear that the yak-men influence many events in the the Ruined Kingdoms and the northern Free Cities; the Ruined Kingdom's current evil leanings are at least partly the result of centuries of yikaria influence. The sha'ir Badiat bint Malin of Kadarosto is believed to be a frequent ally; this may be the source of much of the tension between her and the Khedive Aman al-Qasi, who has sworn allegiance to the Great Caliph at Huzuz, and pretends to take his vow seriously when others seek to impose their plans on his suzerainty.

The yikaria are surrounded by enemies among the cultures of the southern realms and the mysterious East. They stand alone as a bulwark against the armies of the north; if a landing or colonization were ever attempted by Calimshan or other realms, the yikaria would be the ones to fend it off on the northern edge of the Free Cities, just as Qudra would be the Land of Fate's bulwark in the south.

The Imperial Dream

Though the yak-men dream of conquest, their feuds with neighbors on all sides keep them from entering the Zakharan heartland in any great numbers. Nevertheless, they infest the heart of the Great Caliph's court, and their plots bear constant watching. If princes and adventurers don't stay on their guard, one of their trusted servants may be the next to become an unwitting pawn, reporting to distant masters beneath the Roof of the World.

The yak-men are largely united, actively working toward a common goal: the complete conquest of the low-

lands. In the early years of the empire, they seized the World-Pillar Mountains, driving out or enslaving all the dwarves who once ruled those peaks. Now the yikaria turn their eyes to the south, across the Haunted Lands to the Cities of the Pearl. The yikaria have ancient magic at their disposal, as well as a divine ancestor, but they don't rely on divine intervention to achieve their aims. Their emperor has a great plan, each step of which brings his people closer to their goal.

The greatest hope and weapon of the yakmen are their young, for these are the troops that will occupy and rule the north. Once they reach the age of maturity (12 for most yikaria, 14 for the more conservative), all male yikaria go on the Hallong (literally, "begging bowl," a sort of extended reconnaissance of their lowland enemies). The best weapon of the young is their ability to shapeshift and assume the guise of any humanoid creature. No yak-man may return from the Hallong without either stealing some powerful magic or using their special magic jar power to replace a person of high station (and learning all the secrets of his city, scouting it in the secret name of the Faceless God).

However, despite their unity, the yakmen lack one powerful advantage that all Zakharan nation share: numbers. Their population is small and likely to remain that way in the semi-arid heights of the World-Pillar Mountains.

Despite this limitation, they are a threat because of their greatest magic: the yikarian *magic jar*. This special ability allows any yak-man to commandeer the body of any creature he can hold still for two turns. Every governor receives monthly reports from these spies within enemy nests; their information, as might be expected, is crucial to maintaining and expanding the yikarian web of influence. A possessed spy might enter an adventurer's life at any time.

Yak-Men of Cerilia

Most abominations are solitary individuals because they are too evil and self-centered to share power with potential rivals—even if those rivals are their own offspring. A few exceptions exist (the Warlock of the Stonecrows, for example, is said to be the bastard son of the Gorgon), but, for the most part, abominations sire no children.

On Cerilia, the yak-men are all the children of awnsheghlien. In their case, the first yak-man was an Adurian awnshegh

New Realm Spell

Blood Leech

(Invocation/Evocation)

Regency: 2 RP/level or HD of target

Gold: 1 GB

Required Source: 5

Duration: Permanent

This powerful magic allows a wizard of 9th level or higher to steal a single point from a target regent's bloodline strength and add it to his own. The spell's target must be known to the caster, and the spell may not target a creature that has been the target of a previous *blood leech*, even one cast by another caster. The target is entitled to a saving throw against death magic; if the saving throw succeeds, the spell has no effect. If the saving throw fails, the target loses one bloodline point immediately and permanently. The spell can be cast from ranges up to 20 miles.

In addition to the gold and regency requirements, the spell requires a pinch of bloodsilver to cast.

caught on the southern side of the Straits of Aerele after the explosion of Mount Deismaar. The bloodline is rarely passed on, however, presenting the constant danger of the line dying out.

Though the Yikarian Empire was founded by an awnshegh, not all yikaria carry the blood-taint themselves. Generally, the more powerful a yak-man is, the more likely he is to carry the taint of Azrai. The Forgotten God carries the True blood of Azrai, with the Bloodform (Minor, yak), Divine Aura (Great), Invulnerability (Great), and Long Life (Major) blood abilities. The Emperor has a Great bloodline, and the Invulnerability (Major) blood ability.

The governors and the general have Major bloodlines. Each governor has some variation in blood abilities, but they share some traits of the founder of the line in common. Several governors have either the Invulnerability or Long Life ability, but none have the Divine Aura. The yak bloodform is no longer counted as a blood ability for blooded yak-men—it is a defining characteristic of the race.

In addition to their blood abilities, the Cloud Wizard, the Storm King, and the Emperor are masters at magical blood-theft, stealing regency from the regents and scions of the North using the *blood leech* spell. Slowly, they sap the northern kingdoms' strength, preparing for the

day when they will surge out of the mountains to establish their rule for all time. Until then, they prefer to remain in their mountain retreats, undermining the nearest regents.

Yak-Men of Tol-il

If you have access to the AL-QADIM setting materials describing the World-Pillar Mountains, placing the yak-men beyond the Shining South is the best—their empire should be difficult to reach, more myth than reality to most inhabitants of the realms. Another option is to place the empire in the High Country east of Rashemen; this at least makes the yak-men vaguely accessible through Thay or Rashemen. Indeed, it creates the possibility that the yak-men played some role in encouraging the Tuigan Horde to come over the High Country into the Realms, perhaps to conquer and rule as the yak-men's puppets, perhaps simply to make a later conquest by the yikaria themselves easier.

If someplace further east is desirable, consider placing the Yikarian Empire in the highest reaches of the A Ling Shan, the great mountain chain just east of Raurin, the Dust Desert. If there is a more remote and inhospitable part of the Realms, it is hard to imagine. Though few would seek out the empire, great heroes or those on their way to or from Kara-Tur would have to pass beneath the yak-men's gaze.

In any case, outside the Land of Fate the yikaria's activities are restricted to increasing their power base in Thay and infiltrating the Southern Kingdoms of Unther, Chessenta, and Mulhorand. They do no more than keep a watchful eye on the tribes of the Endless Waste and the civilized portions of Kara-Tur.

Yak-Men of Oerth

High in the Crystalmist Mountains, above the realms of the drow and the kuo-toans, the empire of the yak-men exists in solitary splendor. Few know of their existence, fewer still of their origin. Some claim that the yikaria wandered to Oerth from the elemental planes; on Oerth, the truth is that they are the warped and twisted remnants of the Suloise mages who survived the Rain of Colorless Fire.

On Oerth, the Forgotten God is not an abomination or a god of outland priests. Instead, he is Tharizdun, the long-lost god of Suel magic and mysteries whose temple is described in WG4 *The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun*. The yak-men work

tirelessly to restore their trapped god to the power that is rightfully his.

To this end, the yak-men have recruited the aid of human helpers; their spies and agents are responsible for the recent wars across Greyhawk's normally tranquil soil. The foremost of these spies are the monks of the Scarlet Brotherhood, whose lawful and evil ways are amenable to subversion by the yak-men's body-snatching.

Yak-Men of the Planes

The yak-men rule over the genies called the dao; out on the planes they rule the Great Rift of the Dao as well, the better to oversee the activities of their genie servants. Their elemental empire is an extension of the realm of Elemental God Grumbar, Lord of Earth (see *Lund of Fate*); indeed, the yak-men oversee much of Grumbar's realm.

The power of the yak-men on the planes is even greater than it is on the Prime. Everywhere they go, yak-men are accompanied by dao bodyguards. In addition, they command elemental magic on the plane of Elemental Earth that they cannot access in Zakhara. Over the course of centuries, the yikaria grow mountains where once there were none, increasing the size of their empire by the simplest and most potent of methods. Growing mountains is the magic of the yak-men sha'irs, a specialized set of savants found only on the elemental planes. In addition to having crysmal-like gen, they are on close terms with the xorn, the azer, and the wind walkers. What plans these planar yak-men have, few can guess.

DM Notes

The yak-men are excellent long-term opponents in these settings because of their ability to possess others, working through catspaws while remaining behind the scenes, allowing them to instigate plots while leaving their flunkies to take the fall. For additional information on yikarian plots, consult the City of *Delights* and *Ruined Kingdoms* source-boxes, both of which include adventures featuring these strange monsters.



Wolfgang Baur claims to be the most Teutonic game writer in the Pacific Northwest. His first reaction to the idea of yak-men was, "That's stupid!" He takes it all buck, now.

Cons & Pros Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines must be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing must include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held
2. Site and location
3. Guests of honor (if applicable)
4. Special events offered
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements, and,
6. Address(es) 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 first Monday of each month, four months prior to the on sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the first Monday of September. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, *DRAGON® Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA, 98055, U.S.A.

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 (425) 204-7226 (U.S.A.).

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Sci-Con 19

November 7-9 **VA**

Holiday Inn Executive Center, Virginia Beach. Guests: James Patrick Kelley, Lubov, and Steve Luminati. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Other activities: panels, readings a dance, and more! Registration: varies. Send an SASE to Sci-Con 19, P.O. Box 9434, Hampton, VA 23670. Email: info@scicon.org or <http://scicon.org>.

MACE '97

November 7-9 **NC**

Holiday Inn Market Square, Greensboro, NC. Events: card, board, and role-playing games. Other activities: dealers' room, charity auction, and live-action role-playing. Registration: \$15 pre-registered, \$20 on site. JustUs Productions/MACE, P.O. Box 38001, Greensboro, NC 27438-8001 or email: mace97@iname.com. Web site: justus.iw.org.

Pentacon XII

November 15-17 **IN**

Grand Wayne Center, Fort Wayne. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Other activities: dealers area, an auction, and a painting contest. Registration: varies. NIGA/Pentacon, P.O. Box 11174, Fort Wayne, IN

46856. Email: 102654.230@compuserve.com.

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JANUARY CONVENTIONS

Georgecon

January 2-4 1998 **MO**

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February 27-March 1 **VA**

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The Arcane Challenge

answers by Steve winter

Here (after a suspenseful month of waiting) are the final 25 answers to last year's trivia competition. Do you enjoy these questions? Would you like to see more? Send us a letter to let us know.

76. In what region does the town of Pommeville lie?

Answer: Vosgone.

Note: Pommeville was featured in Cleric's Challenge.

77. Who is the king of the centaurs living on the Island of Evermeet?

Answer: Gwyon Ironhoof.

78. What's the first thing the Dancing Man says?

Answer: "Baphomet."

Note: We didn't mark against anyone who included the rest of the Dancing Man's message, but all we needed was the first word.

79. Where was Edralve exiled to after a failed coup?

Answer: The surface world.

Note: Edralve was another of the slavelords. A bit of extrapolation was necessary to get this answer, but not much.

80. Who destroyed the arch-lich Vecna?

Answer: Kas the Bloody-handed (his lieutenant).

81. This city is the capital of Talinie.

Answer: Nowelton.

Note: As anyone who plays in the BIRTHRIGHT setting could tell you.

82. Who is the twin brother of Zeboim and son of Sargonnas?

Answer: Nuitari.

83. Googlaboorp is a priest of what deity?

Answer: Blipdoolpoolp.

Note: Even if you don't have a copy of DL-3, who else could someone with that name serve?

84. What island lies between Aridia and Inferno in the Io's Blood Island Chain.

Answer: Basilisk.

Note: The Io's Blood Island Chain is the setting for *Council of Wyrms*. If you know your mythology, it shouldn't have been too hard to find the answer.

85. Before Abalach-Re was killed in battle against Sadira of Tyr, what city did she rule?

Answer: Raam

86. Which regular customer at the Welcome Wench Inn is actually an agent of the Viscount of Verbobonc?

Answer: Elmo.

Note: He lives in the village of Hommlet, and he's not ticklish.

87. What class and level was Castanamir when he retired to his island?

Answer: 18th-level mage.

88. In what village did the cult of the reptile god take hold?

Answer: Orlane.

89. If you and a noyan seek shelter from a buran in your yurt, where do you live?

Answer: The Horse Plains (or the Endless Waste, or the steppe).

90. What race of petitioners are found in Semuanya's Bog?

Answer: Lizard men.

Note: Semuanya's Bog is in the Outlands; the answer is in the PLANESCAPE® campaign setting.

91. Who inadvertently brought the Red Death to Gothic Earth?

Answer: Imhotep.

92. How many levels are there in the Iron Citadel, which stands in the ring of fire surrounding Ur Draxa?

Answer: Six.

93. Four cryptknights guard the tomb of Martek. They will not attack a group of adventurers who carry one of these.

Answer: Star gems.

94. What two magical substances are unique to the Savage Coast?

Answer: Cinnabryl and vermeil.

Note: After considerable debate, argument, and discussion with the designers and editors on the SAVAGE COAST® project, the answer committee decided to also accept red steel as correct.

95. In this adventure, PCs begin at 0 level and select a class during play.

Answer: Treasure Hunt.

Art Questions

96. Who is this?

Answer: Drelenza, daughter of Iggwilv.

Note: You can find this charming vampire in S4 *The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth* (which, by the way, is pronounced so' kon).

97. What is this (the monster, not the product)?

Answer: Astral dreadnought.

Note: This question was tricky. The monster made its first appearance on the cover of *Manual of the Planes*, but it wasn't named or given stats until it was used on an AD&D collector card. If you have sharp eyes, you might have picked it out of the PLANESCAPE Monstrous Compendium Appendix Two, but the illo in that book is not instantly recognizable as the same creature.

98. Where is this (in what dungeon)?

Answer: The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan.

99. When is this (what year in the DRAGONLANCE SAGA timeline?)

Answer: 352 A.C.

Note: I'm afraid that we were sticklers on this one and counted wrong any answer that did not include "A.C." Krynn has had a slew of year 352s; we needed to know which one you meant.

100. Why is this dragon angry?

Answer: Its egg (or treasure) has been stolen.

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WELL SINCE YOU INSIST ON DIGGING THROUGH THE RUBBLE ON THE COLLAPSED SOUTHERN CORRIDOR, YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW THAT AFTER 8 HOURS OF WORK YOU DISCOVER THE CORRIDOR CONTINUES FOR ANOTHER FIFTY FEET AND SUDDENLY DEAD ENDS! NOW THEN, CAN WE FORGET ABOUT THE SOUTHERN CORRIDOR AND GET BACK TO THE ADVENTURE AT HAND?

HUH! WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT JUST ENDS? CORRIDORS DON'T JUST DEAD END.

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE? WHO WOULD TUNNEL THROUGH SOLID ROCK FOR 70 FEET AND JUST STOP?

OH YEAH? WELL THIS ONE DOES. ACCEPT IT AND MOVE ON, BRAINIACS!

HOW PECULIAR. WE MUST HAVE MISSED A SECRET DOOR ALONG THE WAY.

SOMETHING AIN'T RIGHT!

ACCORDING TO THE HACKMASTER MANUAL, IT COSTS 75 GOLD PIECES PER FOOT TO EXCAVATE A TUNNEL 10 FEET WIDE BY 10 FEET TALL. ACCORDING TO MY FIGURES, SOMEONE SPENT 65,250 GOLD PIECES TO DIG THIS TUNNEL.

THE QUESTION IS,
WHY?

(SIGH) UH ... HEY GUYS, YOU FIND A BOOK LYING ON THE FLOOR. YOU DIDN'T SEE IT AT FIRST. YOU CHECK IT OUT AND IT TURNS OUT TO BE THE JOURNAL OF THE DWARVEN ENGINEER WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF EXCAVATING THIS CORRIDOR. THE LAST ENTRY EXPLAINS THAT WORK WAS HALTED BECAUSE NATURAL STRESS FRACTURES IN THE SURROUNDING ROCK MADE THIS AREA TOO UNSTABLE.

OH HUH! JUST AS I THOUGHT! HE'S HIDING SOMETHING. LOOK! HE'S COVERING UP HIS NOTES!

I THINK HE JUST MADE THAT UP! THERE WAS NO BOOK THERE A SECOND AGO.

HOW ODD! WHEN B.A. BACK-PEDALS IT MEANS ONLY ONE THING. WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

I'M USING A PICK-AXE TO ATTACK THE SO-CALLED DEAD END! MAYBE IT'S JUST AN ILLUSION OR SOMETHING!

I'LL BACK TRACK AND RECHECK EVERY TEN-FOOT SECTION FOR SECRET DOORS. WE MIGHT HAVE MISSED SOMETHING.

I'M TAKING A WOODEN MALLETT AND USING IT TO DETECT HOLLOW SPOTS IN THE WALL.

LOOK YOU IDIOTS. IT'S JUST A SIDE CORRIDOR. RANDOM DUNGEON DRESSING, OKAY? I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF DIGGING THROUGH 150 FEET OF RUBBLE AND DEBRIS JUST TO EXPLORE A COLLAPSED TUNNEL. SO LET'S JUST DROP IT AND GET BACK TO THE ADVENTURE. OKAY?

I'M TAPPING THE CEILING WITH A POLE.

AN HOUR LATER ...

THIS IS GREAT! WITH BRIAN'S HASTE SPELL AND WORKING IN ROTATING THIRTY MINUTE SHIFTS WE CAN TUNNEL 20 FEET PER TURN!

BRIAN, WE NEED TO USE YOUR BAG OF HOLDING TO MOVE AWAY SOME OF THIS RUBBLE.

BUT GUYS, HE ADMITTED THIS IS NOTHING BUT DUNGEON DRESSING.

DUNGEON DRESSING, HELL! WE'RE ON TO SOMETHING BIG, I TELL YOU!

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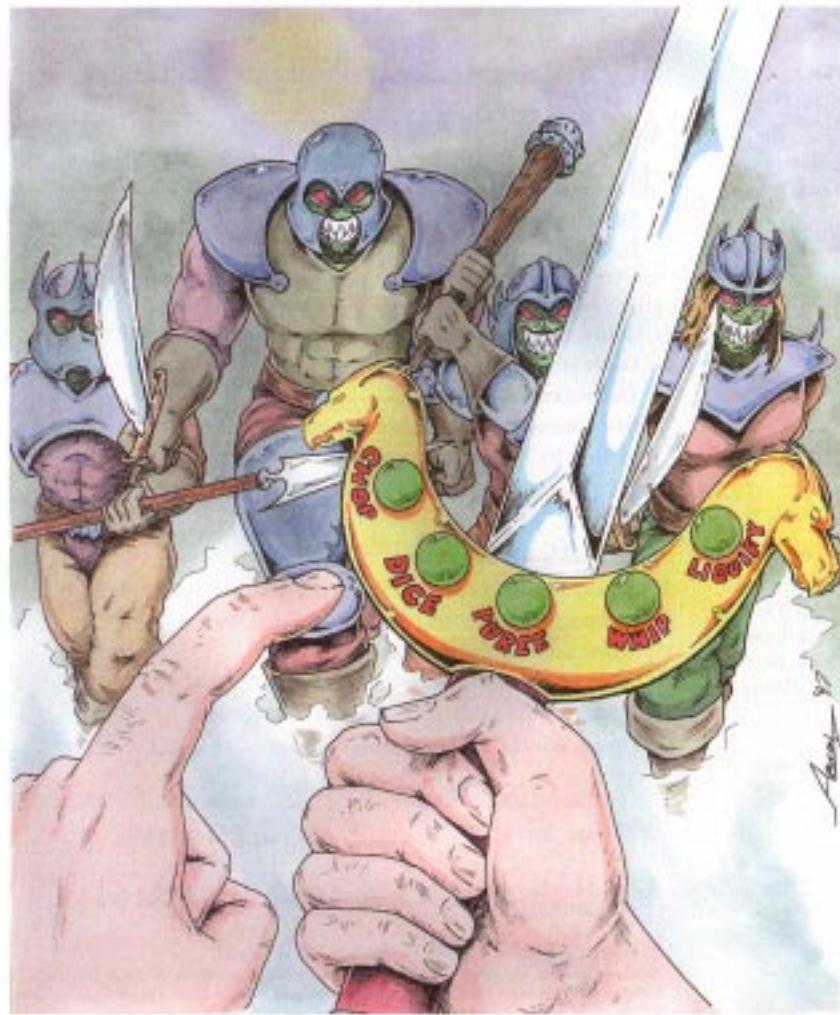
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"Forgetting something, my son?"

By Aaron Williams



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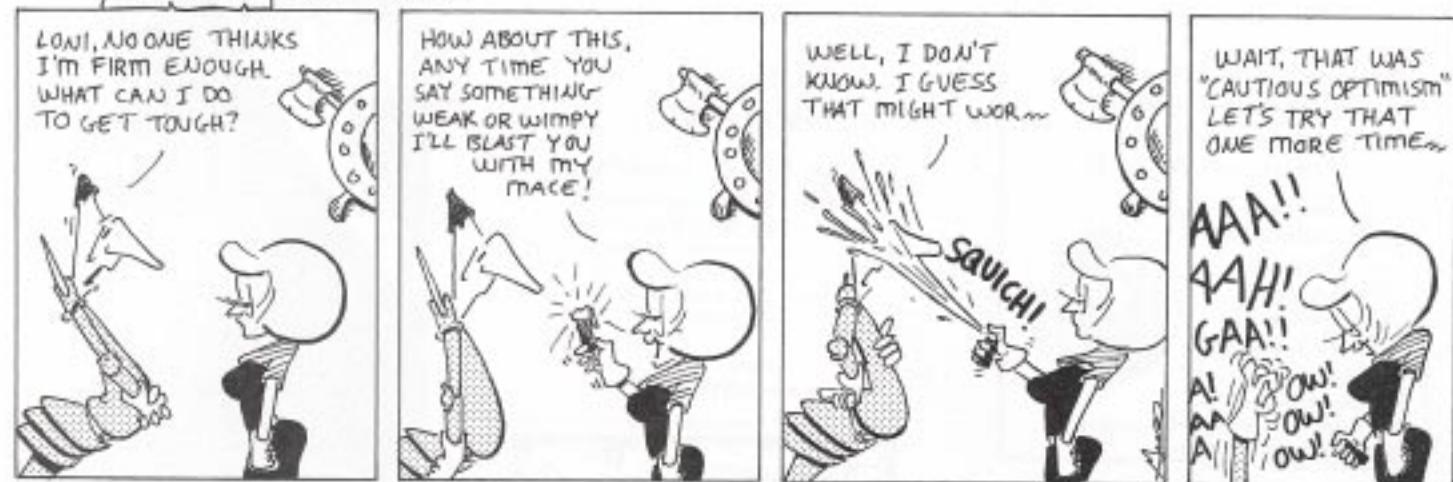


"I don't care if all the kids are doing it—I don't want my son running around with his cap on backward!"

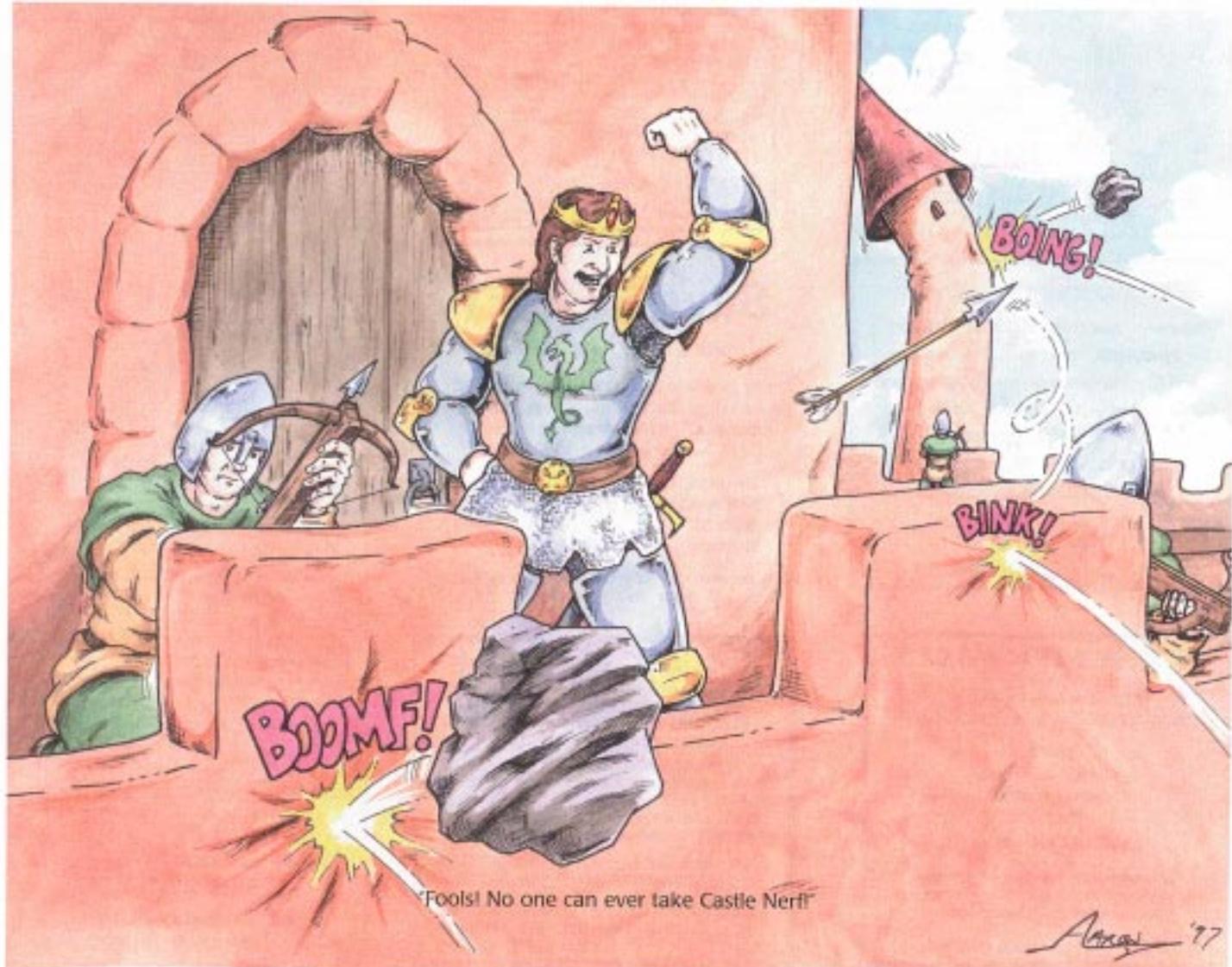


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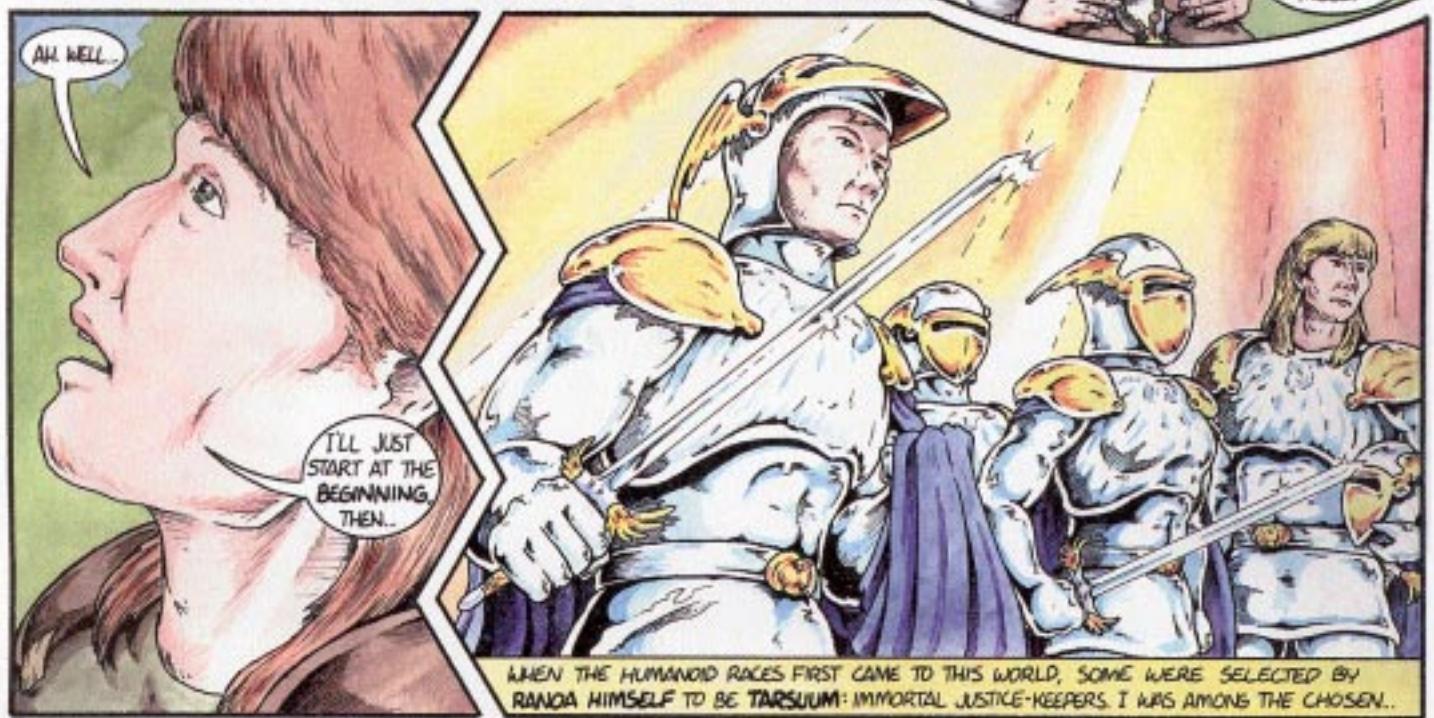
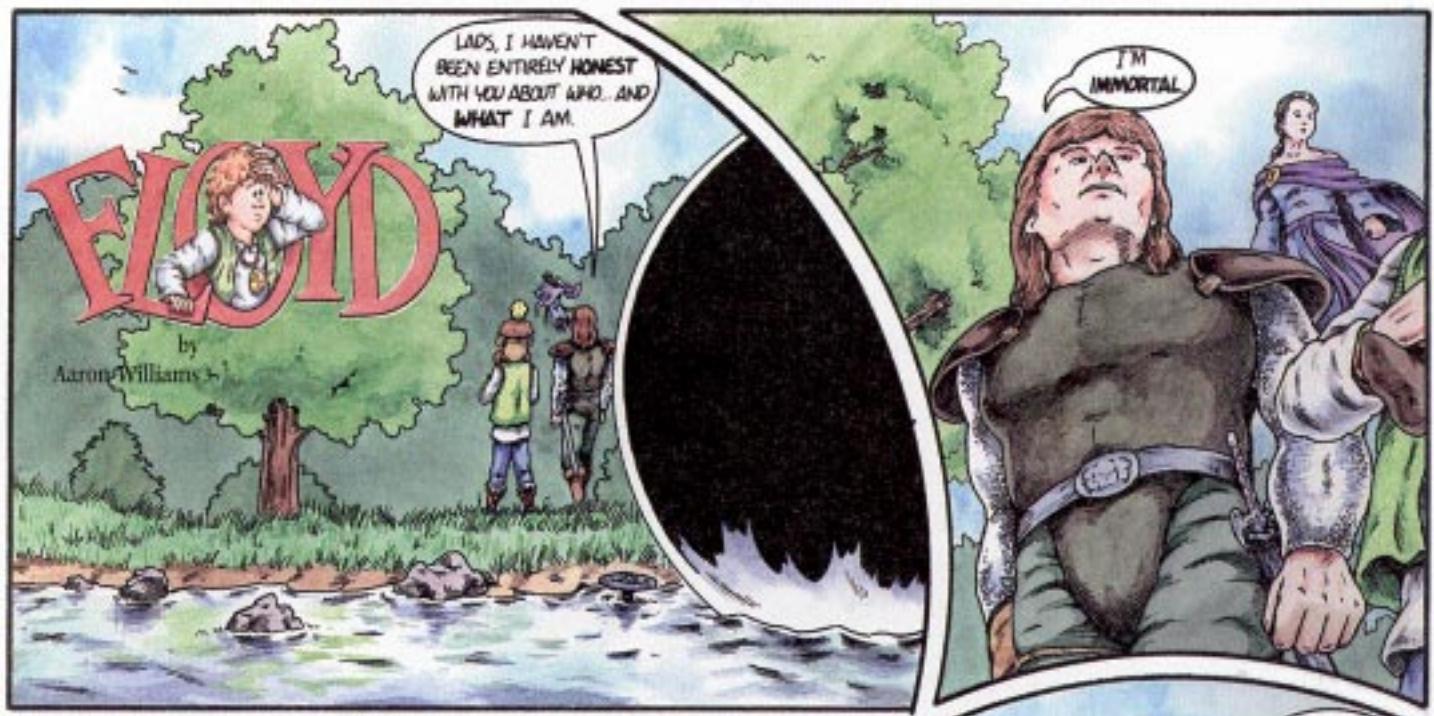
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OUR POWERS WERE FORMIDABLE. WE USED THEM TO BRING CRIMINALS TO JUDGEMENT, HALT SINISTER PLANS, AND DEFEND THE INNOCENT.

BUT.. JEALOUS EYES WATCHED US...

DID YOU EACH GET A RED CAPE AND BLUE TIGHTS, TOO?

SHADDAP, FLOYD!

...AND PLANS WERE MADE
TO TAKE OUR POWER.

THANK YOU, CARMEN. WE WERE CHOSEN, APPARENTLY, FOR OUR SENSE OF JUSTICE AND ABILITY TO COPE WITH IMMORTALITY.

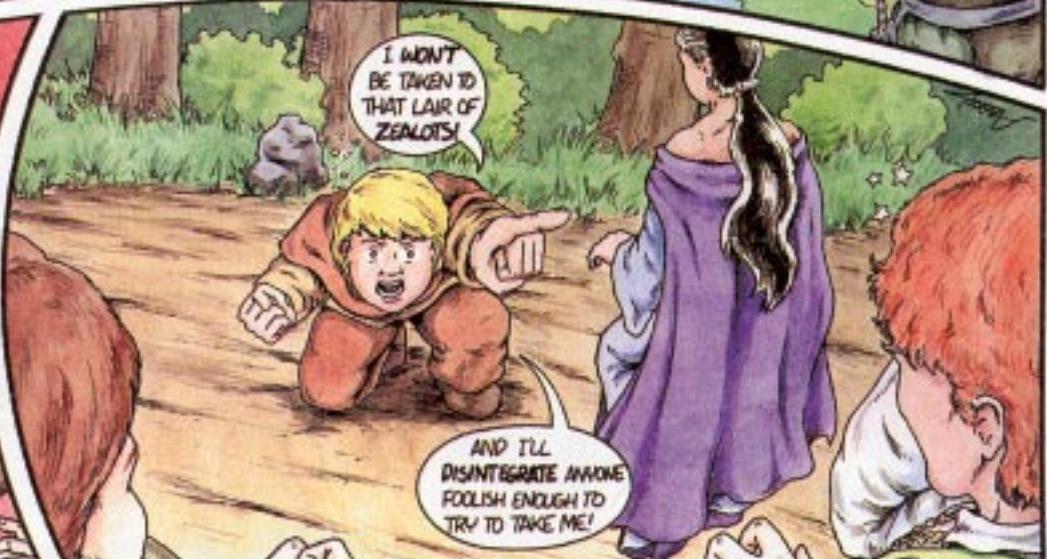
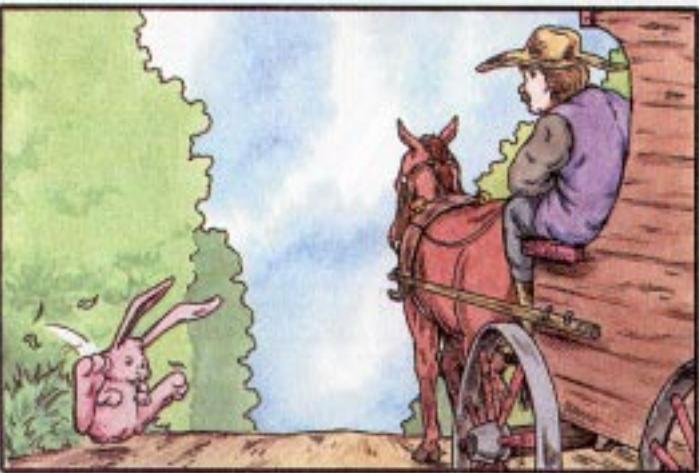
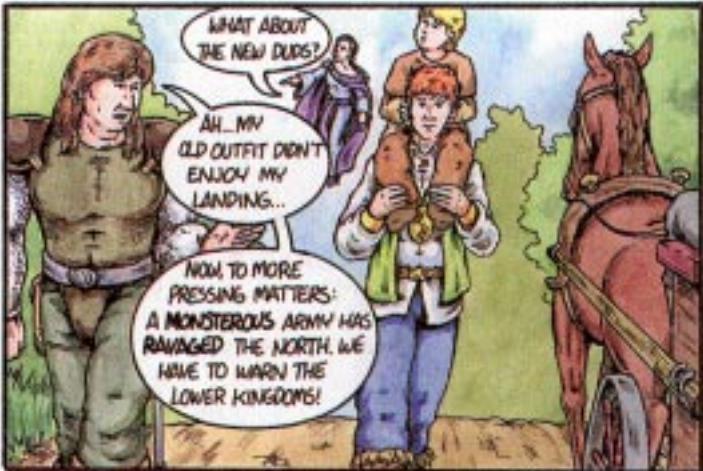
THE RESULT WAS THE MAGEWAR, POWERFUL WIZARDS DRIVEN BY THE DESIRE FOR ETERNAL LIFE USED ALL MANNER OF CUNNING TO ENSURE THAT EVERY TARSUM WOULD GATHER AGAINST THEM. THEY WOKE A SPELL DESIGNED TO IMPRISON US FOR STUDY. I WAS THE ONE WHO FOUND THEIR HIDDEN LAIR.

...JUST AS THE SPELL
WAS LOOSE...

I CAME TO MY SENSES AMID THE RUINS OF WHAT HAD BEEN THE WIZARDS' FORTRESS. I HAD VAGUE RECOLLECTIONS OF MADNESS... AND SURVIVORS IN THE RUBBLE... BEGGING FOR MERCY.

LATER, I LEARNED
THAT THE SPELL HAD
DESTROYED EVERY WIZARD
AND TARSUM, EXCEPT
FOR ME.

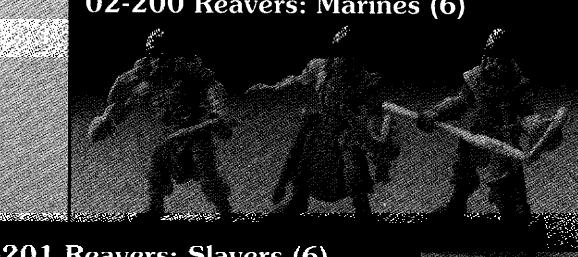
HOWEVER, I WAS
NOW CURSED; EACH TIME
I USED MY POWERS OR
DRAWN MY SWORD, I'D FLY
INTO A RAGE THAT WOULDN'T
END UNTIL ALL AROUND
ME HAD BEEN SLAIN.



Barbarians

Skeletons

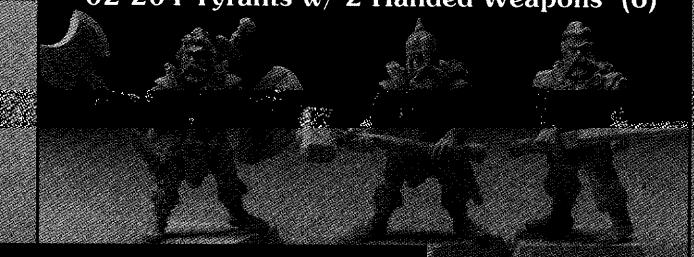
02-200 Reavers: Marines (6)



02-201 Reavers: Slavers (6)



02-204 Tyrants w/ 2 Handed Weapons (6)



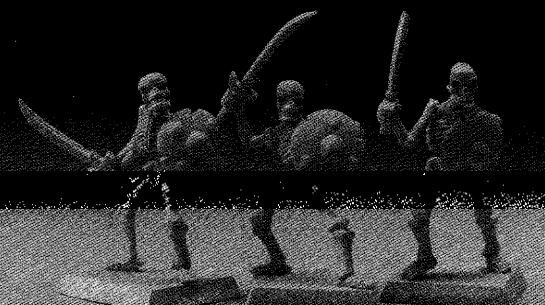
02-205 Tryrant: Shield Wall (6)



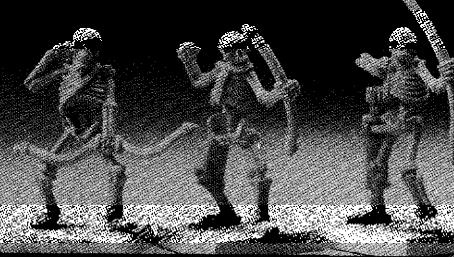
02-180 Skeleton Foot Command (5)



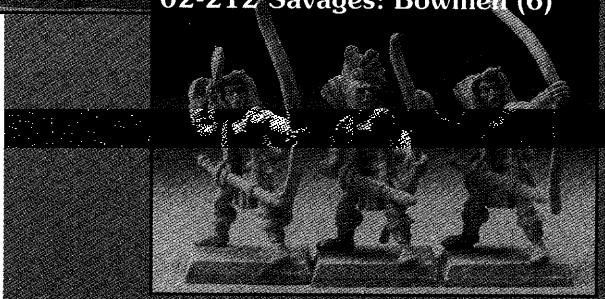
02-181 Skeleton w/ Sword & Shield (6)



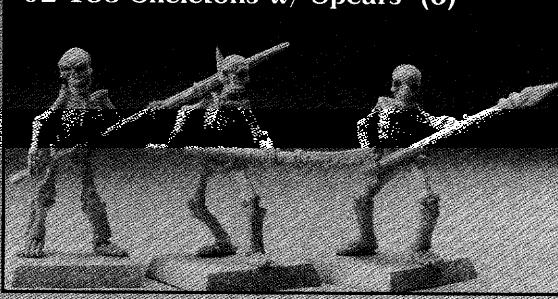
02-182 Skeletons w/ Bows (6)



02-212 Savages: Bowmen (6)



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Role-Playing Reviews

Offbeat RPGs

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As long-time readers of this column have probably figured out, I'll play just about anything: fantasy games, science-fiction, horror, cyberpunk-you name it. I like card games. I like military simulations. I like poker, parcheesi, mah jongg, and charades. I've even been known to

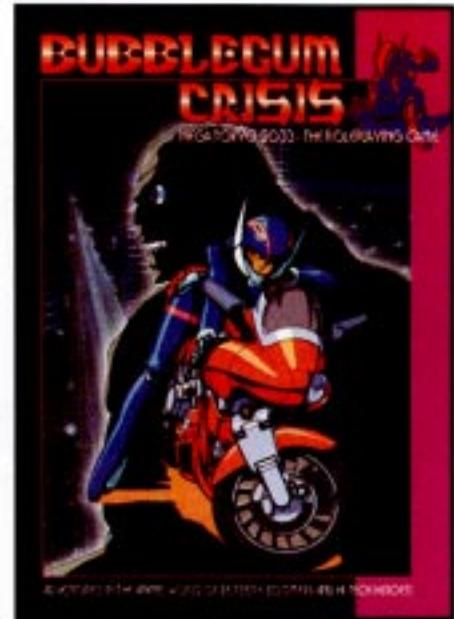
spend an entire afternoon with the *Mouse Trap** game, trying to figure out cool new ways to get the little man to back-flip into the washtub.

But being a regular sort of guy-albeit a guy who considers an afternoon with *Mouse Trap* time well spent-I have my own prejudices. There are certain types of games I plain won't play because-well, for no good reason, actually.

Yeah, I know . . . shame on me. But I'm trying to reform. As part of my rehabilitation, we'll be taking a look at three games that I'd ordinarily toss in the closet and never look at again-not because they're no good, mind you, but because the subject matter tends to make me yawn. Anyway, consider this month's column an invitation to re-examine your own biases. If there's a game you've been avoiding, be it *Mouse Trap* or mahjongg, give it a try. If I can do it, you can too.

Role-playing games' rating

	Not recommended
	May be useful
	Fair
	Good
	Excellent
	The BEST!



Bubblegum Crisis* game

188-page softcover book

R. Talsorian Games, Inc.

\$24

Design: Benjamin Wright, David Ackerman-Gray, Ray Greer, George MacDonald, Steve Peterson, and Mike Pondsmith with Michael MacDonald, William Moss, Christ Pasquarette, F.E.A.R. Co. Ltd., Trauma Team Japan, Tateno Tsuneo, Nobuaki Takerube, Tano Akira, Hiyoshi Miyako, Yamamoto Tsuyoshi, Suzufuki Taro, Nakajima Sonomi, and Usuki Teruaki

Editing: Janice Sellers

Illustrations: Benjamin Wright, David Ackerman-Gray, Mark Schumann, and Alex Okita

Cover: uncredited

I gotta admit, the appeal of anime-Japanese animation, heavy on violence, sexuality, and surrealism-eludes me. Folks in the know have assured me that *Bubblegum Crisis*, the series upon which this RPG is based, ranks among the better examples of anime art. In the interests of enlightenment, I got a hold of a tape and gave it my full attention. Can't say I was impressed. The Knight Sabers, the series' protagonists, struck me as a rather uninspired cross between the Power Rangers and the Smurfs. I found the adventures predictable and derivative, the animation lifeless and flat.

Considering how much I disliked the cartoons, I was surprised by my thumbs up reaction to the game. If you're an anime fanatic, I suspect you'll like it a lot more than I did-and I liked it quite a bit.

The self-contained, entry-level game—whose name, by the way, refers to “a bubblegum bubble which is about to pop ... an impending mess that will be hard to handle”—combines clever mechanics, a flashy setting, and an interesting premise: battlesuited good guys (the Smurfy Knight Sabers) vs. bad guy androids (the Boomers) in 21st Century MegaTokyo.

Getting your Knight Saber up and snarling involves a trip through the Fuzion System, R. Talsorian’s brand new set of universal rules, adaptable to RPGs as diverse as the *Champions** and *Mekton Z** games. Thanks to the sharp writing and generous number of examples, the rules for character creation—in fact, the rules for everything—are a snap to follow. You begin by consulting a series of “Lifepath” tables that cough up virtually every aspect of your PCs personality. A roll on the Worldview Table, for instance, determines if your alter ego’s as benevolent as Mr. Rogers (“I like almost everyone”) or as nasty as Darth Vader (“People are scum and should be wiped out”). The Value Tables give you role models (a teacher, a brother) and goals (money, honor, power).

Players averse to random rolls may, if they like, select specific entries from the tables, but it’s more fun to roll. I came up with a moody middle-class guy who hates his relatives and believes that “No one understands me.” Which, come to think of it, isn’t much different from my real-life self.

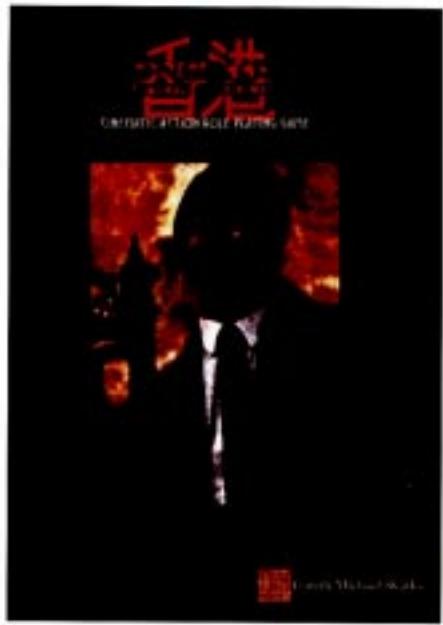
To generate statistics for your moody relative-hater, you distribute a pool of stat points among several basic attributes, including Strength, intelligence, Reflexes, and Willpower. The gamemaster determines the number of stat points to be distributed, a number he can boost or decrease depending on how powerful he believes the PCs need to be to survive the adventure he has in mind. A set of secondary stats (Luck, Resistance, Endurance) are derived from the basic attributes; Luck, for example, is the sum of the intelligence and Reflexes scores. The player also receives a pool of campaign points to spend on skills (Animal Handling, Forgery, Languages) and talents (Ambidexterity, Direction Sense, Intuition). Those unwilling to invest the 20 minutes or so required to create PCs from scratch may opt instead for ready-to-play templates like Entertainer, Scientist, and High-Tech Vigilante. All told, *Bubblegum Crisis* PCs are remarkably similar to their cartoon counterparts: feisty, versatile, and tough to kill.

To resolve an action, the gamemaster decides a Difficulty Level for the task at hand which in turn suggests a Target Number. For instance, if a PC wants to translate a coded document, the Difficulty Level might be Exceptional, the Target Number 12. The player adds the relevant stat level (Intelligence, which we’ll say is 5) to the relevant skill rating (Languages, 3) and a 3d6 roll (in this case, 7). If the total exceeds or equals the target number, the action succeeds (15 beats 12, so the document’s translated).

Combat involves a host of modifiers, including range, line of sight, and damage class. Normally, faced with combat mechanics this complicated, I’d be banging my head on the table. But since *Bubblegum Crisis* is essentially a combat game—you could conceivably stage an adventure with nothing but combat—the detail is justified. If, by the way, it’s occurring to you that the Fuzion System isn’t a heck of a lot different from a half-dozen other RPG systems you could rattle off the top of your head—well, you wouldn’t be wrong. It is, however, less cluttered than most, making it easy to grasp and more than adequate to handle the demands of the premise.

The “2033 Sourcebook” section posits 21st Century Japan as an urban nightmare “plagued by corrupt governments, greedy corporations, pollution, overpopulation, violence, and technology run rampant.” Despite all this scary stuff, the setting doesn’t seem particularly threatening; for every creep like the BU-128 (a railcannon-carrying Boomer) we have a Japanese Smurf with a goofy name like Sylia Stingray. And though well-described, the setting’s not nearly as rich as the future portrayed in, say, the *Shadowrun** or *Cyberpunk** game. But that’s not the fault of the designers. It’s the fault of the source material, cartoonish in the most literal sense.

Evaluation: *Bubblegum Crisis* favors simple adventures as opposed to intricate campaigns. Accordingly, it works best in bite-size chunks along the lines of the short scenarios presented at the end of the book; “Return of the Killer Dolls” features an investigation of a mysterious plane crash, “Brother Boomer” pits the PCs against a Boomer-controlled space station. Once I got into the spirit of the thing, accepting *Bubblegum Crisis* on its own two-dimensional, intentionally lightweight terms, I had a pretty good time. I can’t say *Bubblegum Crisis* changed my mind about anime. But it changed my mind about anime-based games.



Hong Kong Action Theatre* game



160-page softcover book
Event Horizon Productions \$20
Design: Gareth-Michael Skarka, Aaron Rosenberg, Aaron Sturm, Scott Thompson, David Sturm, J. Christopher Haughawout, Matt Harrop, and John R. Phythyon Jr.
Editing: John R. Phythyon Jr.
Illustrations: Cinema City Entertainment Co. Ltd., Golden Princess Amusement Co. Ltd., Mandarin Films Ltd., Magnum Films Ltd., Seasonal Films Ltd., Shaw Bros Ltd., and Eileen K. Skarka
Cover: uncredited

I like kung fu flicks—Asian action films emphasizing martial arts and mysticism, with stars like Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan—even less than anime. Although I appreciate low-budget crapola as much, maybe more, than the next guy, the slapstick violence and free-for-all nonsense bores me silly. A couple of times, I’ve tried to watch *Enter the Dragon*, one of the genre’s alleged classics, but my eyes glazed over somewhere around the 300th flying kick.

So I looked forward to *Hong Kong Action Theatre*, a modestly packaged RPG covering the entire spectrum of kung fu flicks, with about as much anticipation as a tax audit. Wrong, Swan Boy. *Hong Kong Action Theatre* turns out to be a stunner, easily one of the year’s best games.

I never heard of lead designer Gareth-Michael Skarka, but he’s my kinda guy, a fellow who bends over backward to do things differently,

refines his ideas to the bare essentials, then buffs them till they shine like jewels. Case in point: the remarkably novel character creation system. These aren't PCs in the conventional sense; rather, they're "actors" who take on different "roles" depending on the nature of the adventure. In Adventure One, for instance, the PC might be a Veteran Cop. In Adventure Two, he might be a Wise Old Wizard.

It works like this: The player begins by determining ratings for his actor PC's basic attributes-Toughness, Brains, Speed, Cool, Chi (a measure of spirituality)-with random die-rolls. The PC receives no skills; rather, he receives a number of points in three specialty categories: Physical, Mental, and Social. Prior to the start of an adventure, the player chooses a particular role for his PC, then spends his specialty points on whatever skills are appropriate for the role. In an adventure where he's a Veteran Cop, he might be skilled in Driving, Computers, and Law. Playing a Wise Old Wizard in a subsequent adventure, he might be skilled in Slight of Hand, Acrobatics, and the Occult. **Hong Kong Action Theatre** PCs, then, never die. Instead, they're endlessly recycled, giving players unlimited opportunity to experiment with a variety of archetypes.

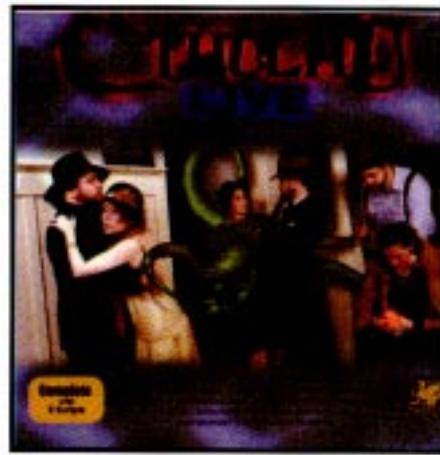
As if that weren't innovation enough, Skarka embellishes the PCs with a host of nifty touches. Following an exceptional performance in a adventure, a PC earns Star Power points which can be spent on spontaneous script rewrites. If, for example, a PC finds himself in a dangerous situation, he spends a few Star points and-ta da-a-a-al-turns out, it's all just a dream. High levels of Chi can be swapped for spells along the lines of righteous demon fist and mountain dancing. And every PC gets his own Signature Move, an action or trait that distinguishes him from run-of-the-mill nobodies. Sample Signatures: Sacrificial Buddy (an NPC companion who, at an opportune moment, conveniently dies to save the PC), Theme Music (like the *Mission: Impossible* tune; it beefs up the PC's Cool rating), and Tag Line ("I'll be back" or "Make my day," which boost skills rolls when artfully grunted).

Of course, a martial arts game has to have a combat system, and Action Theater serves up a doozy. As part of the character creation process, the PC receives a fixed number of points to spend on martial arts maneuvers, such as Head Butt, Feint, Grapple, and Nerve

Strike. He also receives a Gunplay rating, which encompasses sub-ratings for Gun Type, Weapon Damage, and Weapon Speed. A combat turn comprises a four-step sequence: declaration of intent, speed rolls, attack/defense rolls, and damage assessment. Resolving a combat action (or, for that matter, a non-combat action) involves Difficulty Ratings and Ability Totals. In essence, the gamemaster sets a Difficulty Rating for the intended action (Easy is 10, Impossible is 40), then computes an Ability Total by adding the PC's relevant skill rating to any pertinent situational modifier (the PC might be penalized -5 or so if he's got a broken arm). The Ability Total is subtracted from the Difficulty Rating; the resulting number must be equaled or exceeded by a 1d20 roll for the action to succeed. Throughout, numbers and formulas are kept to a minimum, keeping the focus squarely on the battle itself. As a consequence, **Action Theatre** combat is a blur of activity: savage, outrageous, and lightning-fast.

Action Theatre has no game world per se. Instead, we're offered three genres to investigate, representing the design team's favorite types of films. The Gunplay genre emphasizes armed combat and organized crime. Martial Arts, arguably the best-known category, concentrates on brutal man-to-man confrontations, often featuring tournament competitions or historical settings. The Bizarre Fantasy genre mixes horror, fantasy, and science-fiction, where combatants project bolts of mystic energy and reside in mansions that float in the sky. Each genre comes complete with background details, key features, and role-playing tips. Best of all, each includes a pair of engaging, ready-to-play scenarios. My favorite: the Bizarre Fantasy episode titled "Creatures of the Dark Air," where the PCs face a squadron of grotesque spirits in a gloomy castle.

Evaluation: If the gods are feeling benevolent, they'll see to it that **Hong Kong Action Theatre** gets the audience it deserves. Elegant, evocative, and as exciting as a roller coaster ride over a cliff, **Hong Kong Action Theatre** is a start-to-finish delight. Having consumed the scenarios, I'm ready for some sequels. While I'm waiting, I just might give *Enter the Dragon* another shot. (Information: Event Horizon Productions, 1219 Laura Ave., Lawrence, KS 66044.)



Cthulhu Live* game

154-page softcover book
Chaosium, Inc.

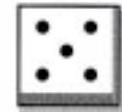
\$17

Design: Dan DePalma, Robert McLaughlin, Scott Nicholson, and Cyndy Schneider (based on the Call of *Cthulhu** game by Sandy Petersen and Lynn Willis)

Editing: Janice Sellers

Illustrations: Robert McLaughlin, Michael Tice, H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society, Revisionist Historical Society, and Steve Gallacci

Cover: Bob Berta



One of the dorkiest things I've ever done was allow myself to be talked into participating in a live-action RPG. Ten years later, I still cringe at the memory of wandering around a public park in a bath robe, brandishing a sword made out of a cardboard tube, looking for a dragon, which, as I recall, was played a fat guy wearing a blanket. Not only was it no fun, it was humiliating, and thank God my wife-to-be- didn't see me, or I'd still be single.

But along comes **Cthulhu Live** and really, what choice do I have but to try live action again? After all, Chaosium publishes bad games about as often as Michael Jordan buys hair brushes. And *Call of Cthulhu*, the brilliantly executed H.P. Lovecraft horror game upon which **Cthulhu Live** is based, happens to be my all-time favorite RPG.

So I spent a night digesting the rules, another night preparing a scenario, then coaxed some friends and neighbors over for an evening of what I cryptically referred to as "a game that's sorta like Sherlock Holmes in the Twilight Zone" I won't keep you in suspense. They loved it. And I adored it. In fact, I adored it so

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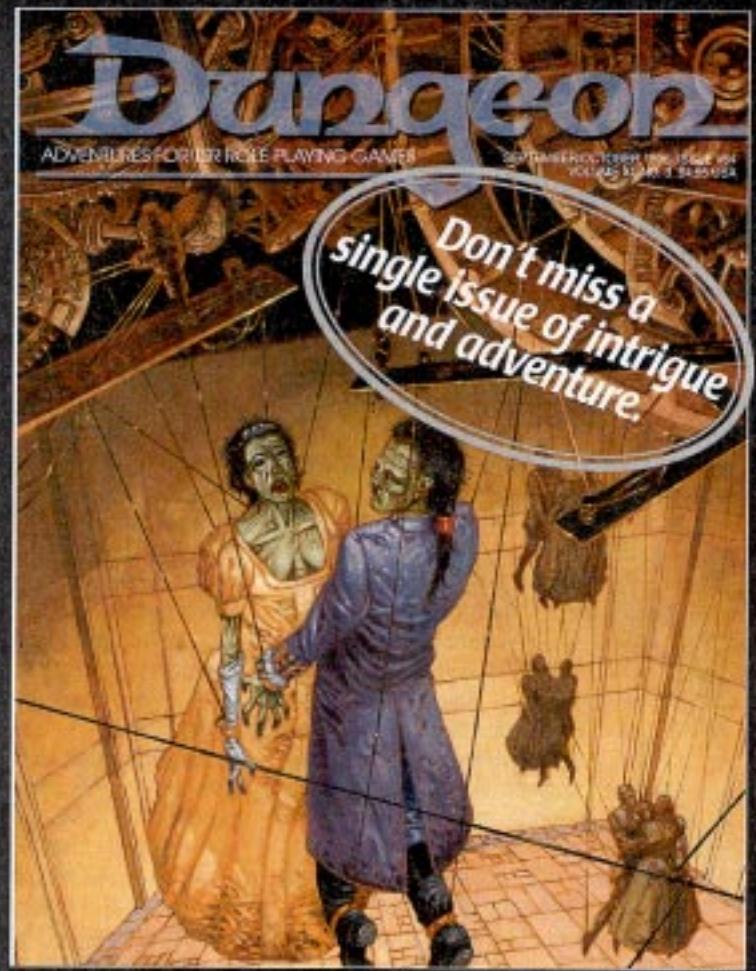
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much that it made me dismiss my earlier experience with live action as an unfortunate fluke.

So what makes *Cthulhu Live* a winner? Three factors:

1. Regular Folk. The game is set in a world not unlike our own. Actually, it is our own, circa 1920, meaning that the players don't have to strain their brains absorbing a lot of background material. In a sense, the less they know, the more fun they'll have, as much of the game involves investigation into the Cthulhu Mythos and the gradual revelation of the Mythos' horrible truths. And because the players are portraying lawyers, private eyes, and other everyday types, no elaborate (or embarrassing) costumes are required, though fashion plates are free to adorn themselves to their hearts content.

2. Easy Rules. To keep things moving along, most live action games—the *Star Wars five-Action Adventures** and *International Fantasy Gaming Society** games, to name two—employ streamlined mechanics. *Cthulhu Live* takes this approach a step further, stripping the systems to the bone. A PC, for instance, has ratings for only four attributes: Dexterity, Education, Constitution, and Power. After the player calculates his PC's Sanity Points (a measure of mental stability) and buys a few Skills—Anthropology, History, and First Aid are among the options—his character is pretty much done.

Action resolution uses neither dice nor tables. Instead, the gamemaster arbitrarily decides a difficulty level, then compares this to the PC's relevant skill or attribute rating. If the rating equals exceeds the difficulty level, the action succeeds. For example, if the gamemaster decides that recalling the middle name of Henry VIII's first wife is Difficulty 16 and the PC has a History rating of 12, the attempt fails; that's about all there is to it. Sanity losses are resolved in a similar fashion. Even your brain-dead little brother should be able to understand rules this elementary. (Incidentally, although the *Cthulhu Live* rules derive from the *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game, familiarity with the RPG isn't necessary. The *Cthulhu Live* rulebook contains everything you need to know.)

3. Terrific Scenarios. The second half of the rulebook contains two lengthy, detailed scenarios that take the gamemaster by the hand and walk him through every step of the proceedings. "The Ooze" stars a puddle of crud from outer space with a penchant for turning

farmers into zombies. "Horror in the Asylum" takes place in a spooky hospital loaded with mad scientists and experiments gone haywire. Each scenario provides copious staging tips for creating an authentic atmosphere. To simulate a shock treatment, for instance, the gamemaster is directed to strap a crony into a chair, then flick the lights on and off while the screaming crony throws himself against his restraints. A mad scientists laboratory can be suggested with a few bottles of herbs, some hand-written notes, and—I came up with this one myself—a cauliflower (brain) positioned in a tray of cherry gelatin (gore). Elsewhere, the book provides detailed instructions for manufacturing Cthulhu monstrosities from odds and ends available at the local Wal-Mart. You can make your girlfriend into a Hound of Tindalos with talcum powder and black cream make-up, or transform yourself into a vile Crawling One by attaching rubber fishing worms to your face.

Evaluation: Drawbacks? A few. *Cthulhu Live* requires, as many as 10-15 participants, making it tough to pull off for players with a shortage of pals. (I could only round up eight participants for my playtest, and though we got through the scenario, it was a struggle I wouldn't want to repeat.) Though most of the rules are simple, the combat system, which relies on a deck of homemade combat cards, is awkward. And because so much of the game is improvised, the gamemaster has to be quick on his feet, conversant in Cthulhu mythology, and a strong storyteller. If you're still on board, you'll find *Cthulhu Live* to be a great way to spend a weekend, a theatrical extravaganza that captures the flavor of the RPG and doesn't take itself too seriously. As a convert, I'm thinking about putting together a scenario for this year's convention circuit. Watch for me. I'll be the guy in the bathrobe.

Short and sweet

*In Nomine** game, by Derek Pearcy (based on the original French game by Croc). Steve Jackson Games, \$25.

Give the Steve Jackson crew credit for guts. *In Nomine* tackles a volatile premise head on: the Judeo-Christian concepts of good and evil, heaven and hell, God and Satan. The battleground is the universe itself—here, poetically known as the Symphony—with angels and hellspawn as the primary combatants. Players take the rolls of lesser servitors, aligned with good or evil; points are allocated to

attribute-like Forces (Corporeal, Ethereal, Celestial), skill-like Resources (Artistry, Survival, Tracking) and spell-like Songs (charm, possession, projection). Action resolution involves 3d6 rolls, with two of the dice determining success or failure, the third determining the degree (spectacular success, disastrous failure). A roll of 1-1 -1 indicates divine intervention; a roll of 6-6-6 results in a visit from Mr. Horns. *In Nomine's* most impressive achievement is not its vivid setting nor its imaginative mechanics, but its respectful, even reverent treatment of a sensitive subject. Ambitious, chilling and absolutely, positively not for children. Or Jerry Falwell.

Tales of the Jedi Companion, by George R. Strayton with Peter Schweighofer. Greg Costikyan, Greg Gordon, Bill Slavicsek, Matt Hong, Bill Smith, Simon Smith, Paul Sudlow, and Eric S. Trautmann. West End Games, \$25.

Didn't I hear somewhere that George Lucas released some spruced-up versions of the old *Star Wars* films a couple months back? Doesn't matter. When I need a fix of Luke Skywalker and company, I turn to West End, who've been the semi-official keepers of the flame for close to a decade. West End's *Star Wars** game supplements are not only loaded with nifty RPG stuff, but serve as the last word in Lucas lore. *Tales of the Jedi* is the latest volume in West End's hardback series, which also includes such must-haves as *Han Solo and the Corporate Sector* and *Dark Empire*.

Tales, covering the era existing 4,000 years before *A New Hope*, examines Jedi powers, exotic planets like Alpheridies and Ossus, and the Sith, a race of creepy aliens.

If all you know is the movies, then brother, you don't know nothin'.

Nemesis, by Richard Daken, Rick Ernst, and M. Alexander Jurkat with Catherine D'Avella, Shirley Madewell, Chris Pallace, James Parks, and Bernard C. Trombley. New Millennium Entertainment, \$16. *Conspiracy X Game Master's Screen*, by M. Alexander Jurkat. New Millennium Entertainment, \$15.

Still waiting for the official *X-Files* role-playing game? Just in case it never gets here, I suggest you check out the *ConspiracyX** game (reviewed in *Dragon® Magazine* issue #232), a paranoia-drenched RPG that Scully and Mulder would be proud to call their own. These two supplements maintain the high

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standards of the original game. Nemesis presents an in-depth study of the Grey, a race of extraterrestrials who've infiltrated our planet to pursue a sinister Human Breeding Program. An eyebrow-elevating adventure titled "Grey Matter" rounds out this first-rate effort. The *Conspiracy X Game Master's Screen* consists of an attractive eight-panel screen packaged with another excellent adventure called "Night of Rage," loaded with supernatural surprises. (Information: New Millennium Entertainment, 15 Ledgewood Drive, Albany, NY 12205.)

Of Gods and Men* game, by Jeffrey Konkol. Non Sequitur Productions, \$25.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® has pretty much cornered the market in fantasy role-playing with products like the *Earthdawn** and *Middle-earth** games gobbling up whatever chunks of the audience remain. So any small press publisher who puts out a new fantasy game must either be nuts or have one heck of a good idea. *Of Gods and Men*, a meticulously detailed RPG that's been quietly winning converts for a while now, is mostly a good idea. The PCs are culture-based; that is, their traits and

attitudes derive from homelands selected by the players; Highland PCs are nomadic and spiritual, Pythean Empire PCs are rigid and violent. The imaginative magic section features spells like liquid energy and mind wipe. A set of cards, bound into the rulebook, represents Divine Powers that enable players to modify the rules; the Probability Manipulation card allows a player to switch the position of the ones and tens on any percentile die roll, the Inspired Attack card doubles the damage of a successful melee attack. Stumbling blocks: the underdeveloped campaign world and the clunky nine-step combat round which relies on power points, attack foci, and speed factors. I don't foresee a stampede of players abandoning AD&D for *Of Gods and Men*, but it's an interesting alternative for the open-minded. (Information: Non Sequitur Productions, 1513 North 69th Street, Wauwatosa, WI 53213.)

Spherewalker Sourcebook, by Greg Stolze. Rubicon Games, \$20. Spherewalker Source Cards. No credits given. Rubicon Games, \$2 per 10-card pack.

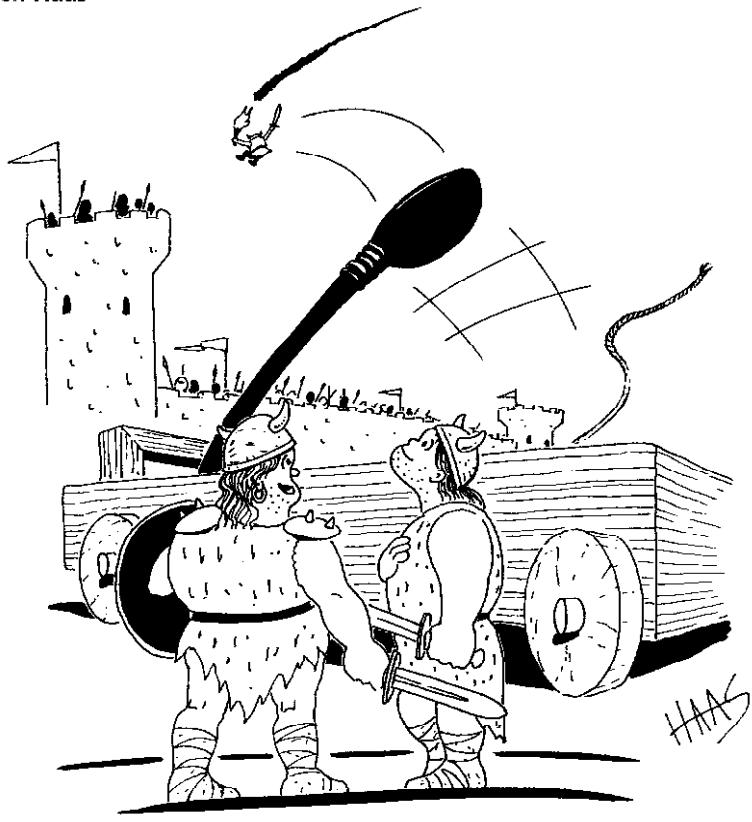
The *Everway** game (reviewed in

Dragon® Magazine issue # 224) didn't die when Wizards of the Coast unceremoniously cut it loose. Instead, it drifted into the loving arms of the small but enterprising Rubicon Games. *Spherewalker Sourcebook*, Rubicon's first *Everway* sourcebook, brims with information vital to players and gamemasters alike. Formatted as a alphabetic encyclopedia, the book tackles topics as diverse as bell walking pyramid lizards, and winterwater. Though nothings covered in depth, the crisp writing and classy production makes the book a cover-to-cover treat. Also note that Rubicon has published a new run of source cards, 90 in all. With imaginative text and quality art, the cards compare favorably with those in the original boxed game. (Information: Rubicon Games, PO Box 2931, Seattle, WA 98111-2931.)

Claim-Jumper* game. No credits given. The Grail, Inc., \$22.

In this clever board game, reminiscent of the *Clue** game, players move poker chips around a colorful terrain map, searching for the right combination of key cards that will lead them to buried treasure and victory. A black velvet pouch holds the solution; guess wrong, and you're out. So what's a game like this doing in a role-playing column? Well, as the designers point out, the 4" x 4" modular tiles that make up the terrain map happen to be perfect for miniatures. A gamemaster can arrange these 16 Lake, Mountain, Prairie, and Settlement tiles to represent just about any outdoor area of his choosing, which is much preferable to sketching out maps on paper, especially if you're a lousy sketcher. A board game and an RPG accessory, all in one-what a deal! (Information: The Grail, Inc., 914 Park Ave., Laramie, WY 82070.)

By Jeff Haas



"Nobody goes berserk like Trog!"

Rick Swan, the author of *The Complete Guide to Role-Playing Games* (St. Martin's Press), has designed and edited nearly 50 role-playing products. You can write to him at 2620 30th Street, Des Moines, IA 50310. Enclose a self-addressed envelope if you'd like a reply.

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TSR PREVIEWS

NEW FOR NOVEMBER

The Book of Priestcraft

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By Rich Baker, Dale Donovan,
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DUNGEON® Adventures #65

Cover by Rebecca Guay

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by Chris Perkins

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❖ *Knight of the Scarlet Sword*

by Jeff Crook

Something is rotten in the town of Bechlaughter, but by the time the heroes discover their true foes, it might be far too late.

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by Kate Novak and Jeff Grubb

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Dragon® Magazine #242 Spells & Magic

Cover by Tony DiTerlizzi

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by Lachlan MacQuarrie

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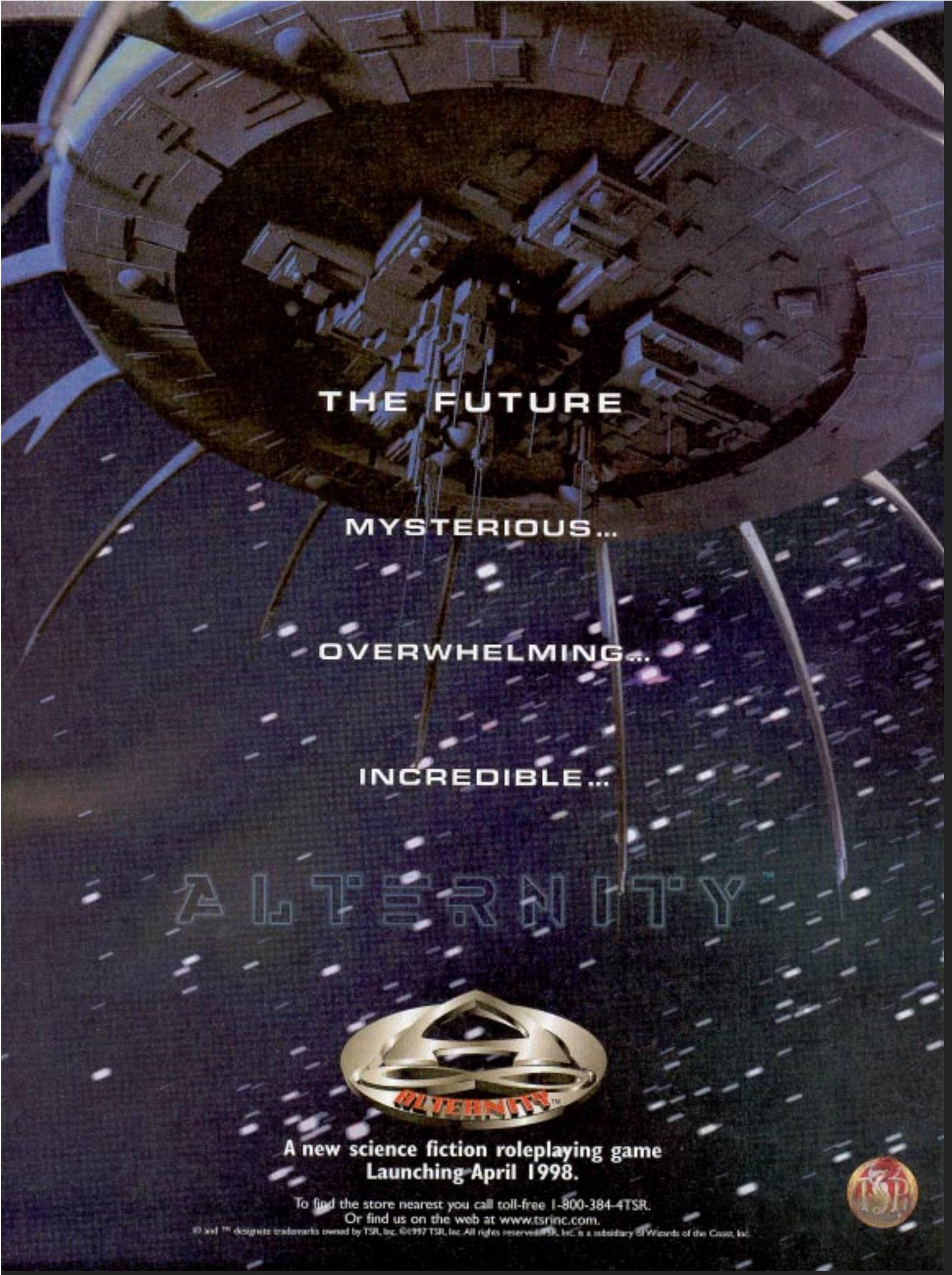
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The Current Clack

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TSR: Moving into the New House

Wizards of the Coast has bought TSR, moved the staff from Lake Geneva to Renton, and set up their offices and cubicles. Some recent developments:

1. The **GREYHAWK®** setting, one of the original AD&D® campaign worlds, is probably coming back in 1998. **GREYHAWK** creator Gary Gygax might participate in ways yet to be determined.

2. Both the **FORGOTTEN REALMS®** and the **RAVENLOFT®** settings will receive strong support, as will the **DRAGONLANCE® SAGA™** rules system. The **PLANESCAPE®** and **BIRTHRIGHT®** settings and the **DRAGON DICE™** game will receive support while management gauges their profitability. Some long-dormant AD&D campaign settings, such as **SPELLJAMMER™** and **DARK SUN™**, might receive occasional new support-one product a year, say-to test continued demand. The AD&D line will emphasize products usable in any campaign, such as the *Tale of the Comet* boxed set and the new **JAKANDOR™** island setting.

3. Yes, a new AD&D campaign setting will appear based on Dominia, the world of *Magic: The Gathering**. But it won't require Magic cards to play, and it won't affect the core AD&D rules. No publication date has been set.

4. An AD&D 3rd Edition? Maybe. Nothing has been decided.

5. Wizards president Peter Adkison has reversed TSR's long-standing policy that aims products toward younger players. An advisory Code of Conduct has replaced the restrictive Code of Ethics, which was closely based on the 1953 Comics Code. New products will target the broad gaming audience. The baatezu and tanar'ri may possibly regain their former names, "devil" and "demon," once spoken only in whispers

in the echoing halls of Lake Geneva. (Clack tests this possibility by seeing whether *DRAGON® Magazine*'s editor lets the previous sentence state those former names.)

Notes from the Field

The publisher of the *Warhammer** and *Warhammer 40,000** miniatures games, Games Workshop (Nottingham, England), is a publicly traded company, so it releases sales figures each year. The Workshop's August 1997 Annual Report shows tremendous health, though percentage increases didn't quite keep pace with 1996's explosive growth. Sales in 1997 were 58.4 million pounds sterling (U.S. \$105 million), up 30% from 1996. Pre-tax profits were 11.1 million pounds (\$20 million), up 25.5% from last year. Following the Workshop's 1996 move to direct distribution in North America, 1997 sales here showed spectacular jumps: \$16 million in the US (up 42%) and Can. \$4 million in Canada (up 109%). The Report's summary concludes-Clack is not making this up—"The inexorable march to total global domination goes on." (US office: 3431-C Benson Ave., Baltimore, MD 21227-1072)

Terry Amthor, creator of the *Shadow World* campaign setting published by Iron Crown Enterprises, sells new supplements for the setting by mail-order through his Eidolon Studio. First up is *Emer Atlas I*. Check the Web (users.aol.com/terbob/) or send a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) to Eidolon Studio, Box 57083, Washington, DC 20037-7083.

Remember Nova Games' clever *Lost Worlds** booklets that let you fight face-to-face fantasy battles? You know, you choose a maneuver and call out its number, flip to the page your opponent calls, and see the result of your maneuver?

This summer, Flying Buffalo (Scottsdale, AZ), which has taken over the series, brought out 14 new *Lost Worlds* booklets (\$5.95 each) by hard-working designer Alfred Leonardi. In addition to Zombie, Bugbear, Pirate, Medusa, and other fun companions, six dinosaur books let you pit your fighter in plate armor against the likes of Triceratops, Pachycephalosaurus, and Tyrannosaurus Rex. (Rick@flyingbuffalo.com; www.flyingbuffalo.com)

One of the unsung heroes of TSR, Acquisitions Editor Bruce Heard, kept the company's schedules running smoothly for years. During the TSR buyout, Heard left the company to remain in Wisconsin, where his wife, Beatrice, holds an excellent job as a manager for Abbott Laboratories. Heard has a new project to keep him busy: On August 12, Beatrice gave birth to Noel Heard, 7 lbs. 11 oz. Parents and son are doing fine. (Ambreville@aol.com)

Freelance game designer Allen Varney ran gaming programming at this year's World Science Fiction Convention in San Antonio, TX and it went real well. Send news to APVarney@aol.com.

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