

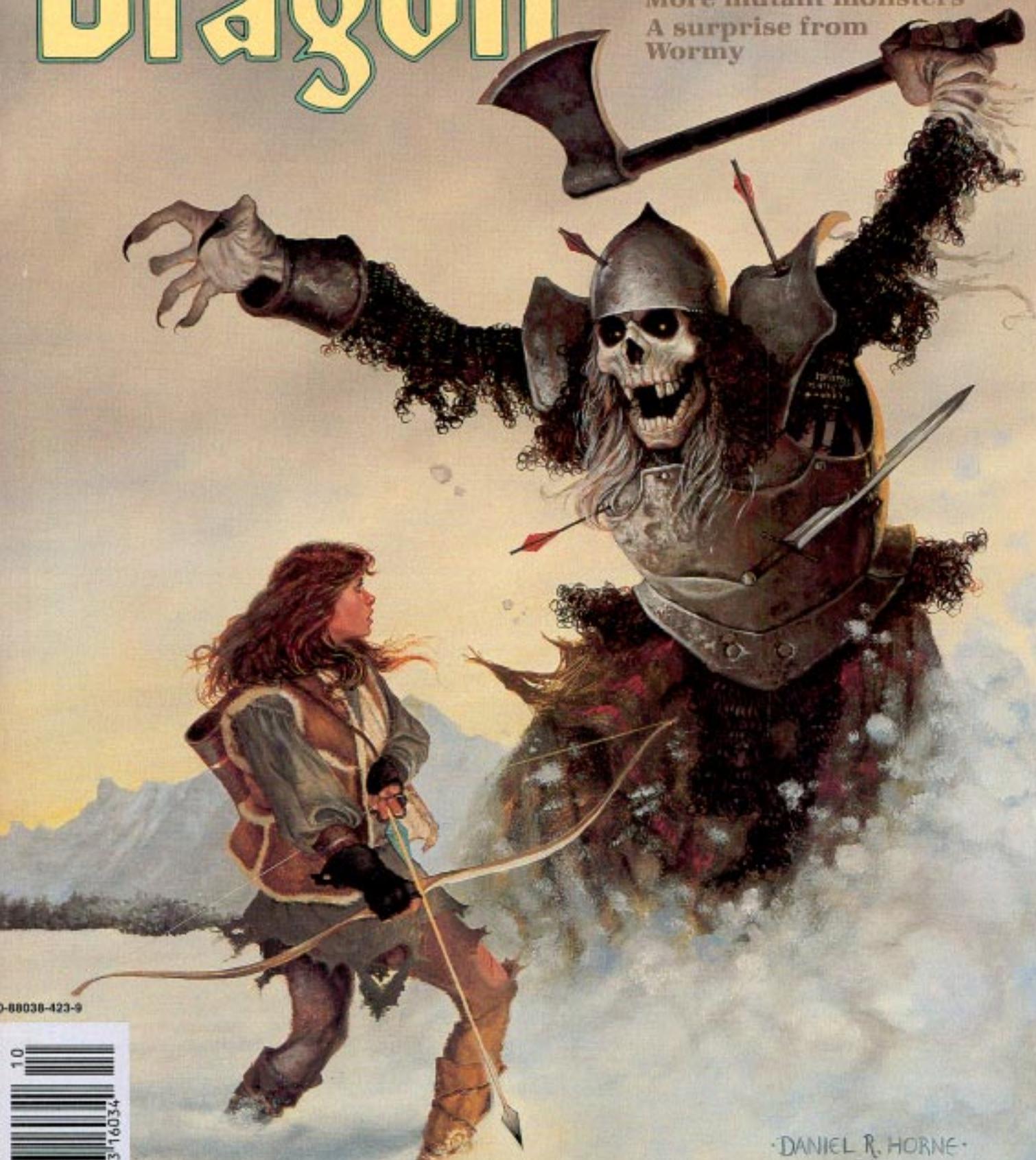
Dragon®

Monthly adventure role-playing aid

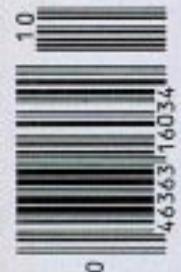
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#126

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Wormy



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DANIEL R. HORNE
1987



JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

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BLOCK MANIA

BLOCK MANIA

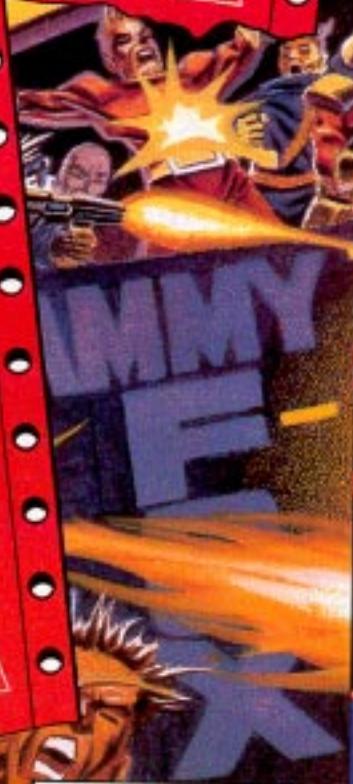
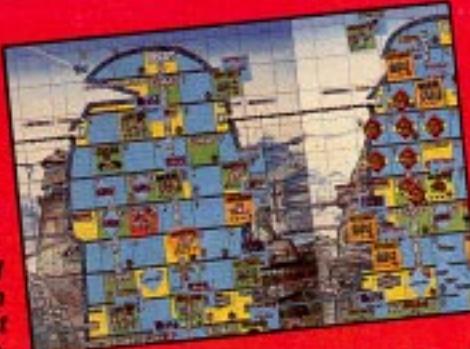
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MEGA-MANIA



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Dragon®

Magazine

Issue #126
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October 1987

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COVER

Daniel Horne said the scene on his cover painting "takes place on a frozen tundra. The sun is setting, the hoar frost is glittering like thousands of pieces of broken glass." A ranger in the service of the High King has just been attacked by the undead remains of one of her old opponents — a frost giant who has waited a long time for this moment of revenge. Having lost her sword and used up her normal arrows, the ranger has a single elven arrow left — from which comes the painting's name: "Saving the Best for Last."

LETTERS

Where's the PBM?

Dear Dragon:

I want to ask if you could send me the names and addresses of SF and fantasy gaming systems that can be played through the mail. A friend of mine recommended your magazine to me when I told her of my great need to find a sci-fi gaming system played by mail. She said your magazine had such places listed. However, since I can't find a copy of the magazine, I wrote in hopes that you could help me get in touch with such mail-gaming systems.

Squire Jim G. Styles
Post Falls ID

Though DRAGON® Magazine does not cover play-by-mail games very often, there are several other magazines that do. If you want to learn more about PBM games, write to: Paper Mayhem 1518 Adams Street, Ottawa IL 61350-4764; or Gaming Universal, PO. Box 81573, Lincoln NE 68501. These two magazines are devoted exclusively to PBM games, and it would be worth asking for subscription information from them if you cannot find other sources of information.

No news?

Dear Dragon:

Why not include half a page or so devoted to the latest news in the gaming world? I know that the mechanics of such a column would be difficult to work out, since each issue is planned far in advance, but information like this would interest many gamers. It seems like a lot of the other gaming magazines carry or used to carry such information, but DRAGON Magazine never has. I think that the gaming community has a right to know things. Try to create a short column discussing the headlines of the gaming world; it would give a chance for those gamers who do not attend conventions and who are not extremely close to any of the major companies to learn some of the happenings within their hobby.

Michael Lach
West Chicago IL

We've been fairly good about covering TSR-related news in this magazine, but we haven't had a lot to say about the rest of the industry — except for what's mentioned in the advertisements, of course. A game-industry news column is not a highly requested feature. If more interest in it develops, we may consider it. Any thoughts from the readers?

Mini-features

Dear Dragon:

This may sound odd, but one of my favorite parts of issue #122 was an advertisement; specifically, the center pages showing the miniatures from Citadel. I began collecting and paint-

ing miniatures even before learning to play D&D® games. In fact, miniatures got me interested in the game. The Citadel ad reminded me that you used to have a feature that showcased miniatures every month. Also, once a year, you used to show photographs of the winners of the GEN CON® Games Fair Miniatures Open. Is there any chance that either of these two features will return to the DRAGON Magazine?

David Howery
Dillon MT

When I was at the GEN CON 20 Games Fair, I was approached by several people who — like David Howery — wanted to know if we would start covering miniature figures again. This is certainly a possibility; we would like to hear from you on this topic. Do you use miniatures in your role-playing games? Would you like more coverage of new releases, painting tips, and other miniatures-related topics? Write in and tell us.

Final frontiers

Dear Dragon:

I am a STAR FRONTIERS® game referee and enjoy the game immensely — that is, I did until November, 1985, when Volume I of Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space was released. Don't get me wrong — I loved Zebulon's Guide and found it an excellent expansion of the original rules. However, the new rules in the guide were not complete. Things like robots, spaceship rules, etc., were to be expanded and detailed in further volumes.

But in the two years since Volume I's release, the follow-up volumes have not come out. Will Zebulon's Guide be continued, or will I have to make up all those other rules on my own — or worse yet, will I have to switch to another company's sci-fi games?

Kevin Armstrong
Cheshire, U.K.

As noted in the "Sage Advice" column in this issue, TSR, Inc., has no further plans to publish material on the STAR FRONTIERS game. However, we have a number of articles left to run in this magazine, and some of them may cover areas missing from earlier rules supplements.

Collectible copies

Dear Dragon:

I own a number of old copies of DRAGON Magazine. All are in fair condition and I am interested in what these issues are worth as collectibles. Could you please send me a list of what these issues are worth? Thank you very much for the help you can give me.

John Van Erp
Folsom CA

(continued on page 59)

The games of August

The GEN CON® 20 Games Fair is over, and a synopsis of my experiences at the convention follows — at least, my more interesting experiences there:

Wednesday: Patrick Price, Barbara Young, and I arrive at MECCA and set up the magazines booth in two hours flat. Barbara then leaves to buy her entire fall wardrobe, Pat goes home to read, and I wander the convention hall. I meet some people from Austin, Texas, who I'd previously met through a science-fiction BBS based in that city, and I also meet some familiar faces from Games Workshop, Ral Partha, and other companies as they set up. Later that evening, I go out with some friends from TSR to a Chinese restaurant, and during a lull in the conversation, I cheerfully suggest that we find a place to have a D&D® game. Barbara kicks me in the knee while everyone laughs and immediately forgets what I said.

Thursday: Thursday has a bad moment when a small girl falls on an escalator and requires about 30 stitches. Barbara and I run our DUNGEON™ Adventures seminar, I meet more familiar faces, and game designers from several companies run the "Dungeons & Refuseniks" seminar on life as it actually is inside a game company. The people from R. Talsorian Games (who make the TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE™ game) reveal that they have developed a one-shot Goop Gun (more like a medium bazooka) for use against their own office personnel. Everyone turns green with envy. "Do we have anything like that to use on our game designers?" a TSR co-worker whispers to me. Three people come by the magazines booth looking for Bruce Heard, our acquisitions man. Business is good.

Finally, after a long first day, the group I'm with decides to run off to see the Safe House, a Milwaukee bar with an espionage theme (secret doors, checkpoints, a telephone-booth exit, etc.). I don't drink, but the bar sounds like it would be interesting to see anyway. When the waiter arrives, I order a glass of milk. The waiter looks at me thoughtfully. "Would you like your milk warm?" he asks.

(continued on page 54)

The World Gamers Guide

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you can be included in the World Gamers Guide by sending your name and full address (carefully printed or typed, please), plus your gaming preferences, to: World Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, United States of America.

The World Gamers Guide is intended for the benefit of gamers who would like to contact other game-players around the world, to share their interests in gaming through correspondence. Each eligible name and address that we receive is published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON Maga-

zine. To be listed for more than three issues, you must send us another postcard or letter. Overseas American military personnel may also be listed herein.

When listing gaming preferences, write out the complete title of the games you most enjoy. For the purposes of this column, the abbreviations listed below are used.

AD: AD&D® game
BT: BATTLETECH® game
CW: CAR WARS® game
DC: DC™ HEROES game
DD: D&D® game
GW: GAMMA WORLD® game

MSH: MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game
OA: AD&D *Oriental Adventures* system
P: PARANOIA™ game
RC: RECON® game
RM: ROLEMASTER™ game
RQ: RUNEQUEST® game
RT: ROBOTECH® game
SF: STAR FRONTIERS® game
T: TRAVELLER® game
TN: TOON® game
TS: TOP SECRET® game
T2000: TWILIGHT 2000™ game
T2300: TRAVELLER: 2300™ game
VV: VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ game

Sean Riley
(AD,CW,MSH,P,T,TN)

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Ballarat, Victoria
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B.P. 31
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(AD,DD)
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4295
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Fanaat [gaming club]
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FORUM

Regarding Mr. Gilpatrick's letter in the Forum, DRAGON® issue #122, suggesting a computer system to provide back-issue articles: I would be in support of a TSR computer system. (Steve Jackson Games has one, and, according to their newsletters, it's very popular.) It could have a "bulletin board" subsystem which garners could use to discuss mutual problems with monsters, treasures, settings, PCs, NPCs, DMs, etc. Staff people could clarify rules once every few weeks in the manner of the irregular "Sage Advice" column. Customers could even place credit-card orders with the Mail Order Hobby Shop. However, if a back-issue article database were to be added to the system, it would require a massive outlay of capital for the storage systems. I'll assume a guesswork average of 65 pages of articles per issue from issue #1 to date. (My collection only goes back to issue #70.) If this estimate is correct, the 123 issues published to date would have almost 8,000 pages of material. With 2.5 single-spaced 80-column typed pages required to fill one page of the magazine, the computer database would have to hold nearly 20,000 pages of information. A single microcomputer hard disk would not have enough space to store all of the back-issue articles.

Robert Kelk
Ottawa, Ontario

I read with interest Scott Gilpatrick's comment in issue #122's Forum. Mr. Gilpatrick is correct in that a modem service (electronic bulletin-board) system, or BBS) containing articles from past issues of DRAGON Magazine would be invaluable and possibly profitable for TSR. He is incorrect that it would be expensive to set up - at least, relatively speaking.

Optimally, you could run the service on any IBM-compatible computer, preferably with 640K RAM for maximum options. There are a large number of IBM-compatibles available, some priced at well under \$1000. Start with a monochrome monitor, 20-megabyte hard-disk drive, and internal modem card, preferably one capable of running 2400 baud (translating roughly to the capability of transmitting 300 characters per second). If it is necessary to keep costs down, at the minimum, a modem able to run 1200 baud (or 150 character per second transmission/reception speed) is advised.

Software for running the service is available in the public domain or as shareware (a concept in which private users pay for the software if they feel it's useful, and businesses pay a licensing fee, the costs being ridiculously low). The only other expense is the phone line (it really should have its own) and the cost of getting the data into the system.

Your typesetting department has probably stored all the articles on disk at one time or another in order to output the type. I would hope they still have the data on disk, but it is quite probable that they have already deleted some. If the articles are still available in electronic form, it is no hard matter to convert them to files on a PC. Depending on your typesetter's front-end configuration, it may have the

ability to send or receive ASCII (American Standard Coding for Information Interchange) characters. If so, modem-to-modem between the typesetter and the PC, then edit the documents on the PC (with a public-domain word processor) for readability. If your typesetter cannot send data to another system, call around to the various type houses and ask if they have a Shaffstall system. It's quite an elegant piece of hardware that can read virtually any disk format and convert it to another. If your articles have already been deleted from disk, you're up a creek. Hire a high-school kid at minimum wage to type them in.

So far, you've invested approximately \$3,000 for the computer, hard drive, and software. Now comes the marketing. Sell subscriptions at \$10 per year, using Mr. Gilpatrick's idea of a half-hour per day maximum connect time. Allow downloads to be free (i.e., they won't reduce time on the system). Now flesh out the BBS by adding games, message services (consider a BBS D&D® game, a popular concept among some boards here in Columbus), and the like. Is it possible that there are 300 DRAGON Magazine readers with computers and modems? I have no data, but I'm willing to assume that the sub-group containing D&D game players and the sub-group containing computer hackers do tend to merge quite a bit. And remember: The second year is free of any hardware and software expense. At the most, you'd have the minimal expense of data conversion from typesetting to PC each month.

The last bit is somewhat stickier; you now need someone to run it. Don't tell me there isn't at least one computer hacker at TSR, Inc., who would be willing to run a BBS? Running a board starts out as fun. It can become boring at times, but that's not until it's running smoothly. And many of today's public domain BBS programs make system operation a breeze, with automatic functions that previously required a lot of human-interactive time.

Please do consider this proposal. Everyone would win. We'd get a sound article base, and you'd get not only income, but much good will.

Michael Sawczyn
Columbus OH

I have one or two comments and corrections concerning "Marshalling the Martial Arts" in issue #122. Aikido is listed as unarmed combat only. In fact, aikido training classically includes work with knife, sword, and staff. Aikido has its main roots in *daito-ryu*, which included not only ju-jutsu, but also swordsmanship and iai. I would also add that a major distinction aikido enjoys is work against multiple opponents; this is a required part of black-belt exams, and also brown-belt exams in some dojos. (In fact, I require it of blue belts in my own dojo.)

A problem I have in general with including unarmed combat vs. weapons is that historically, it was extremely uncommon. Sure, some accomplished martial artists have defeated attackers with weapons, but only when the

attackers were relatively untrained, or (as a last resort) when a weapon was unavailable. During the eras of classic weaponry, every martial-arts school included weapons work. Only an idiot would choose to fight bare-handed against a sword if anything else was available. In Okinawa and other places, when swords, spears, and classic weapons were made illegal by a foreign ruling class, martial arts schools came to specialize in unarmed skills along with staff, nunchaku, etc. But this was not out of choice.

In Japan, martial arts were classically taught in *ryu*, or schools, that generally included work with several weapons, as well as with strategy, artillery use, and other military skills. In aikido, for instance, the same principles would be taught for staff, sword, and unarmed combat. (And the staff could be easily adapted to spear fighting.) For instance, the principle of *matsu*, or pine, is taken from the shape of the pine needle. A needle facing you is an extremely difficult target to hit. The principle of *matsu* is applied to a particular body stance, to a way of turning the hips in avoiding an attack, to holding a sword or staff in a way that covers you from attack and also threatens the opponent, and to a style of thrusting or cutting with hand or weapon while simultaneously stepping to the side of an attack.

Bob Frager
Redwood City CA

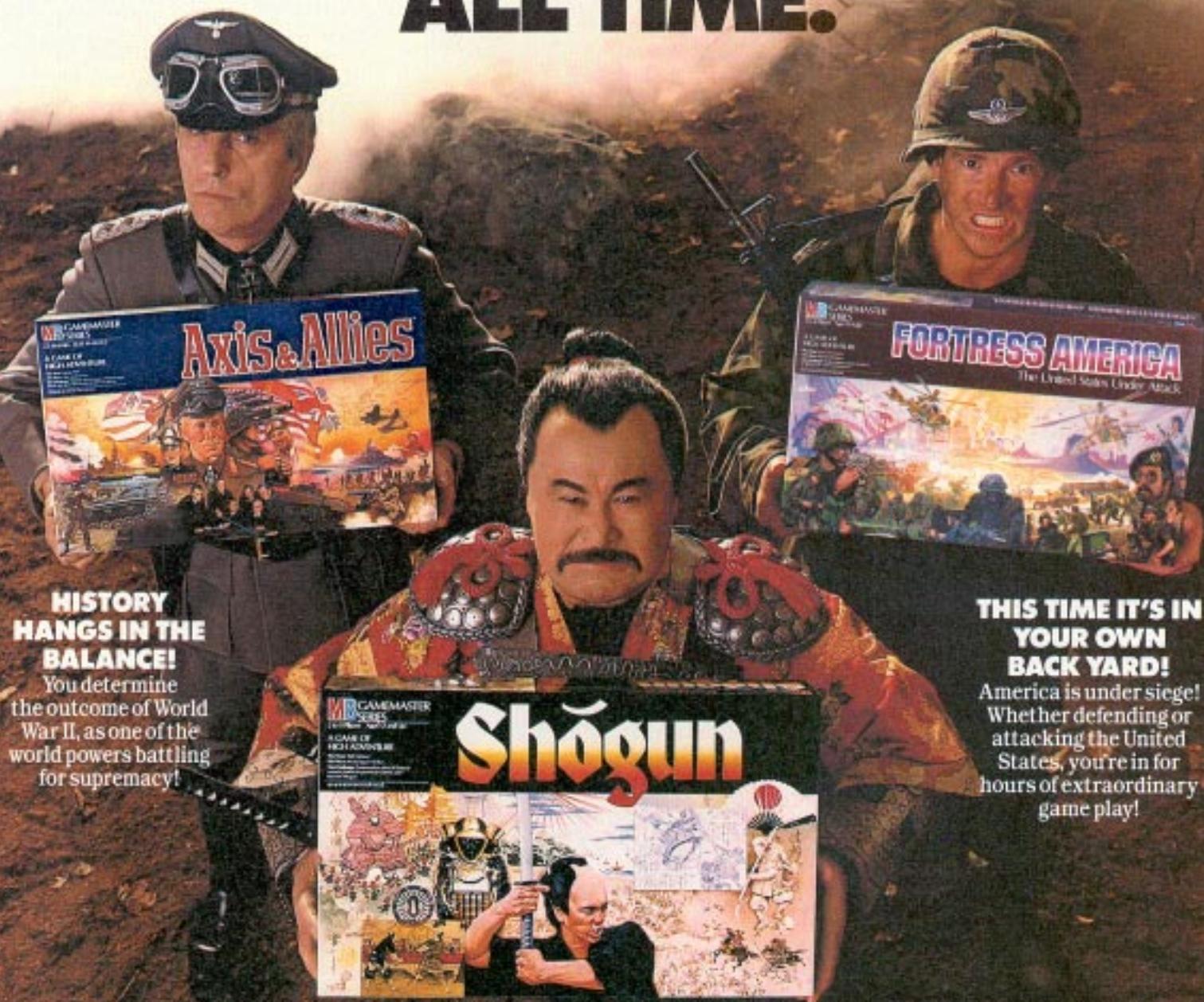
I read Dana Foley's letter in issue #122 commenting on my article "Surely, You Joust!" in issue #118 with much interest. Dana Foley's remarks are a case in point of a person reading too much into an article. My purpose in describing the combat between Allycia and Scud was to provide an example of how a joust can be conducted using the full range of jousting modifiers, not to present the life stories of Scud and Allycia, so I used a minimum of background detail. The full tale of what happened after Allycia defeated Scud was not pertinent to the jousting example, so I did not bother to elaborate a complete description of the future relationship of the two characters. Also, Dana Foley should have read my article more carefully; otherwise, such incorrect conclusions would not have been drawn from the joust described.

Allycia did not leave Scud unarmed and unarmored in a "dangerous forest" as Foley described, but in the "countryside" as I had written. Assuming "countryside" must mean hazardous wild terrain leads Foley to conclude Allycia performed an unchivalrous act. The "countryside" could well be part of a civilized land and the bridge might be only walking distance from the nearest village. Had the joust indeed been fought in a "dangerous forest," Allycia should immediately wonder why Scud is all alone in such dangerous land and would immediately suspect a trap or ambush. Since Scud is just an ordinary fighter and not a cavalier, it is unlikely that Scuds shield would bear a coat-of-arms familiar to Allycia, further reinforcing the idea that Allycia should not trust Scuds professed intentions. Allycia's party would prepare themselves to meet an attack from any direction and use divination magic to determine what dangers the surrounding terrain might hold. So a simple pass-at-arms instead looks like a full-blown battle to the death.

It makes no sense for Scud to choose to guard a bridge in a "dangerous forest." Scud would naturally pick a bridge that is safe and well-traveled, so that many knights would happen by for Scud to challenge to a pass-at-arms. Scud might well spend months waiting for a knight to show up at a bridge in hazardous and little-traveled terrain.

(continued on page 56)

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Role-playing Reviews



Hitting the
campaign supplement trail

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Griffin Island

A RUNEQUEST® game campaign supplement
Created and developed by Chaosium Inc.;
published by The Avalon Hill Game Company \$16.00

Authors: Rudy Kraft, Paul Jaquays, Greg Stafford, and Sandy Petersen

Cover: Steve Purcell

Interior illustrations: Paul Jaquays

Editing and production: Charlie Krank

Undead

A Role Aids™ AD&D® game campaign supplement
Mayfair Games Inc. \$10.00
Authors: Laurel Nicholson and John Keefe
Editor: Jackie H. Leaper
Cover: Michael Whelan

Interior art and maps: Jeff Busch, Teanna Byerts, Gerald O'Malley, and Jim Clouse

So, what's first on *your* shopping list when you go looking for a campaign supplement?

"Uh . . . it's gotta be *yuh* know . . . complete. . ."

Nope. The last thing in the world you want is something complete. Way too much detail. Maybe you know one of those lost souls who can tell you the name, age, and weight of every person in his fantasy city, or the three principle exports of every one of his fantasy nations.

What you want is the illusion of completeness. You want to *feel* like the whole campaign worlds in there. But exhaustive detail is no guarantee of that sense of completeness — nor is it much of an indication of how useful the package is going to be. My mildew herds graze contentedly

on rich pastures of exhaustively detailed campaign supplements in my deep, damp basement.

"Naw. C'mon, you know what I mean. It's gotta feel big. . . "

Yes, indeed. A quality campaign supplement has a sense of scope and grandeur. But sheer size may be a poor indicator of its epic vision. Unfortunately, the first test we game fans use to test campaign supplements for quality is heft.

"Hey, feel this! Hea-vy, man!"

Another similar and slightly more sophisticated test we make is to check page count.

"Wow! 144 pages, and only \$10."

I will not pretend to be above such simplistic evaluations. Poundage and page count still make a good first impression on me, even though experience has shown that, more often than not, the more text you get for your money, the less thought and skill into presenting it effectively.

In reviewing a number of quality campaign supplements, I've noticed a few features that support the illusion of grand scale without yielding the indigestible, intimidating bulk that unambitious design and clumsy presentation produces. We'll be looking for these features in the campaign supplements in this month's review.

Magazine-style layout and organization: Chop the text up into manageable chunks—Organize material into marginal essays and sidebars for easy browsing and reference. Use captions under graphics and illustrations. Highlight summaries and important material with contrasting typefaces, tints, boxes, and other graphic tricks. This makes the product more "browse-able" as well as readable. Seldom do we read a campaign supplement from cover to cover. More often, we just thumb through, reading whatever catches our attention.

But another reason I like this style of presentation is that it shows that someone has thought about the organization of the text and graphics. That doesn't necessarily mean that the thinking has been particularly insightful, but it is better than finding endless columns of long paragraphs running page after page without headings or any other hint of an outline structure.

Monologue and dialogue: One neat narrative presentation trick is giving background material in the voices of significant or incidental NPCs from the campaign setting. In the hands of a skilled writer, these voices can serve as models for NPCs' presentations during game sessions. Little bits of slang (references to "stunties" as a common term for dwarves) and local color ("By Gods green teeth . . .") give flavor to a campaign.

More importantly, giving background material to the players through statements by self-interested locals presents the players with an interesting puzzle. "Why should I trust this guy's statements? How does he know this information? What incentive does he have to mislead me?"

How much does he really know, and how much is he making up?" Unreliable and biased narrators giving conflicting accounts of events and locales helps support the illusion of a complex world of incomplete knowledge and dubious informants. Here, the challenge is not in weaseling the truth out of the game master, but in teasing the truth from the collected and skeptically scrutinized reports of local beggars, gossips, and sharpsters.

Campaign background accessible by the players: What the game master really wants is a group of players who can improvise characters out of the background of the campaign – players who know the setting well enough that they can stay in character in the campaign setting during the session.

On the other hand, the game master doesn't want the players to know everything about the campaign. Obviously, if the players read all the material on the mysterious villains and study the campaign sample adventures, POOF! – there goes the element of suspense. Since most campaign packs contain information that the players are not supposed to read, the poor players don't get to read up on the campaign background. This is a sorry state of affairs.

The more material that can be made directly available to the players in pull-outs, maps, or player booklets, the better. Why should GMs be the only ones allowed the pleasure of immersing himself in the campaign background? Why not give the players something to play with?

Let's look at two recent quality campaign supplements.

Griffin Island

A bit of FRP history is in order before we address *Griffin Island*. In 1981, Chaosium published a thick paperback RUNEQUEST supplement called *Griffin Mountain*, the first of a series of campaign/adventure supplements developing the RUNEQUEST game's campaign world, Glorantha. A combination of the brilliant Gloranthan campaign setting, superior graphic presentation, and excellent adventure materials made these materials the finest, fantasy role-playing supplements of their era – perhaps of all time. When The Avalon Hill Game Company purchased the rights to publish the third-edition RUNEQUEST game, these classic campaign supplements were allowed to go out of print.

Griffin Island is a revision of the 1981 *Griffin Mountain* supplement. There are three significant distinctions between the original edition and the new edition:

1. The material has been adapted to work with the new RUNEQUEST game rules. Since the old RUNEQUEST game is no longer in print, this is an essential element of the revision.

2. The new supplement has been published in a box, permitting Chaosium to present large portions of the campaign

material as player handouts. Nobody does campaign-background player handouts as well as Chaosium, and these are exceptionally good examples of their craft.

First, there is a 32"X 22" campaign map of the island. The map has been created and annotated by a hero of Griffin Island who disappeared under mysterious circumstances; it has fallen into the PCs' hands by coincidence. The map is more or less reliable, as are all good fantasy maps. Enigmatic notes have been scrawled by the ancient hero: "Seven magic arrows to pierce any magic in the High Place where lizards live. Beware the Guardians." More formal notes give brief but colorful descriptions of the major races and locales of the island and comments on their significance. From these notes, it is immediately evident that the cultures and geography of the island have been given serious and inspired consideration.

Then, there are 28 pages of player handouts. Four four-page spreads describe the four major city-states of the island, with maps, a brief history, descriptions of prominent persons and important places, floor plans of inns, and commentaries from local personages on significant topics. Another four-page spread describes the religions of the islands. Other handouts include notes on the local barbarian culture, including information necessary to create a player character from this culture, and commentaries from various island personalities on significant topics such as dwarves, griffins, slarges, and the leaders and reputations of the various city states. According to their differing backgrounds, the natives have varying opinions concerning these topics. For example, consider these comments on arcs:

"Monsters, one and all. None of them are good. Kill every one of them, even the children and pregnant sows."

"Cruel humans that have adapted from mountain-dwelling. They must have been civilized once a long time ago, because they possess sorcery and metal tools. But now they are depraved and worthless!"

"All the time the humans become more and more like the orcs. Or maybe it just gets harder personally for me to tell them apart."

"There are two kinds of orcs, good ones and bad ones. Everyone hears stories about the bad ones, but there are actually many good ones, too, thank you."

In the voices of these NPCs can be heard distinct personalities and cultural prejudices. Since these voices have been written as handouts for the players, rather than as challenging roles for the GM to improvise from scattered notes during a busy adventure session, the voices become compact, accessible emblems of the larger campaign.

3. The new supplement is no longer specifically tied to the Gloranthan universe. It is now presented as an isolated island suitable for introduction into a variety of fantasy campaign settings.

I lament the demise of the Gloranthan

universe. Even if The Avalon Hill Game Company were interested in publishing new Gloranthan material, I'm not sure there is anyone to produce it. For better or worse, Chaosium has moved on to new things. The greatest tragedy is that the old Gloranthan supplements are out of print and likely to remain so. So, it is with resigned enthusiasm that I salute the adaptation of the Gloranthan *Griffin Mountain* material to more generic fantasy conventions. I mean, what would a fantasy campaign be without orcs?

Several classic encounters have been omitted in the new adaptation. I particularly miss the Gloranthan giants – nowhere else in FRP supplements have giants been so well presented. But the best Gloranthan material has been well-adapted to a more generalized fantasy background, retaining most of the original charm and atmosphere. If divorcing *Griffin Island* from its Gloranthan roots has made it more accessible to other styles of FRP campaign, earning this fine campaign supplement a wider audience, then the adaptation is more than justified.

The campaign background material, game-master staging notes, minor encounters, and scenarios are exceptionally well-done. For the most part, the classic setting and narrative values of the original have been preserved or enhanced.

The city-states of the island are full of personalities with colorful stories and adventures tied to them – for example, a princess who rides giant hawks and her doting father; an ancient, powerful, and evil sorcerer who rules a citadel populated with cruel, disgusting, slave-trading orcs; and, rulers who make a habit of interviewing all foreign visitors (a wonderful rationale for involving the PCs in role-playing encounters with eccentric and dangerous major NPCs). The wilderness areas are provided with lovely encounters, tombs, semi-civilized monsters, and sites of obscure magical significance.

The best things about the scenario resources are their brevity and variety – perfect for an evening's entertainment, easily reviewed and understood by the GM, with good maps and simple text descriptions. GMs accustomed to D&D®-game-style adventures may think the scenarios rather skimpy on first glance, but RUNEQUEST games encourage a different pace of fantasy role-playing. The players and GM are provided with ample improvisational resources in the campaign background, the NPCs are typically well-developed (and worth a good, long chat), and RUNEQUEST game combat is a rather involved, time-consuming affair. Gathering rumors in a tavern, traveling through the wilderness, encountering a few creatures and natives, and investigating two or three rooms of an ancient chieftain's tomb will provide more than enough entertainment for an evening's role-playing.

Remember what we were saying about magazine-style layout? Chaosium's writers

and graphic designers are masters in the use of typography and graphic elements to clarify the text's organizational structure, which improves readability and ease of reference. One thing that may bother novice RUNEQUEST game players is the volume of space taken up by RUNEQUEST game NPC and monster statistics — sometimes 50% or more of the text of a scenario treatment. Believe me — those detailed statistics are necessary for melee and magical combats, and are a major pain for the GM to work up on his own.

The maps of the city-states and adventure sites, and the diagrams of the tavern floor plans are visually appealing and utilitarian. The black-and-white 34" X 22" map is not wall-hanging material, but it is just right for its game purpose. The illustrations are not exceptional, but are certainly serviceable. The overall look is a couple of steps off the pace of the classic Gloranthan supplements, but still, despite the absence of NPC portraits, stylishly rendered illustrations, and color maps and graphics, it compares favorably with other contemporary products.

Summary evaluation: The excellent presentation of the player handouts enhances the already superior quality of the campaign and adventure material, and fine presentation of the original *Griffin Mountain*. As the only representative of a classic line of campaign supplements still in print, *Griffin Island* is an essential part of any fantasy role-player's library. Newcomers to Chaosium's campaign-supplement presentation wizardry will marvel at its excellence. Old fans of the out-of-print Gloranthan supplements must resist nostalgic comparisons with the good old days and recognize *Griffin Island* for what it is: the best contemporary fantasy campaign supplement.

Undead

I admit, I was a bit surprised at how good this supplement turned out. From the title, I envisioned an encyclopedic treatment of the standard undead types of most FRP games — skeletons, zombies, vampires, liches, and so on — with a couple of standard scenarios in which undead lords hide down in deep dungeons, guarded by scads of dead guys, daring bold adventurers to come in after them.

And from Mayfair, I had only modest expectations. Actually, the only Role Aids AD&D game supplements I've given more than a cursory glance — Cory Glaberson's *Dragons* and Laurel Nicholson's *Under Elven Banners* — I rather liked. But word of mouth about Mayfair FRP game supplements hadn't been too promising.

The campaign setting is the Verdaise region, on the floor of a vast caldera, 40 x 15 miles in area. The local kingpins are five Lichlords in the service of the evil god Dierguth. This peachy deity, when angered at some presumptuous Elgaard dwarves, blew them and their mountain home sky-high in a volcanic extravaganza,

leaving the deep, bowl-shaped land of volcanoes, molten lakes, and lava tunnels that the Lichlords call home.

In no time, those nice Lichlords had nifty undead legions boiling over the rims of the caldera, spilling out over the neighboring lands, having a jolly time conquering their neighbors and recruiting the victims willy-nilly. A tough bunch of 200 dwarf freedom fighters, undaunted by the dramatic removal of several hundred square miles of their native mountain range, have slipped back into Verdaise and crawled into the lava tunnels, vowing to someday reclaim their homeland from the occupying dead guys.

The volcanic terrain on the floor of the caldera, with its lava waterfalls, 50'-high ash dunes, and bubbling lakes, makes a unique and colorful campaign setting. The dead guys are nicely rendered. The discussion of undead unit tactics is pretty convincing — the big undead NPCs are charmingly ghastly — and there are some swell original spells, magical items, monsters, and grand sorcerous rituals that are specially tailored to the atmosphere and gaming elements of a campaign focusing on the undead. For example, there is a handy Mask of the Dead which restores character levels lost to those pesky level-draining wraiths. The ritual for creating this device is given; if the ritual goes wrong, a Flame Zombie is produced — a delightfully gruesome dead guy wreathed in flames, but cold as ice. Another charming set of monsters are the Children of Pnogwyn, a horde of undead children who died in a plague, and now search vengefully for the adults who abandoned them.

The adventure is fairly linear, and there's quite a bit of dragging-around-by-the-nose, but this supplement is a good example of the genre. There are plenty of staging hints for hamming up the presentation, and plenty of resources for keeping the action moving and the players busy solving problems, parlaying with NPCs, and bashing dead guys. The final set piece really won my admiration. I won't spoil it by describing it, but I'd love to see the faces on the players as the game master springs it on them.

The graphic presentation is excellent. Talk about magazine-style layout — this is a real pleasure to browse through. The book is printed throughout in two colors, dark blue and gold, and the effects achieved are pretty decent. The illustrations support the macabre, brooding tone of the campaign. The maps are generously provided, well-detailed, and professionally keyed. The layout clearly indicates the text's structure and encourages browsing by breaking the material into lots of convenient descriptions and essays. The whole graphic design is both attractive and utilitarian. The package even has a reference index — a lamentably rare feature, given that campaign supplements are supposed to be designed as reference works.

As for providing campaign background in the voice of NPCs from the setting, *Undead* has some pretty nice bits. Because *Undead* is a glue-bound book, it can't provide player handouts, but it does the next best thing — there are numerous sections designed to be read aloud to the players. Read-alouds can be pretty flat, but these are generally well-written with good stage directions. Note particularly the speeches of the special NPCs in the back of the book; these give some pretty grim accounts of encounters with some of Verdaise's exotic undeads.

Unfortunately, the weakest part of the presentation is the title and the cover. Mayfair's practice of purchasing rights to previously published art by well-known fantasy artists does guarantee that the art will be at least tolerably well-rendered, but it also guarantees that the cover will poorly represent the contents of the product. Likewise, the title does little to suggest the distinctive virtues of this campaign supplement.

Summary evaluation: This is a quality AD&D game campaign supplement, comparable to some of TSR's better supplements. The setting is imaginative and fantastic; the dead guys are grim and menacing; there are plenty of neat new magics and monsters; and the adventure, while a bit contrived and manipulative, has some nice bits. The unusual two-color printing looks smart, and the graphic design is first-class. Nicholson and company have done a commendable job in advancing the reputation of Mayfair's modules.

Short and sweet

Robin Hood™: The Role-Playing Campaign, by Graham Staplehurst. ICE, \$15.00. Role-playing in medieval England under the yoke of the Norman conquerors . . . well, the medieval part is all right — there's lots of nice stuff here about medieval history, legends, and daily life — but it's not particularly exciting to those used to fantasy adventuring with lots of magic and monsters and evil sorcerers and stuff. The encounters and adventures are pretty good — recommended, even — but the history and geography are pretty dry reading and are not well-staged as elements in adventures or campaigns.

Game masters running fantasy or historical campaigns with a strong, medieval English flavor should find this a useful sourcebook, but *Robin Hood* doesn't present a very convincing setting for a role-playing campaign.

Who Watches the Watchmen? by Dan Greenberg. Mayfair, \$7.00. This DCTM HEROES adventure is based on the first-rate comic-book series, *The Watchmen*. The series features striking antiheroic characters and an intriguing setting — an alternate history in which the Keene Act outlaws costumed crusaders.

If this were a Watchman source pack, it would be pretty interesting. Unfortunately, it's not — it's just an adventure, and one with a rather thin plot. Worse yet, it's set in the period before the Keene Act makes being a costumed hero illegal, eliminating one of the most interesting elements of the Watchman setting. You play the early Watchmen — homemade characters from your own campaign can't be used — and it's hard to imagine wanting to play these characters in an extended campaign. I suspect this project suffered from the problems that plague many licensed products. In such situations, designers are often encumbered by restrictions imposed by the established plotlines and characterizations. In this case, I recommend you read the comic series and skip the licensed, role-playing adventure.

The Desert of Desolation, by Tracy and Laura Hickman, and Phillip Meyers; additional design and revision by Peter Rice and William John Wheeler. TSR, Inc., \$15.00. Like *Griffin Island*, this is a revision of a classic FRP game supplement: the 13, 14, and 15 AD&D game modules. Tracy Hickman, best known for his *Ravenloft* series and DRAGONLANCE® saga work, is a first-rate designer, and these modules are exceptional examples of the module genre. Rice and Wheeler, as part of the Companions design team, used some origi-

nal and effective presentation techniques in their own privately published modules several years ago.

In this revision, some additional background material has been added, along with substantial staging tips for DMs. The original modules were nifty dungeons, with lots of puzzles, monsters, and colorful encounters. There are some nice new maps — particularly the isometric map of the tomb of Amun-Re — and some cute, bogus ancient inscriptions for the players to decipher.

It's heavy, man — but a bit too heavy for my taste. A 128-page module, densely packed with information, built around a very linear narrative, and consisting, for the most part, of dungeon crawls — well, it makes slow going, and the writing style of the revision is pretty wordy. The old-fashioned module-model of graphic design doesn't help the pacing and readability, particularly in comparison with the magazine-style presentations of *Griffin Island* and *Undead* discussed above.

The original 13-15 modules were pretty exciting in their time. In this revised version, they still count as classic AD&D game adventures. But exciting? I'm afraid not.

Shadows over Bögenhofen, by Graeme Davis, Jim Bambra, and Phil Gallagher. Games Workshop, \$12.00. Now, here's something exciting. This pack, continuing

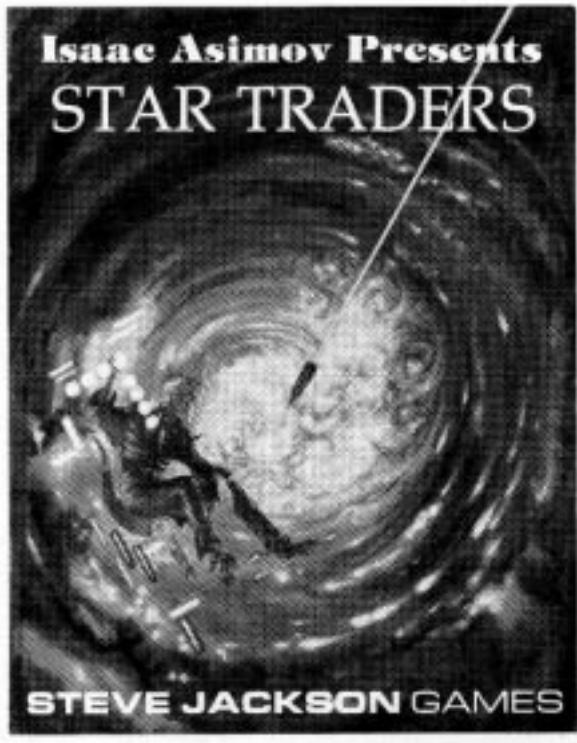
the adventure begun in *The Enemy Within* (reviewed in issue #124), is even better than its predecessor. For starters, it's got lots of nice enclosures, particularly the color fold-out map of Bögenhofen and the color tactical map for the adventure's grand finale, along with graphically-appealing player handouts and GM maps and references. And what a swell cover.

But that's just the frothy moment after you pop the plastic. The real charm of the pack is in the text and the presentation of the adventure. This supplement effectively exploits the Cthulhu-style gothic horror elements implied in WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY games. The atmosphere is beautifully grim, the plot mysterious and full of nifty twists, and the consequences of the failure of the PCs to foil the plot are — well, they're pretty spectacular. One particularly fine section is the action at the Bögenhofen Fair. Want to test yourself against the carnival wrestling champion? Want the fortune teller to scry your future? And don't miss the fabulous Chaos Mutant Goblin at Dr. Malthusius's freak show Zoopecia.

Instead of jamming dozens of episodes and encounters into the pack, a few very good episodes and encounters are well-staged and elaborately developed. And the illustrations and graphic presentation? In a word, Stunning. Are you following me here? This is Good. Real Good. ☐

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SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., write to:

Sage Advice
TSR, Inc.
P.O. Box 509
Lake Geneva WI 53147

This edition of Sage Advice focuses on questions of an unusual nature — some of them quite odd, but all of them interesting.

Where can I get cardboard figures for use with fantasy role-playing games?

TSR's two Dragon Tiles fantasy play aids contain cardboard figures. Their stock numbers and titles are: 9121 Dragon Tiles 1 and 9145 Dragon Tiles 2. Look for them at your local dealer. If you can't find them locally, you can order them through the TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

I have a player who cheats — I think. He never misses a saving throw, seldom misses with an attack, and never “misses out” by rolling low scores. Recently, he made a “successful” roll for divine intervention. Also, every character he brings into my game is loaded with money and magic that I don’t think he earned. What should I do?

Cheaters tend to spoil things for everybody. Try these solutions: Make sure you or at least two of your trustworthy players witness every die roll the player makes. This will virtually eliminate cheating in that respect. You can fix the other problems by just putting your foot down. As DM, you decide if and when a deity shows up to help your PCs. Don't let a player tell you otherwise. If you don't want the deity to appear, it doesn't. If you allow a die roll, roll the die yourself. The same holds true for treasure or magic: If you think a character has too much of either, don't allow it into the game, no matter where the player says it came from — whether you believe him or not. Bust doesn't enter into this — only what you think is reasonable. Remember: Your word is law in your game. You should try to be fair, consistent, and entertaining, but after that, what you say goes.

One of my players wants to have a baby; what should I do?

Your question had me momentarily

confused. If one of your players wanted to have a baby, you, the DM, should be the last person she should talk to.

I take it that you mean that one of your players would like his or her player *character* to have a baby — an event that certainly requires the DM's involvement. I suggest that you handle it discreetly “off-stage.” There is no reason to play out having a baby; just assign a percentage chance each game month that the mother gets pregnant. The chance should never be higher than 36%; you can increase the chance slightly if one of the parents is an orc or half-orc, and you should decrease it if one of the parents is an elf of any type.

Once the mother is pregnant, you must determine how long before the child is born. The gestation period for humans is nine months. This is the proper period for most man-sized creatures. Gnomes and halflings might require shorter lengths of time. In nature, the length of gestation depends on the birth weight of the baby, not on the lifespan of the species. The mother will have to refrain from adventuring during the last half of the pregnancy, and adventuring after the birth will be difficult at best.

You may decide to introduce a few random factors such as a survival percentage for mother or child, or the possibility of a miscarriage. You're on your own there — just keep the chances small, if you use them at all.

My male paladin wants to marry a chaotic-evil lady magic-user. Is this okay or does he have to marry another (female) paladin?

This question is actually very complex. To answer it fully, we would have to define marriage itself. This would require a philosophical treatise of considerable length. To keep things short, let's make a few assumptions:

1. The marriage conforms to the Western definition of the term.
2. The paladin in question belongs to a sect or church that allows its paladins to get married in the first place.
3. The paladin in question has not taken some kind of vow that might prevent him from holding up his half of the marriage.

Whether or not these assumptions are correct depends upon the circumstances in your campaign. If they do apply, there is no particular reason why your paladin can't marry anyone he chooses. Remember, however, that all paladins are strictly lawful good. They are likely to run into

trouble if they choose mates who are not also lawful good. Indeed, marrying a chaotic-evil character might actually cause the paladin to lose his paladinhood. Diving headlong into a relationship with such an unpredictable spouse is a chaotic act, and promising to support, shield, or even obey an evil character suggests at least tacit approval of the character's beliefs and activities, and is evil in itself.

On the other hand, it is possible for some sects to place any number of restrictions or requirements on their paladins' marriages. This is up to your DM. In the end, it is up to your DM to decide if a marriage is acceptable.

What does “TSR” stand for?

TSR doesn't really stand for anything, any longer. The letters were taken from the initials of the parent company, Tactical Studies Rules. Tactical Studies Rules no longer exists; only TSR, Inc. remains.

Will TSR publish my module?

TSR works with published authors only. If you haven't been published, try the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine (if you're an RPGA™ Network member); or DUNGEON™ Adventures. Be sure to write for guidelines and send a query letter first.

I have two players who are always getting into arguments during games. They argue about rules, treasure splits, mapping — you name it. Needless to say, witnessing these arguments is not fun for me or my other players. What should I do?

Players who argue a lot probably shouldn't play together. If this isn't feasible, start dealing with the problem before the game begins. Tell the players ahead of time that you don't want them to fight.

During the game, try to shut the players up before an argument starts. Try to anticipate what the argument will be about, and make a ruling on it, then make both players stick to it.

After the game, explain to the players that their fighting is spoiling the game for everyone else. If the two players just don't like each other, they have to be made to understand that you — the DM — won't tolerate personal arguments during the game. When they argue about the rules, make them understand that you — the DM — make decisions about the rules.

How do you fight a black dragon? Spells don't work on them, and they're made out of acid.

Black dragons are not made out of acid; they simply use an acid breath weapon. Spells affect dragons just as they affect other monsters — if a dragon fails its saving throw, the spell affects the dragon. Dragons are also vulnerable to weapons.

How long, in real time, does it take for a character to reach 9th level?

The answer to this one depends on how

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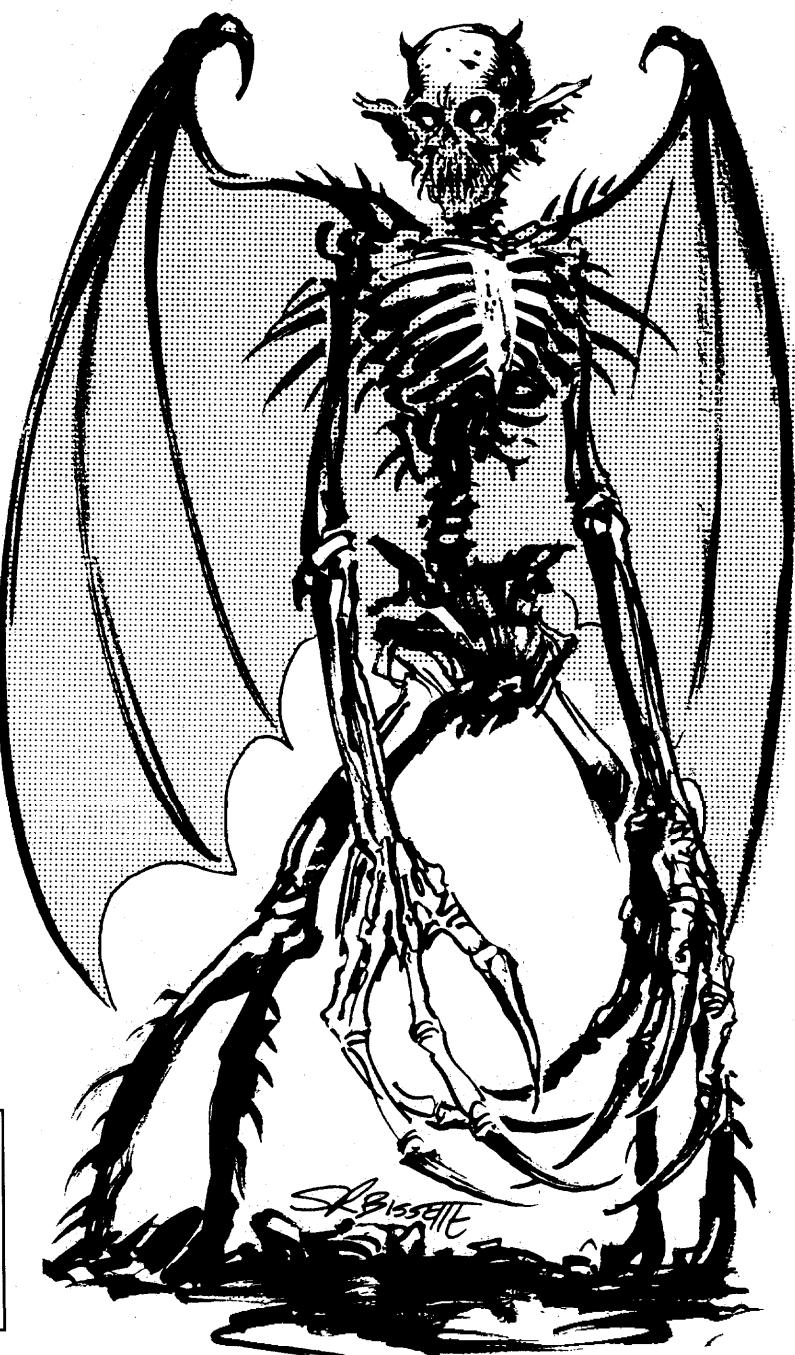
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often you play, with whom you play, and whether or not you are really following the rules. In some Lake Geneva campaigns, it would take you about a year to reach 9th level if you played the same character once or twice a week.

I'm trying to locate two older TSR modules, the solo modules M1 and M2. Where can I find them?

These two products may be obtained by getting in touch with the Mail Order Hobby Shop. Write to the address given in the first question in this column and ask for prices and a catalog.

How do you pronounce the word "myrmidon"?

Myrmidon is pronounced MUR-mi-don. The "ur" is sounded like the "ur" in cur or burr. The "mi" is like the "mi" in miss.

When will the next of your STAR FRONTIERS® modules come out? How about Volume II of Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space?

There are currently no plans for more STAR FRONTIERS game products.

Will there be a D&D® boxed game set or rules supplement covering the Old Ones?

There are no plans for any further D&D boxed game sets or rules supplements. However, D&D Immortals Set modules might cast some light on this subject in future releases.

What happened to the D&D™ cartoon?

The D&D cartoon was the victim of the network's annual program selection process. The network simply decided not to renew the cartoon for another year. If you want to know more, write to the CBS television network.

What do I do if my players want to split up an adventuring group, say to save game time (and spell duration) when mapping a section of dungeon? I've tried just alternating between groups, but whenever one group meets a monster the other group rushes to join them.

There are a couple of ways to deal with this. The first is to make the party stay together — just say "no" when they want to split up. The second is to play along normally, alternating between groups. This means only one group plays at a time, but at least they can watch each other play. If one group gets into trouble, there is really nothing wrong with the other group rushing to the rescue — fantasy literature is filled with nick-of-time rescues. Or you can tell the other group that they don't know the first group is in trouble, and are not allowed to come to the rescue. They may think twice about splitting up after they see half their party slaughtered. Of course, smart players

might find a way to discover that their comrades are in trouble; if it's legitimate, let them help. Clever solutions to sticky problems are part of role-playing games.

The third solution is to conduct each group's adventure in secret. This is the least satisfactory because one group has nothing to do while you DM the other — but it keeps the players from learning things that they shouldn't. The boredom that the nonparticipating players suffer may discourage them from splitting up in the future. It might also cause them to quit your game.

Running a D&D game requires you — the DM — to make difficult decisions such as these. Ultimately, you must make them on your own.

What does "1d10" mean? What does "d%" mean?

"1d10" means roll one 10-sided die. "5d10" means roll five 10-sided dice. That is, the number before the "d" is the number of dice and the number after the "d" indicates the number of sides each die has. The abbreviation "d%" indicates percentile dice: that is, roll two ten-sided dice, reading one die as tens and one die as ones in order to get a number between 1 and 100 (00 = 100). The term "d%" is also expressed as "d10!"

I've just moved and I can't find a new campaign. I own a couple of solo adventures, but they don't match the levels of my characters.

By any or all of the following:

1. Try out TSR, Inc.'s solo modules and ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Adventure Gamebooks. You'll probably enjoy them, even if the characters in them are not the level that you wish to play.

2. Ask local book stores and hobby shops that carry TSR products to let you post notices asking for a DM.

3. Consider placing a classified ad in a local newspaper.

4. You might consider joining the RPGA Network. The Network is a TSR-administered worldwide club of role-playing gamers. One of its services is to help get gamers together. Membership information is obtainable from: RPGA Network, PO. Box 509, Lake Geneva WI 53147 (ATTN: Membership Director).

How can I find a store that sells D&D games and accessories?

Look in, your local Yellow Pages (if you haven't already) under: Hobby; Hobby Stores, Retail; or, Books. Your local library probably has out-of-town phone directories which will include yellow Pages for towns near you.

What is a Sphere of Death?

There is no object or item called the "Sphere of Death." The AD&D® game has a magical item called the *sphere of annihilation*, found in the DMG. In the D&D Immortals Set, the Sphere of Death is the

same as the Sphere of Entropy, one of the five metaphysical Spheres that control all things in the multiverse of the D&D game; the other spheres are Matter, Energy, Time, and Thought. See the D&D Masters and D&D Immortals Sets for a more complete explanation.

What does "NSA" mean?

"NSA" refers to swords, and means "No Special Abilities." In other words, the sword is unintelligent and does not have an ego or any extra powers.

Where can I find reusable hex sheets for making game maps?

The TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop sells laminated sheets with 25mm hexes on one side and 25mm squares on the other. One can draw on them with overhead projector pens or other water-soluble markers, then wipe them clean for reuse. This product is called a laminated hex sheet; its stock number is Z-10500, and it costs \$5.00 per 21" x 34" sheet. This product is *not* in the catalog, but can be ordered by mail.

What is a murder hole?

A murder hole is an opening in a ceiling, usually in a fortification, from which a defender can attack an intruder with a spear or other long, stabbing weapon. It is very hard to return an attack made from a murder hole. In the D&D game, a murder hole provides the attacker with full cover (-4 AC bonus). In the AD&D game, a murder hole provides 75% cover (+7 defensive adjustment).

My players want to roll their own dice. Do I have to let them?

No. The DM is free to establish whatever "table rules" he wishes. Most players will enjoy the game more, however, if they are allowed to make their own die rolls. If you are worried about cheating, you can still allow players to make their own rolls but require any roll to be witnessed by at least two other players.

My regular D&D gaming group has grown to 12 players. Do you have any suggestions on how to handle so large a group?

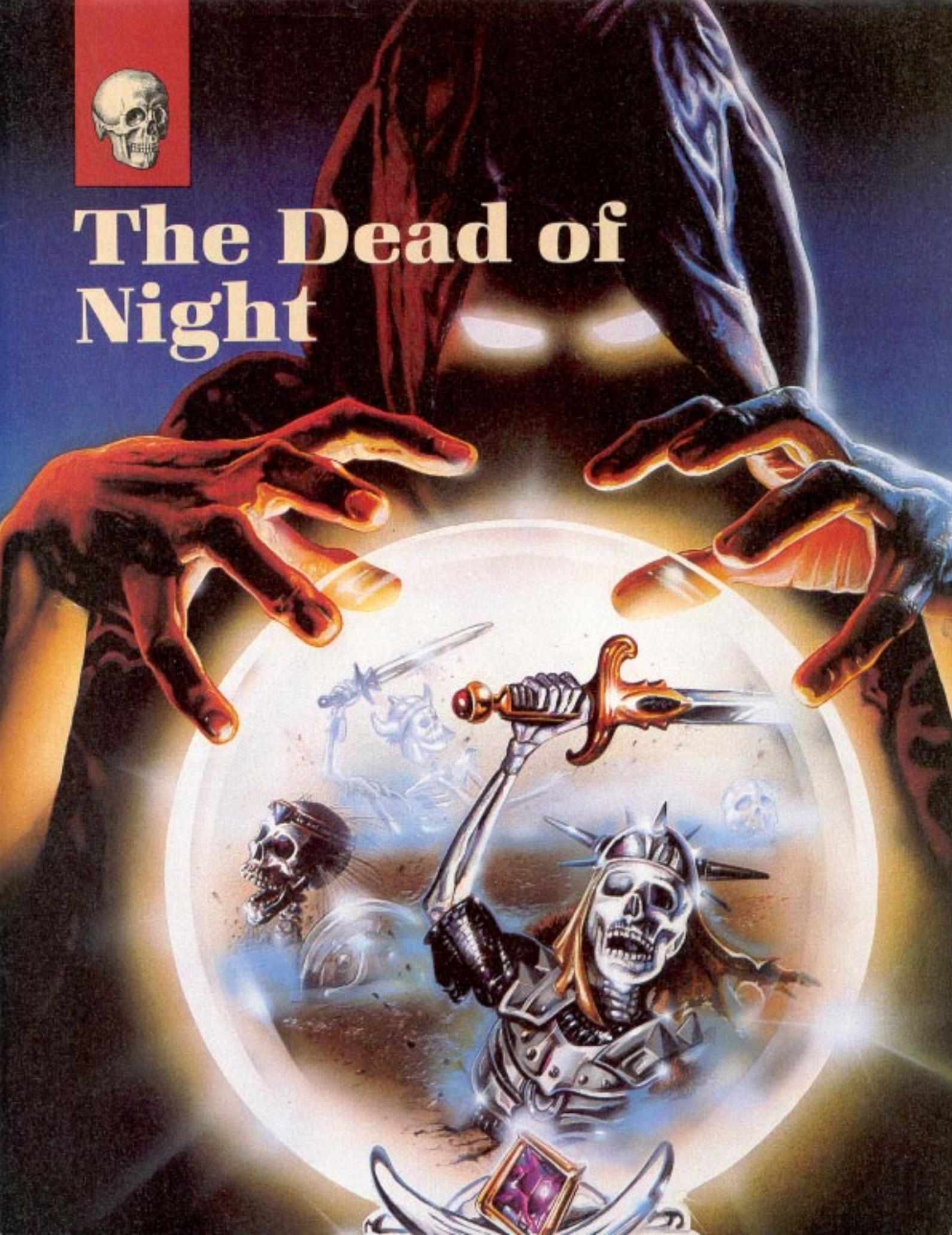
The key to handling any group of that size is organization. Make sure that you have a summary of each character's statistics, spells, and items at hand. This quick-reference material will eliminate delays. When a melee develops, ask each player in turn (using some form of PC initiative system or by simple round-robin selection) for his character's actions. Don't allow the players to speak out of turn. Using figures to illustrate the party's marching order and each character's position when melees occur will also help.

Can the DM also play in a role-playing game?

(continued on page 81)



The Dead of Night





Hearts of Darkness

Vampires, from Dracula to Ch'ing Shih



by Tom Moldvay

The word "vampire" is derived from the Slavic word "vampir." Indeed, vampire legends are strong in the traditional folklore of all Slavic countries (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, and Russia). The classic vampire legends, however, come from the ancient Kingdom of Hungary and were probably created by the Slavic minority of the country.

A vampire is a malign, animated corpse that seeks nourishment and causes harm by sucking the blood of sleeping persons. The best known version of the vampire legend adds several other traits:

1. A vampire operates only at night. It must sleep during the day, resting in a coffin which contains some of the soil in which it was originally buried. At best, a vampire can exist for only a few minutes in direct sunlight before being destroyed.

2. A vampire cannot cross the threshold of a dwelling unless first invited inside. Once it gains permission, it can return at night at will.

3. A vampire cannot, by itself, cross running water (such as a stream or river). If one of the living provides assistance, it can cross safely. A vampire also needs assistance to cross salt water.

4. A vampire can turn itself into a vampire bat. This trait is a fairly recent addition to the vampire legend, since vampire bats are only found in the Caribbean Sea and South America. Many vampires have other shape-shifting powers and can transform themselves into other animal shapes, especially those of wolves.

5. A vampire holds the allegiance of certain types of animals — especially those which are malicious or love the night. The most typical animals here are bats, wolves, and rats. Some vampires can even summon these creatures to their aid. The most powerful vampires also have hereditary human helpers; generations of families, even entire clans, may serve the same powerful vampire, acting as its living allies. (AD&D® game monsters with an affinity for vampires include lamias, rakshasas, stirges, and pseudo-vampires.)

6. A vampire has an aversion to certain plants (such as garlic), holy symbols (such as the cross), and fragrances (such as holy incense). The more powerful vampires can temporarily overcome their aversion (especially if the will of the victim weakens).

7. A vampire can change into a mistlike form which can seep through the tiniest crack. In fact, this mist is usually the way in which the vampire leaves its coffin, which is normally kept buried underground.

8. A vampire has supernatural strength and agility. A normal human has no chance against it in combat. The strength and dexterity of a vampire allow it to perform feats impossible to normal humans, like climbing sheer surfaces or leaping across great distances.

9. At night, outside its coffin, a vampire is invulnerable to most attacks. Normal weapons, even bullets, have no effect on it. Some vampires, however, can be harmed by silver weapons or weapons that have been especially blessed.

10. A vampire cannot eat normal food. Its only nourishment is fresh blood. At most, a vampire can pretend to eat a few crumbs and sip a bit of wine. Even then, the food and drink will cause it pain.

11. A vampire is a soulless creature. It thus casts no reflection in mirrors, nor does it cast a shadow like living creatures.

12. A vampire is generally described as being exceedingly gaunt and lean, with deathly pale skin. Most of the time, its skin is as cold as ice and radiates the chill of the grave. Occasionally, its skin grows fevered and burning, like a hot coal. Its eyes either glow with a hideous red light or are icy blue-gray. The lips are rich and full, and are the color of fresh blood. A vampire's teeth are white and gleaming, with long, pointed canines. Its nails are usually long and pointed like talons. The vampire initially smells unbearably fetid and rank, like the stench of a decomposing body. As time goes on (and the vampire's body would normally have decayed to mere bones), the vampire merely smells a bit stale and musty, like a closed room that needs airing. The stench of a vampire can be temporarily suppressed and is strongest just before it attacks.

13. Before feasting on a victim, a vampire has an aged, hollow look. After draining a victim, the vampire looks younger and somewhat bloated.

14. A vampire has strong hypnotic powers and can use these powers to break the will of a victim. It is especially dangerous to look into a vampire's eyes. The mesmeric attraction often has a sexual basis, and many vampires can more easily hypnotize victims of the opposite sex (though only the blood, not the sex, of a victim is important to the vampire).

15. If so desired, a vampire can transform its victims into vampires, thus spreading the curse of the undead. Only a select few of the victims become vampires; most victims merely die as a result of being drained by the bite of a vampire.

16. A vampire can only be killed while asleep in its coffin. There are three traditional methods for slaying a vampire: drive a stake through its heart, cut off its head, or completely burn its body. Severing the head and placing the remains in running water is said to be good, as is exposing the vampire to direct sunlight.

The usual wood from which the stake should be made is hawthorn or whitethorn. In Russian folklore, aspen or maple is used. It is important to drive the stake right through the heart of a vampire in one single stroke. If it takes more than one blow, the vampire can later return to its undead state.

Similarly, the vampire's head should be severed in a single blow. The ideal weapon

to sever the head of a vampire is a sharpened spade used to dig graves. If at all possible, the same shovel used to originally bury the vampire should be used to destroy it.

Cremation is a fairly universal method to destroy vampires. If vampires have no body, they cannot roam as animated corpses. Considering how malign and powerful vampires can be, it is probably best to use several methods of execution simultaneously just to be on the safe side.

Other vampire legends

There are a number of other legends which are not necessarily part of the classic vampire myth. In Slavic folklore, the vampire and the werewolf are closely related. In fact, the surest way to become a vampire after death is to have been a werewolf in life. Another way to become a vampire is to eat the flesh of an animal that has been killed by a wolf (especially a werewolf in wolf form). The idea is that the wolf's bite has spread the contagion. Not surprisingly, werewolves and vampires continue to be closely associated. In fact, the wolves summoned by a vampire are more likely to be werewolves than normal wolves.

The connection between the werewolf and vampire can be used as the basis for a subplot in fantasy games. A party of adventurers might manage to kill a werewolf — only to be stalked, several days later, by a vampire (who is actually the werewolf returned from the grave for revenge).

In some legends, it is not only the bite of the vampire which is deadly — it is also the breath of the vampire, which is particularly fetid and smells of rotting corpses. The breath also has another quality of rotting corpses — it carries all sorts of diseases. Thus, in some countries, contagious diseases are thought to start with the breath of a vampire.

In Chinese legend, the misty vampire form is also connected to those gaseous marsh lights which are the basis for the will-o'-the-wisp legends. Again, there is a chain of logic that connects vampires to disease. Swamps are known both for their heavy mists and the diseases they breed. Vampires must, therefore, breed disease because of their misty form. In addition, vampires are bloodsuckers, as are mosquitoes, which are similarly notorious for carrying and transmitting disease.

Real vampires?

Vampires are not merely a mythological phenomenon. Throughout history, there have been people who believed in the physical existence of vampires. There are, in fact, numerous historical accounts of the alleged sighting and slaying of vampires. Most of the reports are second- or third-hand, and should be viewed with suspicion. Even so, the sheer number of "authentic" accounts have led some individuals to speculate whether or not there

might be some real basis to the vampire myths. Two of the more interesting explanations are those of "catalepsy" and the "psychic sponge."

Catalepsy is a kind of trance-state which is virtually identical with death. The bodily functions are so reduced that there are no noticeable vital signs. Before the advent of modern medical techniques, an examination of a cataleptic, even by a skilled doctor, would have revealed no heartbeat or breathing.

The condition of catalepsy in the past could easily lead to premature burials, since no form of embalming techniques were formerly used. No one knows for sure how common premature burials once were, but there is plenty of evidence for both catalepsy and premature burials. One investigator, Dr. Franz Hartmann, collected details of more than 700 cases of premature burial. Most unfortunate victims of premature burial awoke in their coffins and eventually suffocated, unable to break out. But in some cases, panic gave the victim superhuman strength. If the grave was shallow or the ground especially loose, the victim was able to escape from the coffin.

In most cases, the victim had never heard of catalepsy or premature burial. The dead were dead, and only corpses were buried. The victim had been buried; he must therefore be dead. But the victim could move and feel. Only vampires came back from the dead with uncorrupted bodies. The logic was inescapable: The victim must be a vampire.

It's easy to see how the victim, too, could believe he was a vampire and would act exactly as a vampire was expected to act. The trauma of the premature burial could easily induce a kind of insanity in which the victim hallucinated changing shapes, having hypnotic powers, and growing younger with each drink of blood. If the victim continued to live by murdering people and drinking blood, the belief would be more strongly reinforced with each new drink (blood has enough nutritional value that it could sustain a minimum level of life).

If a sane victim tried to return to his family, the villagers would be likely to treat him as a vampire. In fact, in many of the historical accounts, the "vampire" looks and acts perfectly normal — except for the fact that he had been buried some time before. There are accounts of people returning from the grave to take up life as normal, even having children after they had supposedly died.

The catalepsy theory can provide an interesting subplot, especially for lower-level adventures. What if the vampire the characters meet in a dungeon was actually a victim of a premature burial who believed he was a vampire? The subplot allows for plenty of inventive role-playing by both the DM and the players. If the characters eventually discover the truth without killing the "vampire," there could

be the additional mission of trying to return the victim to his home and convince everyone that the poor fellow really wasn't a vampire.

A "psychic sponge" or "psychic vampire" is a more bizarre concept — a person who appears to physically drain the energy of other people. Psychic vampirism, according to some sources, is largely an unconscious psychic power. The individual really doesn't know why everyone around him grows pale and tired and seems to be constantly ill while he keeps growing stronger.

If vital energy can actually be drained in some psychic way, then it could explain many of the symptoms of supposed vampire victims. People in a village where such a being lived would become pale and sickly for no apparent reason. After a time, the villagers might notice something was wrong. If they dug up enough graves, by the laws of chance, one would be sure to contain a body that had not decomposed at a normal rate. Here would be "proof" that a vampire was ravaging the village.

Dracula: lord of vampires

The most famous vampire, Dracula, though familiar to most of us as a character in a novel, is based on stories about an actual historical individual. Dracula's real name was Vlad Tepes. In A.D. 1431, the same year that Vlad was born, his father (also named Vlad) was made a knight of the Order of the Dragon, a paramilitary organization dedicated to fighting the Turks. In Rumanian, "dragon" is "dracul." So, the father was given the nickname Dracul, and his son was given the nickname Dracula, which means "son of Dracul." Unfortunately, "dracul" also means "devil." Thus, Dracula could mean either "son of the dragon" or "son of the devil."

Vlad Dracul was Prince of Wallachia from 1436-1442 and again from 1443-1447. The small country of Wallachia (which today comprises one-third of Rumania) lies between the lower Danube River and the Carpathian Mountains. Wallachia was nominally a Banates (frontier march) of the Kingdom of Hungary, but it had been essentially an independent country since about 1360.

At the time that Vlad Dracul was prince, Wallachia was in imminent danger of being absorbed by the Turkish Empire then overrunning most of the Balkans. Any leader of Wallachia was stuck in the middle of a power struggle between the Turks and the Hungarians. Both tried to put candidates favorable to their side on the throne, and both sent armies or assassins when they became displeased with the prince's rule.

In 1444, Vlad Dracul and his two oldest sons, Mircea and Vlad, joined the anti-Turk crusade which led to the disastrous defeat of the Western crusaders at Varna. After the defeat, Vlad Dracul was forced to give up his second son, Vlad, and his youngest

son, Radu, as hostages to the Turks. For the next four years, the young Dracula was a Turkish prisoner. While the imprisonment was not always physically harsh, it was an extreme mental ordeal since Dracula was likely to be executed at any moment if the Turks did not like his father's policies. During those years, Dracula came to view life as fleeting and cheap. In reaction to his imprisonment, he developed a reputation for trickery, cunning, insubordination, and brutality.

By remaining on good terms with the Turkish Sultan, Vlad Dracul angered the protector of Hungary, John Hunyadi. Henchmen of Hunyadi murdered Vlad Dracul and his eldest son Mircea in December of 1447. John Hunyadi then placed his own candidate, Vladislav II, on the throne of Wallachia. Backed by the Turks, Dracula became Prince of Wallachia for two months in 1448. But the Hungarian faction was too strong. Dracula fled to Moldavia, the northernmost Rumanian principality. There, he formed a close friendship and alliance with his cousin Steven.

Politics in Moldavia were as dangerous as in Wallachia. In 1451, Steven's father, Bogdan, was murdered, and the two cousins fled. Dracula managed to make peace with John Hunyadi and served under Hunyadi in John's constant fight against the Turks. From 1451-1456, Dracula lived in Transylvania, which is now the third province of Rumania, but which was traditionally a part of the Kingdom of Hungary. Transylvania contained many Hungarians and Germans as well as Romanians.

Vladislav II was having the same kind of problems Dracula's father once had. In 1456, John Hunyadi decided that Vladislav was favoring the Turks too much. He loaned Dracula the nucleus of an army and sent him to regain the throne of Wallachia. Dracula defeated Vladislav and became Prince of Wallachia again.

Now, Dracula could release all his pent-up hatreds. He executed the members of the faction that killed his father. Since he couldn't be sure exactly who was guilty, he solved the problem by killing 500 suspects, among whom were bound to be the 20 or so men responsible for his father's death. Dracula raided the Turks, whom he hated with pathological fervor, and also raided the German merchant towns of Transylvania. The Germans had come to Transylvania hundreds of years before as immigrants from Saxony, invited by the Hungarian king to encourage commerce. To many of the Rumanians, the Germans were foreign upstarts, monopolizing trade throughout Transylvania. On St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1460, nearly 30,000 men, women, and children of German descent were slain on a hill outside the city of Brasov in Transylvania.

But Dracula's main enemies were the Turks. In 1461-1462, he led a campaign against them in which he made full use of guerilla tactics and terrorism. By Dracula's

own count, his forces slew 23,809 Turks. In fact, Dracula cut off the heads, noses, or ears of the Turks to keep an accurate count, then sent them as presents to neighboring Christian rulers to enlist their aid against the infidel Turks (without success). Dracula's favorite means of killing his victims was by impaling them on a stake. This practice gave him his second nickname, "Tepes" which means "The Impaler."

By the end of 1462, Vlad Tepes was driven from the throne by his younger brother Radu, who had become a Turkish puppet. When Vlad appealed to Mathias Corvinus, son of John Hunyadi and now King of Hungary, he was imprisoned. Mathias was concentrating on political maneuvers in Europe, and he needed a quiet border with the Turks.

Vlad Tepes was still a valuable political asset. Eventually, he converted from the Orthodox to the Roman Catholic religion and married one of Mathias' sisters. When Stephen (the Great) of Moldavia, a remarkable cousin of Vlad who managed to hold the throne for nearly 50 years, supported Dracula's claim to Wallachia, the time was ripe for Vlad's return. The official commander of the expedition was Stephen Bathory, Prince of Transylvania (soon to be elected King of Poland). The army was made up of Hungarians, Wallachians, Transylvanians, and Moldavians. In 1476, they defeated the Turks and set Dracula once more on the throne of Wallachia.

But Dracula had alienated too many factions among his subjects. Before he could consolidate his reign, his enemies united against him, and Dracula was slain on a hilltop outside Bucharest. His third reign had lasted barely two months.

In his own day, Dracula was notorious. Numerous writers, especially Germans sympathetic to their Transylvanian cousins, wrote about him as the "Blood Monster" Bram Stoker knew some of the stories about Dracula and made them the basis for his main character in the novel of the same name.

Dracula was certainly bloodthirsty with a pathological cruelty. He firmly believed in the effects of terror to intimidate his subjects and defeat his enemies. Even his favored means of torture, the stake, made him a natural candidate for the vampire legend that grew around him.

At the same time, Dracula managed to maintain some shreds of personal honor. It was his boast that a person could walk across Wallachia with a bag of gold and be completely safe from bandits (who feared his wrath too much to operate in the country). There were many cases in which Dracula personally rewarded faithful service. No one questioned Dracula's personal courage or his prowess as a warrior. He was even something of a patriot,

So, the main character of the novel *Dracula* is no mere one-sided personality. He is evil, certainly, and terrifying, cruel, and merciless — yet he retains a hint of

honor, his courage is undaunted, and he is still human enough to fall in love, in his own twisted way.

Since Dracula is the best-known vampire, he can serve as a kind of vampire prince in AD&D games. One could always assume that Dracula was summoned to the AD&D game universe by an evil magic-user who probably got more than he bargained for.

DRACULA (Vlad Tepes)

FREQUENCY: Unique
NO. APPEARING: 2
ARMOR CLASS: -1 (-4 with dexterity)
MOVE: 12"/18"
HIT DICE: 12 (96 hp)
% IN LAIR: 10%
TREASURE TYPE: G
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 (by touch or weapon)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+7)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Energy drain, hypnosis, +4 to hit in combat
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +1 or better weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%
INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional
ALIGNMENT! Chaotic evil
SIZE: M
PSIONIC ABILITY: 204

Attack/Defense Modes: B,C/J

S: 19 I: 17 W: 17
D: 17 C: 19 CH: 17

Dracula is similar to the usual AD&D game vampire in the *Monster Manual*, except as noted in this article. His strength is 19 (as per *Legends & Lore*), and he can wield a long sword if he so desires, doing 8-15 hp damage per attack (the weapon may be magical as well). Dracula can regenerate 5 hp per melee round. Garlic, mirrors, and holy symbols only cause him to hesitate 1-2 rounds because of his strength of will, and he can survive up to 10 rounds in sunlight or running water. Dracula is assumed to have been reborn as a true vampire after his death, perhaps being summoned to a magical universe by an unlucky wizard. It is highly likely that he would make use of magical weapons and items in an AD&D game world, selecting those items appropriate to warriors since he had no skill at magic or the priesthood in life. Magical rings, amulets, scrolls of protection, swords and daggers, and similar items would be preferred.

Unlike most vampires, who have been completely overwhelmed by their transition into the undead, Dracula can sometimes overcome his undead state of mind by sheer willpower. It is possible that he could be impressed enough by an exceptional display of courage or faithful service on the part of a character or retainer to call off any attacks he is making. It is probable that Dracula will become involved in the politics of whatever world

VRYKOLAKAS		GREAT VRYKOLAKAS
FREQUENCY:	Rare	Very rare
NO. APPEARING:	1-10	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-	- 2
MOVE:	12'	12"
HIT DICE:	7	13
% IN LAIR:	25%	10%
TREASURE TYPE:	E	G
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-10	2-20
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Energy drain (see text)	Energy drain (see text)
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	+1 or better weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below	30%
INTELLIGENCE:	Average	Average
ALIGNMENT!	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil
SIZE:	M	M
PSIONIC ABILITY:	Nil	Nil

he enters. His relationship with Orcus, demon prince of the undead, is best left to the DM's imagination.

When trying to turn Dracula away, a cleric should consider this monster to be classed in the "special" category. Conversely, though Dracula has no other clerical abilities-as such, he may exert his incredible willpower to force other undead beings into servitude for short periods of time. Treat him as an evil 12th-level cleric, making the usual attempts to call undead into service as per the rules for turning undead.

Vampires in Greece

The vampire in Greek folklore is called the *vrykolakas*. Both the vrykolakas and the vampire are animated corpses that prey upon the living, but the vrykolakas differs from the vampire in a number of details.

A vrykolakas has a weird, distinctive look. The 17th-century writer Leo Allatius gives an eyewitness account of the exumation of a man believed to be a vrykolakas:

"On top of the bones of other men there was found lying a corpse perfectly whole; it was unusually tall of stature; clothes it had none, time or moisture having caused them to perish. The skin was distended, hard, and livid, and so swollen everywhere that the body had no flat surfaces but was round like a full sack. The face was covered with hair dark and curly; on the head there was little hair, as also on the rest of the body, which appeared smooth all over. The arms, by reason of

the swelling of the corpse, were stretched out on each side like the arms of a cross. The hands were open, the eyelids closed, the mouth gaping, and the teeth white.

"Such bodies do not, like those of other dead men, suffer decomposition after burial, nor turn to dust, but having, as it appears, a skin of extreme toughness become swollen and distended all over, so that the joints can scarcely be bent; the skin becomes stretched like the parchment of a drum, and when struck gives out the same sound."

The vrykolakas is not self-animated. Instead, an evil spirit enters the body, causing it to move about. The vrykolakas would thus be the result of a bizarre kind of demonic possession, all the more terrible because the dead person has no mind to actively resist the takeover.

The vrykolakas is most active at night, but only because devils and demons prefer darkness, not because the monster itself is in any way allergic to sunlight. If it so wishes, the vrykolakas can terrorize its victims in the daytime. In fact, a Greek proverb advises people to "beware of the noontime vampire."

This monster delights in inflicting random violence and spreading panic. The vrykolakas does not so much feed off the blood of the living as it does their terror and fright. One common practice of the vrykolakas is to seat itself upon a sleeping victim and, by its enormous weight and horrific presence, cause an agonizing sense of oppression. A victim who dies from this oppression will himself become a vrykolakas.

In a short time, the original vrykolakas can gather a large and dangerous train of followers. Furthermore, as time goes on, the vrykolakas becomes more and more audacious and bloodthirsty, so that it is able to completely devastate whole villages. According to legend, if the vrykolakas in not annihilated within 80 days of its first appearance, it will become a merciless and invincible dealer of death. The mere sight of the vrykolakas in this state could cause death.

Among the many legends of the vrykolakas are some curious ones. One says that when the vrykolakas first returns from the dead, it goes to its native village at night, knocking at doors and calling for one person of the household. If that person answers, he will die the next day. But a vrykolakas never calls twice, and so the inhabitants of the island of Chios (from which this legend springs) always wait for a second call at night before answering.

Even as late as 1910, according to John Lawson (author of *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*), the island of Santorini was notorious for its vampires (i.e., vrykolakas). "To send vampires to Santorini" was an expression synonymous with sending "owls to Athens" or "coals to Newcastle." (American equivalents might be sending "cars to Detroit" or "movies to Hollywood.") The present day island of Santorini was known in ancient times as

Thera. About 1,600 years ago, the island of Thera blew apart in a volcanic explosion believed to have been more devastating than even Krakatoa or Mount St. Helens. The resultant tidal waves and heavy fall of ash helped destroy the Minoan civilization and might possibly be the historical basis of the Atlantis myths. Making Santorini the "Isle of the Undead" may reflect some folk memory of that ancient disaster. Areas in a fantasy universe in which huge numbers of people were slain or died all at once might also form breeding grounds for immense numbers of undead.

There are two ways to destroy a vrykolakas. One method is to exorcise the evil spirit which animates the monster. If the exorcism is successful, the corpse immediately begins to decay, rapidly decomposing in a single round until only bones are left. The second method is to dig up the monster's grave and burn the corpse. Presumably, the evil spirit is only in the corpse while it is animated. By finding the grave and exhuming the body, it is possible to catch the evil spirit unaware, before it has a chance to repossess the body.

In the statistics given here for the vrykolakas are two separate columns. The first, termed "Vrykolakas," is for the monster from its initial appearance and for the first 80 days of its existence. The second column, termed "Great Vrykolakas," is for

the monster after 80 days have passed.

Sleep, *charm*, and *hold* spells do not affect these creatures, nor do poison or paralysis. A vrykolakas also has a special kind of attack. Each turn, anyone whom the vrykolakas touches must make a saving throw vs. spells (specifically against *fear*, with wisdom bonuses applicable). If the save fails, the victim loses an energy level as the vrykolakas feeds off his fear. The vrykolakas can also attack physically for 1-10 hp damage per strike.

A cleric has the same chance to turn a vrykolakas as he does a mummy. In addition, the *exorcise* spell can force the evil spirit to leave the vrykolakas, rendering the creature harmless and inert.

After 80 days, the vrykolakas gains enough power to become a great vrykolakas. The great vrokolakas has a better armor class and more hit points than an ordinary vrykolakas. It has two attacks per round, each of which does 2-20 hp damage. It also attacks by *fear*, but the power works on anyone who gazes at the great vrykolakas (in addition to anyone it touches). The *fear* power drains two levels if the save is unsuccessful. A great vrykolakas has a 30% resistance to all magic (except the *exorcise* spell).

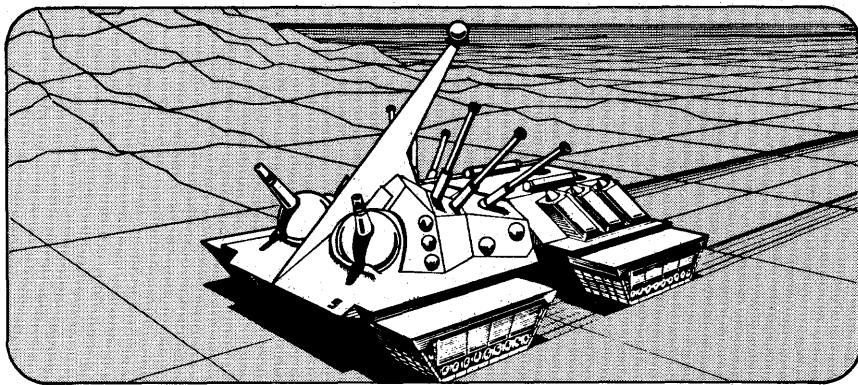
The great vrykolakas is usually accompanied by 1-6 ordinary vrykolakas under its control. For purposes of turning it away, consider the great vrykolakas to be in the "special" category. If the great vrykolakas can be turned away, or the *exorcism* spell succeeds against it, the ordinary vrykolakas are also rendered harmless and "dead" again.

The dancing vampires

A kind of vampire spirit from Highland folklore is the *baobhan sith* (pronounced baavan shee). Since Gaelic can be difficult to pronounce, an alternative spelling of the monster's name could be "bavanshee." The word itself is a dialectic variation of banshee, but the creature is completely different from the usual banshee. The following tale about a baobhan sith is retold from C.M. Robertson's *Folklore from the West of Ross-shire*.

Four young men were on a hunting trip and spent the night in an empty shieling, a hut built to give shelter for the sheep in the grazing season. They began to dance, one supplying mouth-music. One of the dancers wished that they had partners. Almost at once, four women came in. Three danced, the fourth stood by the music-maker. But as he hummed, he saw drops of blood falling from the dancers. He fled out of the shieling, pursued by his demon partner, and took refuge among the horses. The woman could not get to him, probably because of the iron with which the horses were shod. Nonetheless, she circled round him all night, and only disappeared when the sun rose. He went back into the shieling and found the bloodless bodies of the dancers lying there. Their partners had drained them white.

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Artwork by Bob Eggleton

BAOBHAN SITH (Bavanshee)

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
NO. APPEARING: 1-8
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 12"
HIT DICE: 5
% IN LAIR: 10%
TREASURE TYPE: A
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spells and blood drain*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
INTELLIGENCE: *High*
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*
SIZE: M
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Baobhan sith are evil spirits that roam at night seeking victims. As minor demons, they are in the "special" category for clerics who seek to turn them. The baobhan sith look like beautiful young women. Using spells, they try to trick their victims into letting them drain all the blood from the victims' bodies. Baobhan sith have the magic-user spells *charm person*, *clairaudience*, suggestion, phantasmal force, and *teleport*.

If a baobhan sith grasps a victim (who usually allows the touch because of *charm person* or *suggestion*) and makes a successful "to hit" roll for vampiric contact, the creature automatically drains blood for 3-18 hp damage in one round. The *charm* or *suggestion* is then broken, and the victim can fight back normally — but the baobhan sith will not release the victim unless the victim makes a strength roll as if to open doors (e.g., a victim with a strength of 15 can throw off an attacker on a 1-2 on 1d6). The baobhan sith drains 3-18 hp with each further round if not removed. Any victim drained below zero hit points is dead. The baobhan sith has a physical attack (a strike with a clawed hand) which does 1-6 hp damage, but the attack is rarely used since they prefer spells and blood draining.

An iron weapon automatically does double damage to a baobhan sith (and gets a +3 bonus to hit). Since they are especially vulnerable to iron, the baobhan sith will always try to avoid contact with it (they can sense it within a 60' radius). Oddly enough, silvered weapons have only normal effects against them. Holy water does 1-6 hp damage per vial to them.

Oriental vampires

The *ch'ing shih* is a kind of Chinese vampire. Like the vrykolakas, the corpse is actually animated by a sort of demon who preserves the corpse from decay so that it can prey on the living. Unlike the vrykolakas, however, the demon animating the corpse is not entirely alien.

The Chinese believed that a person has two souls: the Hun, or superior soul which

is aligned with the spirits of goodness; and the P'o, or inferior soul, which is aligned with the spirits of evil. If a body is not given the proper funeral rites, the P'o can seize control and animate the corpse. A particularly evil person may become a ch'ing shih by purposely separating the two souls. The superior soul can be stored someplace outside the body (much like in the *magic jar* spell) while the inferior soul is given free reign. When the person dies, he will return from the grave to work evil. This type of ch'ing shih cannot be destroyed until the superior soul is first liberated from whatever physical object it occupies (usually a clay vase). The physical object must be broken to free the superior soul.

G. Willoughby-Meade, in *Chinese Ghosts and Goblins*, relates a story about four travelers who meet a ch'ing shih. The same story is also told by Pu Sung Ling in the book *Liao Chai*.

Four travelers arrived late one night to the village of Tsaitien in Shantung province. They were extremely weary, wanting only to sleep for the night. But the village inn was completely filled. After some lengthy discussion and a bit of bribery, the travelers persuaded the innkeeper to find them some indoor sleeping place, out of the foul weather.

The innkeeper reluctantly led the four travelers to the only place available: a small, lonely house a little distance away where, he told the travelers, his daughter-in-law had recently died. In the one-room cottage, behind a heavy curtain, lay the uncoffined body of the woman. While the circumstances were somewhat gruesome, at least the house was warm and dry. The innkeeper gave the travelers straw pallets and blankets which were comfortable enough. Within minutes, three of the four travelers were fast asleep.

A strange sense of evil seemed to oppress the fourth traveler. In spite of his fatigue, fear prevented him from shutting his eyes for some little while. Yet he was so tired that he could not resist long and had just about fallen asleep when he heard an ominous rustling behind the curtain, which sounded as though somebody was stirring very softly.

Cold, with horror, he peered out from half-closed eyes and he distinctly saw a horrible, stealthy hand thrust itself from behind the curtain, which was noiselessly drawn aside. There stood the livid corpse gazing into the room with a baleful glare. It approached softly and, stooping over the three sleepers, seemed to breathe upon their faces.

The man who was awake buried his head under the quilt, horror-stricken. He felt that the corpse was bending over him, but after a few minutes, as he lay in an agony of terror, he heard the same gentle rustling as before. This time the sound, made by the movement of the stiff grave-clothes, moved away from him. When he cautiously peeped out he noticed that the corpse had returned to its bier and was

stretched out stark and still.

He crept from his place and, not daring to even whisper, shook each of his comrades. But he could not make them move. He then reached for his clothes, but hearing the gentle rustling sound once more, he realized that he had been seen.

In a moment, he flung himself back on the bed and drew the coverlet tightly over his face. A few minutes later he felt the awful creature was standing by his side. However, after looking him over, it seemed to retire again. At length, half mad with fright, the man grabbed some clothes which he threw on and rushed barefoot from the house.

He again heard the corpse stirring, but now it sprang from its bier with a rush of speed. The man was able to bolt and bar the door just as the corpse leaped at it with demoniacal fury. As the man ran at full speed under the light of a waning moon, desperate to put as great a distance between himself and the haunted house as possible, he chanced to glance back and shrieked aloud to see that the corpse was not only following him — it was hard at his heels and gaining rapidly. In desperation, he fled behind a large willow which grew by the side of the road. As the corpse rushed at him in one direction, he darted rapidly in the other.

Fires burned in the corpse's red eyes as it strove to catch its terrorized prey. Finally, as it suddenly swooped upon him with hideous violence, the traveler swooned and fell senseless to the ground. The corpse missed its aim so that it struck the tree, not the man, with all of its might.

At daybreak, both corpse and man were found. When the corpse was pulled away, it was found that it had embedded its taloned fingers so deeply into the tree that it could not free itself. The traveler, after many months of rest, recovered his health — but his companions were found lying dead, poisoned by the fetid breath of the ch'ing shih.

The story shows several aspects of the ch'ing shih. It is not especially intelligent but is extremely persistent. It is not a true vampire, as it kills with its poisonous breath, not by draining blood. It attacks with a terrible, berserk fury which temporarily gives it increased strength.

A ch'ing shih can normally be destroyed by physical attacks. If the superior soul is, however, hidden in some magic container, then the creature will continue coming back to life to stalk its attackers. Normal means of destruction only temporarily destroy the body. Even if it is cremated and the ashes are scattered, the ch'ing shih will regenerate a new body after a day or so and return to the attack. If all else fails, it will take possession of some other corpse. If the magic container holding the superior soul is broken, then the ch'ing shih will return no longer. Whether or not a particular ch'ing shih is the type that has a hidden superior soul is, of course, left to the DM.

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CH'ING SHIH

FREQUENCY: Very rare
NO. APPEARING: 1-8
ARMOR CLASS: 3
MOVE: 12" (15" when berserk)
HIT DICE: 7
% IN LAIR: 10%
TREASURE TYPE: Nil
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (2 with breath)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Poisonous breath,
berserk attack
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
INTELLIGENCE: Low
ALIGNMENT! Chaotic evil
SIZE: M
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

The main attack of the ch'ing shih is its poisonous breath, which can affect any one person within 10' of the creature. At the same time, the ch'ing shih can physically attack, doing 2-12 hp damage with a clawed hand.

During its berserk attack, which may be used once per night for 3-12 melee rounds, the ch'ing shih's strength is considered to be 18/00 (adding +3 to hit and +6 to damage with its claws), although the creature's normal strength is 15.

A cleric has the same chance to turn a

ch'ing shih as he would a spectre. An exorcism spell can also drive out the evil P'o animating the corpse, returning the corpse to its formerly inactive state.

The mass-media vampire

While the vampire owes its origin to folklore, it owes its popularity to movies and fiction. In this century, more than 100 movies have been made about vampires. The most popular and enduring have been based on Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*.

In 1921, F.W. Murnau made a classic, silent film version of the story of *Dracula*. Though he gave full credit to Bram Stoker's novel, he didn't get permission to use it. So, he altered the plot and location slightly. The result was the movie *Nosferatu*. The film release was delayed (in fact, nearly all copies of the movie were destroyed) by a lawsuit with the Stoker estate. It was eventually released in London in 1928 and the U.S. in 1929. Since then, it has continued to be shown in the art cinema theaters of the world.

In 1931, the film *Dracula* was released. It starred Bela Lugosi and was directed by Tod Browning. The film was so successful that, for more than a generation, the names "Dracula" and "Bela Lugosi" were virtually synonymous.

In 1958, Hammer Films released its version of the story, entitled *The Horror of*

Dracula. Terence Fisher was the director; *Dracula* was played by Christopher Lee (with Peter Cushing as Dr. Van Helsing). Once again, the performance was so electrifying that the lead actor became identified with the vampire. Christopher Lee also went on to make a number of other movies in which he starred as a vampire.

One of the latest remakes of *Dracula* starred Frank Langella. Like Bela Lugosi, Langella first starred in a hit Broadway play version of *Dracula* before being chosen to star in the movie.

Besides the novel *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, there are several other classic vampire stories. The first well-known vampire story was written by Dr. John William Polidori and was entitled *The Vampyre*. For a long time, the story was actually attributed to Polidori's better-known friend, Lord Byron. The tale came about as the result of one evening when the physician Polidori, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and the daughters of Polidori and his friend Mr. Godwin sat reading ghost stories to each other. Because of that evening, everyone present decided to try to write a horror story. Two of them became classics (Mr. Godwin's daughter married Shelley; later, as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, she wrote *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* — the first science-fiction novel).

Polidori's tale can be "seen as the start of the vampire craze. While little-known today, the vampire of Polidori's tale (Lord Ruthven), was as well known in the 19th century as *Dracula* is today. Just as movies have been based on *Dracula*, a number of plays were based on Lord Ruthven.

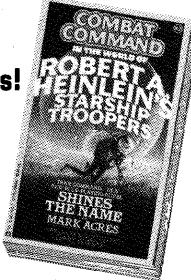
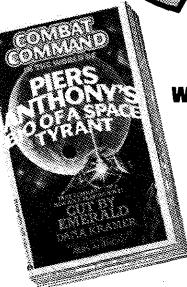
One of the best vampire stories is the novelette *Carmilla* by Sheridan Le Fanu. *Carmilla* first appeared in a collection in 1872 entitled *Through a Glass Darkly*. *Carmilla* is the archetype of a female vampire, and the story has formed a base for at least three movies. It is probable that the story inspired Bram Stoker to write his own vampire tale.

Vampire fiction is as popular today as ever. Fairly recent novels dealing with vampires include: *Salem's Lot*, by Stephen King; *The Hunger*, by Whitley Strieber; *Fever Dream*, by George R.R. Martin; and *Interview with a Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat*, by Anne Rice. Series of novels about vampires are also currently popular. Vampire series include: *The Dracula Tapes*, *The Holmes-Dracula File*, *An Old Friend of the Family*, and *Thorn* by Fred Saberhagen; *Bloodright: The Memoirs of Mircea, Son of Dracula*, *The Revenge of Dracula*, and *Dracula, My Love*, by Peter Tremayne; *Hotel Transylvania*, *The Palace*, *Blood Games*, *Tempting Fate*, and *Path of the Eclipse* by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro; and *The Black Castle*, *The Silver Skull*, and *Citizen Vampire* by Les Daniels — and there are always "Dark Shadows" reruns on television for die-hard fans.

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Dead on Target

The right weapon is a matter of life and (un)death



by David Howery

By their very nature, undead monsters in AD&D® game campaigns are unique. Their unusual structures and nonfunctioning biological systems should make them resistant or immune to many weapon attacks. The purpose of this article is to bring out these effects in clear and unified game terms. Much of this material alters or expands upon previous guidelines for combat against undead monsters.

Weapon classes

Weapons in the AD&D game can be divided into four general classes, determined by their function: stabbing, cleaving, crushing, and special. Each class is described below:

Stabbing weapons are those which penetrate with a sharp point. The surface damage done is restricted to a small area, but there is deep penetration to destroy muscles and organs. This weapon class includes the arrow, blowgun needle, caltrop, dagger, dart, fork, harpoon, javelin, knife, lance, partisan, pick, pike, quarrel, ranseur, spear, spetum, spiked buckler, short sword, and trident.

All other edged weapons are considered to be *cleaving* weapons, even though they may also have a stabbing attack (e.g., a long sword can either be used to either stab or chop). They penetrate with the edge, damaging a broad area or even severing an extremity. Examples include the battle and hand axes, most types of pole arms and swords, and the scimitar.

Crushing weapons are those without an edge for cutting. They do not penetrate, but cause damage by shock directly under the impact area. The aklys, bo and jo sticks, club, flail, hammer, mace, staff, and sling bullet (from sling or staff sling) are counted in this group. The spiked morning star is found here as well, as it is more of a crushing weapon than a penetrating one.

The *special* weapons include the man catcher, lasso, and whip. These weapons are all unable to harm the undead, but may have a special attack which would be effective. Note that the fist, garrot, and sap are totally ineffective against undead. Other types of weapons, such as the bec de corbin, lucern hammer, and newly introduced weapons from *Oriental Adventures* or the DM's own creativity, should be categorized depending upon their main use by characters in combat against undead opponents.

Undead classes

The ways in which these weapons affect the various undead depend on the physical form of the undead opponents. Undead can be divided into four general classes: skeletal, corporeal, noncorporeal, and special. The *special* undead are the demilich, haunt, phantom, and revenant. These have specific and unusual rules covering physical attacks made against them, and

the combat guidelines of this article do not apply to them. Pseudo-undead are not covered under these guidelines, either.

The new classifications and combat system vs. undead follow.

Skeletal undead include the animal skeleton, death knight, huecuva, lich, skeleton, and skeleton warrior. (The crypt thing and eye of fear and flame may also be included here.) Stabbing weapons do only 1 hp damage to these undead, with no other bonuses for damage applicable. The point on such a weapon has little area to hit solidly, and it is likely to glance off the curved bone. In any case, there are no muscles or organs to damage. Cleaving weapons do half damage (add all bonuses, divide by two, and round down), mainly from the weight and force of the blow, in addition to severing extremities. Crushing weapons do normal damage by breaking and crushing bone. Although the whip and lasso are able to entangle (but not damage) skeletal undead, the man catcher is ineffective. Silver or magical weapons are required to harm a huecuva; magical weapons are required against a lich.

Corporeal undead are those which still have bodies of dead tissue more or less intact. Due to the drying of muscles and tissues, these creatures are tougher than when they were alive. Corporeal undead include thecoffercorpse, ghast, ghoul, mummy, penanggalan, sheet ghoul, sheet phantom, son of Kyuss, vampire, wight, and zombie (all types). Stabbing weapons do 1 hp damage, plus magical and strength bonuses, since these creatures are little affected by damage to their dead muscles and organs; what does it matter to a dead man if you run it through the heart? (Unless it's a vampire, of course.) Cleaving weapons do normal damage; this fits in well with the mythological zombie, which had to literally be chopped to pieces to be destroyed. Crushing weapons do only half damage per hit, adding all bonuses before dividing by two and rounding down. The shock of the blow does not faze them much, but shattered bones will eventually render them harmless, unable to move or attack. The lasso, man catcher, and whip can entangle corporeal undead, but not damage them. Magical weapons are required to fight coffercorpse, mummies, vampires, and juju zombies; silver or magical weapons can harm wights; and, cold iron weapons do double damage to ghosts.

Noncorporeal undead are those with no solid bodies, existing almost completely on the Negative Material or Ethereal Planes. This class includes the apparition, ghost, groaning spirit, poltergeist, shadow, spectre, and wraith. According to mythology, these spirits could only be destroyed by exorcism. But, in AD&D game terms, this would be grossly unfair to the characters, who would rarely have a cleric able to cast an exorcism spell. As it stands now, all of these undead require magical or silver weapons to harm them. Stabbing weapons do but 1 hp damage (and no more) to

them; cleaving weapons do 1 hp damage with strength and magical bonuses applicable; crushing weapons do half damage (as calculated above). The DM may rule that certain magical weapons specifically designed to harm undead (as described below) can do full damage to noncorporeal undead. Use of this rule will make the noncorporeal undead truly horrifying, appropriate to their mythological background. Spells and clerical turning will be much more in demand when facing these monsters.

There are a few exceptions to the above rules. First, there are a number of magical weapons which, by their description or general nature, are specifically designed to harm the undead. These include: any weapon-type artifact; *arrow of slaying undead*; mace of disruption; any magical sword or weapon with a special purpose to slay undead; any sword which gains bonuses against creatures with particular abilities or powers — and incidentally against certain types of undead monsters (e.g., *sword, +1/+2 vs. magic-using and enchanted creatures*, good against undead with spell-casting or spell-like powers); *sword, flame tongue; sword of the planes; sun blade*; or any form of *holy sword*. When these weapons are used against any of the three classes of nonspecial undead noted above, they always do their assigned damage. For example, a *flame tongue* short sword does 1d6 +4 hp damage to a zombie, even though it is a stabbing weapon used against a corporeal undead.

DMs may wish to make an exception for silver weapons. These affect undead in various ways; see the *Monster Manuals* and the FIEND FOLIO® Tome for each undead's description. To soften these strictures, the DM may rule that any undead which is harmed by silver will always take damage from a silver weapon regardless of weapon type. For example, a silver arrow used against a huecuva will do normal damage, even though skeletal undead are not normally harmed by arrows.

Finally, note that if an undead monster requires magical weapons to hit it, the weapon used must be magical and have the proper minimum bonus to hit and damage, regardless of weapon type. For example, a ju-ju zombie is fully affected by battle axes (a cleaving weapon), but the axe must be at least +1; a normal axe does no damage. Of course, a hit by a magical weapon against any sort of nonspecial undead should do normal damage if silver weapons are given this freedom. Treat the two classes of weapons in the same way.

Use of these optional rules will put the undead more into line with their legendary versions. It will also prevent illogical events, like slaying zombies with normal arrows, permissible under the present rules. Characters may have to learn the hard way exactly what it means to face a creature that is not living and is thus immune to many of the things that slay the living.

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A Touch of Evil

Breathing life into the world of the dead

by Vince Garcia

Within the three AD&D® game monster sourcebooks, there are a total of 31 undead monsters. Properly played, undead can be some of the most dangerous adversaries faced by a group of adventurers, but too often these creatures are simply placed in a dungeon without consideration of what circumstances justify their existence. Further, the effects of their attacks can be too predictable in some cases — in addition to being too severe in others. Thus, it is best that careful thought be exercised when considering the part of undead in the campaign.

A listing of the AD&D game's undead follows, with a brief, unofficial ecology for each type and an idea for possible set-up. Additionally, some ideas are presented to make the physical attacks used by powerful undead more diverse and interesting.

Abbreviations used include: FF — FIEND FOLIO® Tome; MM — *Monster Manual*; MM2 — *Monster Manual II*.

Apparition (FF). An apparition is the insubstantial remains of a person of authority — sergeant, priest, etc. — charged with overseeing or guarding a specific area, whose death was the result of a shirking of duty. Confined to the area originally to be guarded, the apparition seeks both to protect its "lair" and to gather additional guardians to its service. Thus, a character slain by an apparition who later rises as such will return to the lair of the original creature to take up guardianship alongside it, taking the apparition's place if that creature has been slain.

Set up: While exploring the remains of an old temple, the adventurers come

across a desecrated sanctuary. Within (and unbeknownst to the party), is the apparition of a cleric charged with removing important documents from a secret compartment in the altar in the event of siege. When the temple was attacked, the young priest instead tried to escape with his life and was subsequently slain. He is now forever cursed to guard the undiscovered documents until released by "death."

Coffer corpse (FF). Coffin corpses are the restless remains of those whose last interment wishes were not carried out. Usually, this occurs because expediency dictates the body be abandoned to avoid any unpleasant fate due to the burden (as might often happen during a plague). At other times, church elders may deny the corpse interment in sacred ground. In cases such as these, there is a 5% chance that the restless spirit of the dead person remains tied to the corpse, rising during the hours of darkness to wander the area of its abandonment in a hopeless search for rest, returning to its "lair" at dawn. Creatures such as these may be laid to rest without combat by completing their interment wishes. If attacked during daylight hours (its resting period), the coffin corpse will still defend itself. The creature may only be fully destroyed by complete incineration. The coffin corpse otherwise reforms within a week.

Set up: The group has come to a town in which strange noises have been heard in the local cemetery at night, and glimpses have been caught of a manlike creature wandering the grounds. The next morning, claw marks have been noted at the gateway to an inner courtyard reserved for those able to afford a premium price for burial.

In actuality, this is a restless coffer

corpse who was cheated out of his prearranged burial by an unscrupulous groundskeeper. Each night, the creature has vainly tried to enter the courtyard and claw its way into a new resting place, returning unfulfilled to its common grave.

Crypt thing (FF). The crypt thing is a specially created guardian of tombs fashioned from a skeleton inhabited by a creature summoned from the Plane of Limbo by a high-level cleric. This creature cannot be turned by clerics. Its sole purpose is to mislead intruders into departing the area of its guardianship, often by masquerading as a threatening lich, which it closely resembles. Failing that, the crypt thing will, through the apparent use of spell-casting or the employment of a device, use its magical abilities to *teleport* party members who fail saving throws to random areas of its dungeon (often, these areas are deliberately designed as death traps to receive intruders). Thereafter, the crypt thing demands any remaining adventurers depart lest they share the fate of their fellows. If attacked, the creature may defend itself only with its two clawlike hands.

Set up: Deep inside a labyrinthine tomb, an apparent throne room is discovered near the resting place of the tomb's chief occupant. Past a set of wizard-locked doors, a skeletal inhabitant is revealed sitting upon a throne. With an evil hiss, it thanks the group for freeing it, adding that it will now "reward" them. The destruction of this crypt thing might lead adventurers to think they have slain the lich said to dwell within the tomb—but the lich itself has escaped.

Death knight (FF). Probably the rarest of undead, the death knight is the ultimate

fate of a fallen human paladin or cavalier formerly, not less than 10th level. Bound to the demon prince Demogorgon, the death knight (in nearly all cases) does not actually rule its own entourage of servants, but is assigned under unique circumstances as an ally to special champions of evil chaos — principally clerics or necromancers sworn to serve the Abyssal demon lord. Under these circumstances, the death knight's chief function is to act the part of a marshal, directing assigned military forces so that his master may be free to dedicate all his time to sorcerous activities. The drawback to such a useful aide is that the death knight serves only as long as its master is in a position of undisputed authority. In the event of successful incursion into the headquarters by a powerful group of heroes, the death knight will oppose them only to the extent that its continued existence is guaranteed, abandoning both its duties and master when its own well-being becomes threatened.

Set up: On their quest to overcome the stronghold of a high-level wizard/priest, a group of heroes containing a paladin or cavalier is confronted by what appears to be a lone, evil cavalier. Dipping a lance in challenge to the PC knight, the "evil cavalier" spurs his steed (actually a nightmare) forward, drawing his enemy into a joust. Just as the combatants are about to meet, the nightmare takes its rider into the air, and the death knight generates a *fireball* at its opponent, following it up with a *power word kill* if the hated reminder of its former life still lives. This is followed up with an attack by the death knight's army of orcs and ogres while the death knight returns to base to warn its master.

Demilich (MM2). See sub-category under *lich*.

Eye of fear and flame (FF). This odd creature is the corrupt result of a lawful-evil cleric who sought (and failed) to achieve immortality or lichdom. Seized by Orcus for its presumption, the accursed creature is bound to seek out lawful characters to corrupt through evil and chaotic deeds. When initially encountered, the eye of fear and flame is said to be seen and heard only by those lawfully it seeks to pervert. The creature is very cunning and makes the explanation of itself and its accompanying commands as plausible as it can under the circumstances. Those not obeying what they are instructed to do face attack by the creature, which may then be seen by all.

Set up: Encountering a party looting a tomb, an eye of fear and flame maintains that it is "the guardian of death," commanding two lawfuls to slay their fellow adventurers or fight death itself for trespassing "on ground hallowed to the gods."

Ghast (MM). A ghast is a ghoul which, through continued exposure to the magical forces of the Abyss, gains superior

abilities and powers. Eventually tiring of its slave, the demon master controlling the ghast occasionally returns the creature to the Prime Material Plane, sometimes placing it in command of a pack of ghouls which are often the lesser guardians of a necromancer's or evil cleric's stronghold. Due to the ghast's exceptional intelligence, such packs of undead are especially effective in setting traps and utilizing their abilities to the utmost. A character slain by a ghast later arises as a ghast under the control of its slayer.

Set up: While seeking entry to an evil wizard's stronghold through a sewer system, the adventurers stumble into a series of pits hiding several ghouls. While the ghouls engage those characters who've fallen into the pits, two ghosts, whose presence is screened by the overall odor of the place, arise from the muck behind the party and attack.

Ghost (MM). Ghosts are the spirits of humans whose passing from life was marked by great anger or hatred. Because of this, the spirit of the departed becomes tied to a certain area — usually the place at which it died — bemoaning the fact of its death or inability to seek revenge. In many ways, the ghost is quite similar to a haunt, bearing (among other things) an ability to possess (i.e., *magic jar*) an individual in order to accomplish some act — typically revenge. The most feared property of a ghost, however, is its ability to wither and age those it strikes during melee. This may cause all but elves to make a system-shock roll. Death at the hands of such a creature is final, for no *resurrection* or *raising* is then possible.

Set up: While camped out on the road, a group of adventurers is set upon by the ghost of a human slain earlier by bandits. The ghost attempts to *magic jar* a guard in order to lead the group to the bandits to wipe them out. The ghost resorts to melee only if it is frustrated in its *magic jar* attempt.

Ghoul (MM). Ghouls are the cursed remains of overwhelmingly evil humans who took advantage of and fed off of mankind during life, and so are bound to feed off humanity (literally) after death. Upon the passing of such an evil person, if proper spells and precautions are not observed (i.e., *burial* and *bless* spells), there is a 5% chance such a person will later rise as a ghoul, placing the community at large at great risk. Those among the living who fall prey to ghouls become as these undead — despoilers of the dead. The lacedon, or water ghoul, is the unhappy fate of certain pirates and corsairs.

Set up: Having arrived in a small village, the adventurers discover there have been strange goings-on at the local graveyard. Someone has been digging up and despoiling graves during the hours of darkness. That someone is, of course, a ghoul — a

hated moneylender who was buried a month previously.

Groaning spirit (MM). This creature is the troubled spirit of a female elf of evil disposition — perhaps a drow. Because her dark plans were frustrated by an early death, the groaning spirit wails over her fate — a keening so horribly mournful that some perish from the hearing of it.

Set up: Journeying through a swamp, the party discovers the tortured body of a female drow left there by a pack of orcs. Having buried the body, the group notes a form standing over the grave later that night. Upon investigation, the party discovers it is the spirit of the dead elf — wailing that the orcs would not join her plans of revenge against nearby high elves.

Haunt (MM2). The haunt is the restless spark of life of one who has died without completing a vital task. So great was the urgency to complete the deed that the vital life-force of the individual remains tied to the scene of death, there to remain until it can find a living shell to inhabit until the task is completed. The difference between this and its cousin, the ghost, is that the haunt is the mindless life-essence of the departed, while the ghost is the sentient soul of a now-dead, evil creature.

Set up: Exploring the remains of an old fortress, the party is accosted by a haunt seeking to inhabit a body in order to lower a nearby gateway — a task it failed to accomplish while alive, and the cause of the fortress's fall to the enemy.

Huecuva (FF). The huecuva is a skeletal creature found wandering primarily within tombs in desert terrain. This is not unusual, for the huecuva is typically encountered as a guardian of tombs containing mummies. Because of this, some sages have postulated that huecuvas are in fact the remains of tomb robbers slain by mummies and cursed to act as guardians for them.

Set up: While exploring a pyramid, the party at last enters the main burial chamber, where it is set upon by several huecuvas led by a mummy.

Ixitxachitl (MM). This raylike creature dwelling within the sea depths is a true oddity. That some of the species display the energy-draining and regenerative abilities of vampires cannot be disputed. What is argued is whether or not such are truly undead or merely creatures with certain unique natural abilities. Perhaps certain unique individuals of this aquatic race are in fact undead equivalents of ghouls, ghosts, zombies, and liches as well, animated by their own powerful magical spells or their deity, Demogorgon.

Set up: While exploring a shipwreck, the party encounters several lesser ixitxachitl led by one of the vampiric sort — as well as an ixitxachitl lich!

Lich (MM). Possibly the most powerful of the undead creatures, liches were formerly magic-users, clerics, or wizard/priests of high level. While the circumstances in which a lich arises are somewhat varied, a lich is most often the result of an evil archmage's or high priest's quest for immortality. The process involved in the creation of the lich remains a mystery to most, although some have suggested that through the assistance of a demon, the knowledge can be fully learned.

In even rarer cases, it is rumored that a wizard of extremely high level in fanatical pursuit of the answer to some bit of research may continue his work even beyond the point of death. Perhaps due to the years of exposure to magical powers, some inexplicable force allows the soul to remain with its dead shell until the inhabitant discovers the answer to its research or until the body crumbles to dust. This latter lichtype is not as long-lived as the former, possessing no more than 1d100 + 1d20 additional years of "life." Further, this lich is entirely consumed by its sole desire to find the answer to its research, and is thus often unaware of happenings around it (unless it is attacked, of course).

While lichdom can offer a mortal spell-caster several more lifetimes of existence, the point does arrive when the magic relied upon can no longer sustain the creature. It is at this time that the lich becomes most dangerous, becoming susceptible to one of several forms of madness. The particular form of insanity lasts to the ultimate demise of the creature, typically within 10 years of onset. In the case of the latter type of lich, the body simply crumbles to dust, the soul of the lich going on to whatever awaits it. With the former lichtype, however, the bodily shell eventually becomes dust, leaving only the skull and a few bones intact while the soul wanders forth to other planes. Nevertheless, these remains apparently retain a form of sentience. The source of this sentience is debated. Some sages maintain that it originates with the lingering essences of larvae used to maintain the lich's existence, while others assert a psychic tie to the now-departed wizard or cleric. Whatever the case, the remaining form, referred to as a *demilich*, is perhaps even more dangerous than the original lich, possessing both energy- and soul-draining capacity along with a keening ability similar to that of a groaning spirit.

The first manifestation of a disturbed demilich is that of an apparent wraith, which most often enjoys the energy-draining ability of that creature. A clue to the true nature of the monster can be gained by the fact that this wraith manifestation cannot be turned by a cleric otherwise able to overcome a traditional creature of that sort. This manifestation's sole purpose is to induce melee and spell attack, the latter of which has the effect of strengthening the creature (of course, a successful energy drain upon a character

has the same effect). Eventually, the wraith manifestation gives way to that of a ghost – once again affording the same abilities of an actual creature of that sort. (It is said that the preferred mode of attack by this manifestation is to *magic jar* a group's magic-user, thereby utilizing the target's spells against his own party.)

Last and most terrible, the skull of the creature, if disturbed, is able to independently attack – first by keening, then by a soul drain which can be resisted only by a character possessing an *amulet of life protection* (which still ends with a destroyed outer body) or a *scarab of protection* (which avoids all baneful effects with a successful saving throw).

The best means of handling an encountered demilich is to leave it alone and run, for the creature must remain tied to the immediate area of its death. A demilich may otherwise be harmed by certain powerful swords or by a few select spells.

Set up: Deep within a seemingly deserted keep, the group opens a doorway into a library and workshop, and discovers a lone, skeletal figure engrossed in mathematical calculations. If the party members are wise, they'll leave it alone. . . .

Mummy (MM). Contrary to popular belief, mummies are not usually the venerated dead found within Egyptian burial chambers. Instead, the mummy is typically some unfortunate warrior who, for some transgression, has been chosen to stand guard over the departed. Thus, the chief sarcophagus within a pyramid almost always contains nothing more than wrapped bones, while the true animated mummies will be found behind secret panels or within sarcophagi placed around the object of their guardianship. As mentioned earlier, some claim that tomb robbers slain by mummies may later rise as huecuvas, joining their slayers as guardians.

The means of creating a mummy are said to include a special form of the *animate dead* spell, along with an elixir made from a rare herb growing only in the wildest parts of deserts.

Set up: Having located a major burial chamber within a pyramid, the group readies spells and prepares for possible combat with a mummy in the main sarcophagus – only to discover numerous mummies that ambush the group from secret chambers to either side of the corridor leading out of the burial chamber.

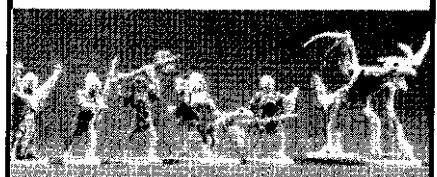
Penanggalan (FF). This unique cousin of the vampire is quite an enigma, possessing the ability to function in daylight as an apparently "normal" female with the appearance of the creature's alignment during life, while lacking the energy-draining ability of a true vampire. The penanggalan feeds on the blood of both men and women, as would its cousin – but it is more attracted to opposite-sex victims like true vampires. The penanggalan, unlike a vampire, may not possess a



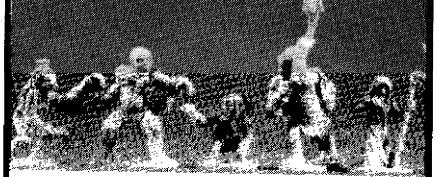
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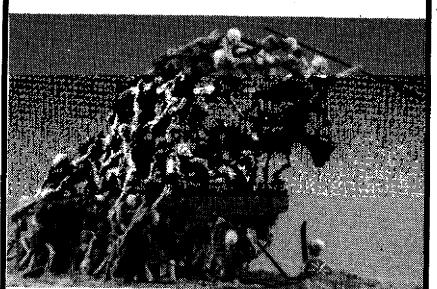
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lair outside the general area in which it was originally killed. Although the penangalan need not rely on this lair as a place of rest, the lair must contain enough vinegar to allow the creature to soak its engorged organs as a means of shrinking them sufficiently to allow reattachment to the body shell used by the creature.

The penangalan, while able to function outside the lair in a normal capacity, cannot venture farther than a day's journey from the spot at which she originally became such a creature. On rare occasions, these monsters cooperate and work with vampires for mutual protection and sustenance.

Set up: A high-level party is approached by an apparently lawful-good peasant girl with a tale of vampires terrorizing isolated villages a day's journey into the mountains. She volunteers to lead the group to the area of the vampire's lair if they will fight it, but refuses to stay with the party during the hours of darkness by making several plausible excuses — typically volunteering to scout ahead while the group makes camp. The girl, of course, is a penangalan working with the true vampire in the area.

Poltergeist (FF). This is one of the very few impotent undead, being merely a restless spirit limited to making knocking noises and perhaps throwing light objects about the room to which it is bound — the place in which it lost its life.

Set up: Obtaining rooms at an inn, one of the party members is assigned the last available room for a suspiciously low price. Of course, it just happens to be haunted by the poltergeist of a vagabond guest who died in the room several years earlier. This is a great first encounter with undead for a low-level group.

Revenant (FF). On rare occasions when a powerful human is slain, there is a slight chance (5%) that the slain person (through sheer willpower and anger) arises as a revenant to seek out and slay its killers. This is one of the most unusual undead beings, and it is well detailed in the FIEND FOLIO Tome.

Set up: Having slain yet another powerful champion of evil, the group soon learns its quarry has returned — to hunt the PCs down for revenge!

Sheet phantom/sheet ghoul (FF). The sheet phantom is an odd form of undead thought by some to come about as a result of some particularly bizarre circumstance, the nature of which no two sages can agree upon. One popular theory is that it is the spirit of a magic-user who, while under a duo dimension spell, was slain by a ghoul. The idea of it being an undead form of a lurker above is not widely or seriously acknowledged. Whatever the truth, there is no question that this creature is a dangerous and respectable foe which cunningly camouflages its

appearance by masquerading as a tapestry, rug, or sheet. Its purpose in doing so is to envelop and possess a living being (thereafter known as a sheet ghoul) for purposes unknown. (Some believe the creature seeks its prey to allow it to leave the area of its demise.) A few who have encountered this creature claim that once it possesses a body, it is able to use the spells possessed by the hapless soul.

Set up: While exploring a chamber with a canopied bed, the canopy drops upon anyone checking the mattress. Naturally, the canopy is a sheet phantom.

Skeleton, animal (MM2). These relatively weak skeletons of normal animals are said to be created mostly by neutral-aligned clerics hesitant to use the animate dead spell on humanoid remains. The animal skeleton's purpose is usually one of minor guardianship. Druids regard these creatures as abominations and seek to "lay them to rest."

Set up: While exploring the cave of an old hermit (actually a dead lawful-neutral cleric), a low-level party is confronted by several of these creatures guarding the hermit's body. Perhaps the party was sent here by a druidic faction to spy on the hermit.

Skeleton, human (MM). This common undead is to be found in almost every dungeon belonging to a neutral or evil magic-user or cleric. As they require no food or oxygen, skeletons make excellent minor guardians. Their presence is frequently camouflaged by burying them, submerging them in water-filled corridors, hiding one or two in a pit, etc. They may also be made to resemble more powerful undead, such as liches, with the right disguises.

Set up: During their first dungeon excursion, a low-level party encounters several of these creatures in any of the settings just described. Several of the skeletons remain in the rear of an attacking group of their kind, wearing reasonably good armor and carrying well-kept weapons, watching the battle impassively or making directing motions to their "troops." These appear to be skeleton warriors, but are actually just other skeletons.

Skeleton warrior (FF). In most cases, skeleton warriors were powerful fighters or cavaliers (possibly paladins) who were seduced to the path of evil. Some claim Orcus or Demogorgon originally bound these warriors to be servants to the 12 death knights. Others claim that even today, powerful wizard/priests may learn the sorcerous methods of creating such monsters. Few undead are more feared than these nearly unstoppable and intelligent warriors.

Set up: On a quest to battle a death knight, the adventurers fight a skeleton warrior, mistakenly believing it is the object of their quest. The skeleton war-

rior's circlet is held and used by the death knight itself.

Son of Kyuss (FF). The origin of these horrid creatures dates back to an evil high priest named Kyuss. Originally meant as temple guardians, the "Sons" have, after the passing of Kyuss, continued to be fashioned by certain priests of the Egyptian deity Set, and may be found on many worlds where such worship exists. Interestingly, the country of origin of Kyuss is often claimed by many Set-worshipping nations and cities, though no such claims have been proven.

Set up: Upon assaulting a temple to Set, the adventurers find themselves faced by a number of Sons of Kyuss, which block them from the chief worship area. Additionally, nets fall from the ceilings to immobilize the PCs — and allow the worms inhabiting the undead to attack at +2 to hit.

Spectre (MM). Spectres are the cursed souls of those who ruthlessly oppressed their fellow men during their lifetime (the character of Jacob Marley from A Christmas Carol provides a good example). Bound to wander the land they ruled, particularly its most desolate and isolated regions, spectres hate the living for the torment of unrest they endure. A fair number of spectres were very powerful and feared as political figures in life, particularly tyrants who were fighters, thieves, or assassins.

Set up: While journeying overland, the adventurers come upon the ruins of a town burned to the ground by a wicked knight. That evening, the adventurers are visited by the town's last remaining inhabitant — the knight's spectre.

Vampire (MM). The actual origins of vampires are lost in time, though they are among the greatest and most evil servants of Orcus. A variant form of vampire has been recorded which originates from the life-draining kiss of a succubus; high-level characters actually slain in this manner arise as vampires of exceptional strength and ability within a fortnight. These powerful creatures need not rest in coffins to the extent that normal vampires must, but may exist in full sunlight, although with no other abilities than they possessed in life. Furthermore, these vampires may be slain in normal melee combat if caught above ground during the hours of daylight (a stake through the heart is still necessary, though the vampire will not turn gaseous upon reaching zero hit points). During the night hours, this greater vampire possesses all the abilities of a normal vampire, but in addition may summon a Type I or Type II demon (40%/20% chance) to serve for 24 hours. Such demon-spawned vampires have the maximum number of hit points for their kind and have 18(00) strength.

The normal vampire lacks the ability to function in daylight or to gate demons into

the Prime Material Plane; it is, nevertheless, a respectable foe. Unlike the former type of vampire, a normal vampire almost always seeks a lair in an isolated spot to better protect itself from discovery.

Set up: Rumors of vampires are afoot, and the party is requested by a sovereign to help a certain count or baron put a stop to them. Of course, the count or baron, who cheerfully greets the party at high noon, is a greater vampire, and the baroness is his succubus consort.

Wight (MM). The true origin of wights remains a mystery. Some sages claim they are the fates of evil humans who, through illness or deliberate design, are buried alive, and through their anger and sheer willpower remain in a state of unlife to seek revenge. Others say wights are evil guardians, the spirits of loyal henchmen who were slain and buried with their lieges to protect their former masters from desecration. Wights are typically found in tombs and burial chambers, where many of them jealously guard their buried lords and their riches. Certain especially powerful wights were probably lieges themselves, perhaps serving greater undead masters in their unlife.

Set up: After a long illness, the local mayor was recently laid to rest in the family vault. Soon thereafter, unearthly noises were heard emanating from the vault, which none of the townsfolk would dare approach. The adventurers are asked to investigate. The noises are, of course, the mayor — now turned to a wight over the anger of having been buried alive.

Wraith (MM). Wraiths are said to be the horrid spirits of dying men who vow to return and wreak havoc upon the living. In such cases where it would be impossible for an individual to become a revenant, there is a 5% chance that a person of great evil can fulfill his curse irrespective of whether or not precautions — including destroying the physical body — are taken.

Set up: An evil lord who was recently killed in a peasant revolt had vowed to return and seek vengeance on the townspeople. Soon afterward, reports of an evil spirit's wanderings about the area began to surface. The adventurers are asked by the town's mayor to investigate. The party eventually encounters the spirit of the angered lord amidst the ashes of his castle.

Zombie, human (MM). Zombies are the mindless, undead servitors of magic-users or clerics who cast an *animate dead* on corpses not fully stripped of flesh — a process usually requiring either time or a cash expenditure of one gp per corpse for acid (though certain insects also serve well in this regard).

Set up: Coming across a recent battle area suspiciously devoid of corpses, the adventurers are soon set upon by bandits led by an evil cleric — at the head of a

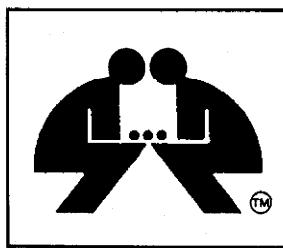
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number of slain guardsmen now turned to zombies.

Zombie, juju (MM2). This uncommon creature originates with a high-level magic-user's slaying of a creature by way of an *energy drain* spell. Because the spell is extremely risky, few wizards are foolish enough to actually make use of it. The presence of a juju zombie, however, can offer some indication as to the level of opponents nearby.

Set up: After killing a number of juju zombies, the adventurers eventually discover why their creator had no hesitancy to use the *energy drain* spell: Their creator is a lich; being undead, it has no fear of being energy drained.

Zombie, monster (MM2). Monster zombies are the result of casting *animate dead* spells upon the remains of bugbears, giants, etc. A few unusual and variant forms of such creatures are occasionally reported, some being extremely powerful but still mindless.

Set up: Having hacked their way through bugbears and ogres, the adventurers discover a nasty surprise: Someone has turned the corpses into monster zombies while they were off exploring another part of the dungeon.

Variety in touch attacks

As regards the repercussions of the touch attacks used by some undead, most of these effects can become boring and repetitive in time. Ghouls always paralyze, spectres always drain two levels of experience, etc. In some ways, the effects of various undead touch attacks — with particular respect to energy-drainers — is unbalanced. The climb from low to high level can be a long and difficult one; to see what may have taken a player months or years to accomplish disappear with one touch of a wight is surely one of the most frustrating of gaming experiences. Regaining the experience and abilities lost can also be a task. It takes a tremendous number of monsters (hundreds of slain wights, for instance) and treasure for an Initiate of the 9th Circle to regain the 100,000 experience points necessary to get back to full druidhood. Likewise, only a few characters have access to the 10,000 gp per level of experience the *Dungeon Masters Guide* indicates as the charge for a *restoration* spell.

Energy levels appear to primarily represent the sum total of experience and training that a character has acquired in its class. The energy-draining undead, which exist partially on the Negative Material Plane, seem to draw away a part of the life-force of the living (to what end is unclear — perhaps to strengthen themselves). When fully considered, can this energy transferral reasonably be equated to robbing the target of its training and experience? Probably not, for the sum total of a character's life experience trans-

Table 1
Alternate Energy-Drain Effects*

1d6 roll	Drain from victim	Benefit to monster**
1-2	Hit points	Gains hp of damage it inflicts on character, up to maximum allowed by hit dice.
3	Strength	Does an additional hp of damage for each point drained when it strikes.
4-5	Dexterity	Armor class bettered by 1 for each point drained.
6	Level of experience	Gains 1 HD for each level drained.

* When a character has a physical characteristic or hit points reduced to zero as a result of energy-draining, he rises within 24 hours as an appropriately strengthened undead monster similar to the type that killed him.

** These benefits may be temporary or permanent as the DM desires.

Table 2
Hit Location for Undead Paralysis

1d6 roll	Area of paralysis	Effect on victim
1-2	Right arm	Spellcasting with somatic components and melee becomes impossible (if character uses weapon in right hand).
3	Random leg	Character must check dexterity on 1d20 each round to stay on feet; any dexterity bonus to AC is lost.
4-5	Left arm	Spellcasting with somatic components impossible; shield may not be used (if PC is right-handed).
6	Full body	No movement or combat possible.

lates poorly into a synonym for "life-force."

One series of modifications that could bring this ability into a more balanced form would be to allow energy drains to affect those physical characteristics of a character that would rationally benefit or strengthen the energy-drainer — in other words, strength, hit points, dexterity, and so on. The loss suffered by the character might or might not be permanent (the DM can also decide on his own whether to allow a saving throw after the battle to see if the lost damage returns at the rate of one level or point per day). The monster, meanwhile, would derive certain benefits from the touch. These benefits are listed on Table 1. For random determination, roll 1d6.

In the case of creatures causing paralyzation, the all-or-nothing syndrome can be monotonous. A more interesting effect would be to allow for only partial paralyzation through a hit-location system. Table 2 illustrates this system.

In the case of those undead causing disease, they are pitifully impotent when the easily obtained *cure disease* spell is

Table 3
Length of Paralysis

Creature	Length of paralysis
Ghoul	2-12 rounds
Ghast	4-24 rounds
Lich	20-80 rounds

considered. The DM is thus certainly within his rights to occasionally tie the healing of such diseases to certain rare herbs or to a magical spring which may require a quest to locate within a set time limit in order to save an affected character. (Requiring a broth from the legendary tannin leaves to be freed of mummy's rot is but one example). In any event, PCs will have to watch out for undead that decide to reach out and touch someone. Ω

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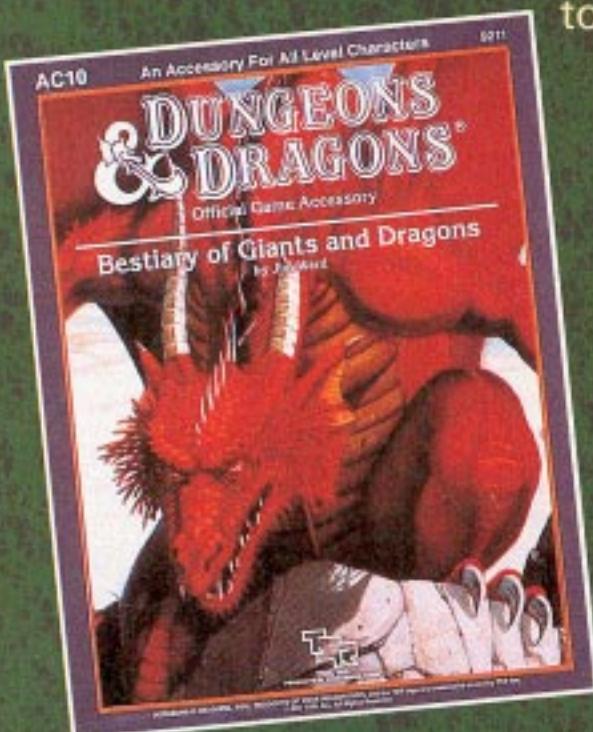
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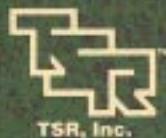
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The Game Wizards

Second edition: The editor's viewpoint

by Steve Winter

So far in this column, you've read Zeb Cooks views about redesigning the second edition AD&D® game and Michael Dobson's views about marketing it. This month, we'll explore the high-speed, action-packed world of electronic editing.

Originally, the second-edition project was primarily an editing job. The AD&D game books are currently organized in a stream-of-consciousness fashion. Topics leap from the dungeon to the tavern to the throne room and back to the dungeon again in the space of a page. The books contradict each other, omit material, and sometimes devote pages of type to topics that no one understands or uses.

But it's a terrific game.

Editorially, we have four goals in mind for the final AD&D game presentation. First, the books should be restructured for easy reference. Second, all of the information on one topic should be in one place. Third, a player shouldn't have to pay for information he doesn't need when he buys the new *Player's Handbook*, and the DM shouldn't have to pay for redundant information when he buys the new *Dungeon Master's Handbook*. Fourth, everyone who currently owns the *Players Handbook* and *Dungeon Masters Guide* should feel that his money has been well spent when he buys the second editions of these books.

The biggest question facing a game editor who approaches a new product is whether the rule book should be structured as a reference book for people who are familiar with the game or as an instruction manual for people who aren't. In the best of all possible worlds, a rule book would serve both functions equally — but, unfortunately, the two are mutually exclusive. An instruction manual makes a lousy reference source and an encyclopedia is a poor textbook. Rule books that try to be both usually wind up as confusing, incomplete, and full of wasted pages.

We chose to make the AD&D rule books reference manuals for several reasons. You only learn to play the game once. That process takes about four hours — the average length of one game session. Once you've made it through that first session, you know everything you need to know about role-playing. The best way to spend that first session is, was, and always will be with a group of people who already know what they're doing. We always urge newcomers to learn from experienced players. There's no better teacher than a journeyman at work.

This is not to say that you can't learn the AD&D game by reading the handbooks. The *Player's Handbook* will most certainly contain an introductory chapter on what role-playing is all about, but it will be short — no more than two or three pages in

length. If you know the game, you can skip it entirely (though we hope to make it interesting enough that you will want to read it). The *Dungeon Master's Handbook*, of course, contains extensive articles on how to conduct a game, but that information is just as valuable to experienced DMs as it is to rookies.

The second reason we decided to use a reference structure is because we don't want to scare you away. Yes, part of the reason for a second edition is to attract new players to the game, but it's also to make the game better for everyone who's playing it right now. That means the second edition has to be just as sophisticated as the first. If the first thing you see upon picking up the new *Player's Handbook* is "See Spot run," we've just lost a customer and possibly a player. That won't happen.

In keeping with the reference book approach, both the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Handbook* will be thoroughly and accurately indexed. That's enough said about that.

Anyone who has ever looked up "Doors" in the current index knows why one of our primary goals is to gather all of the information on a topic into one place. Unfortunately, this goal conflicts with another — avoiding redundancy. There is certain information that only the DM needs. Putting that information in the *Player's Handbook* not only gives players too much information, it ups the size (and cost) of the book. Such information belongs only in the *Dungeon Master's Handbook*. But unless the *Dungeon Master's Handbook* repeats everything from the *Player's Handbook*, the DM has to check two books to get all the facts. Repeating everything from the *Player's Handbook* in the *Dungeon Master's Handbook* ups the size (and cost) of the *Dungeon Master's Handbook*.

Our solution is to present information in complete subsets. For example, consider the chapter on NPC hirelings and henchmen. Players need to know what sorts of NPCs are available and what conditions are attached to their employment. This information is presented in detail in the *Player's Handbook*. The DM needs to know where and how NPCs can be hired, how much they earn, and how much abuse they'll put up with before they quit. Most of the chapter in the *Dungeon Master's Handbook* is devoted to these details, with a summary of the information from the *Player's Handbook* to refresh the DM's memory.

Compare the skeleton outlines of both books as shown in the table, and you'll see that we've tried to keep their structure parallel. Now, if you know where to find something in the *Player's Handbook*, you'll know where to find it in the *Dungeon Master's Handbook*.

The fourth goal — assuring that owners of the first-edition books get their money's worth from the second edition — is automatic as long as we meet the first three

Game Book Outlines

Player's Handbook

Introduction to AD&D game
Character creation
Character races
Character classes
Proficiencies
Alignment
Money and equipment
Experience
Magic
NPCs
Encounters
Time and movement
Vision and light
Combat
Treasure
Player's notes
Appendix I: Spell lists
Appendix II: Magical items
Appendix III: Useful tables

Dungeon Master's Handbook

Introduction to AD&D game
Character creation
Character races
Character classes
Proficiencies
Alignment
Money and equipment
Experience
Magic
NPCs
Encounters
Time and movement
Vision and light
Combat
Treasure
Magical items
Miscellanea
Mastering the game
Appendix: Useful tables

immensely popular. A question needs to be asked: Is the game popular in spite of its failings, or because of them?

Before you laugh, let me tell you a story. An editor at TSR, Inc. used to work for a metropolitan newspaper. That newspaper ran advertising flyers for a local dime store. The flyers were a mess. They looked as if someone had clipped two dozen ads from different newspapers and scattered them across the page. Items were printed upside-down and sideways, in a multitude of colors and sizes, with no apparent organization. The store looked much the same.

One day, the newspaper staff offered to redesign the store's ads, and the store manager accepted. The ads were cleaned up, organized into tidy columns and categories, and presented as an attractive whole.

Sales dropped.

Obviously, something was amiss. By interviewing customers at the store, the copywriters discovered that customers liked the old ads better. The new ads looked too slick, too professional, and too expensive. The old ads implied bargain prices and hidden treasures, if only you could find them. If you found something you needed, there was a sense of accomplishment. If you pored over the ad every week, you felt like part of a small group of dedicated bargain hunters.

With this startling discovery in mind, the ad men went back to work. They created a new ad format that was well organized and easy to read, but which retained the jumbled, low-budget feel of the original. It was a huge success.

In many ways, the AD&D game is like those original ads. It is a big, sprawling mess; it intimidates new players and onlookers; and, whether you know it or not, that is probably part of the reason why it appeals to you. AD&D game players form an elite group. How many people have looked at the game and said, "Ugh, that's too weird and complicated for me. Let's play Parcheesi." Those of us who persevered through the difficulties were rewarded by an experience that Parcheesi players will never know.

If that challenge is taken away, some of the game's charm and appeal goes with it. We're walking a tightrope between too little and too much. Too little change and it's not worth the effort; too much and we reposition ourselves out of the hobby. You don't want that, and neither do we. We think we can strike the right balance, or we wouldn't have climbed onto the rope to begin with.

We'll be very interested to hear your opinions on this subject, both in your letters and in reports from our multitude of playtest groups. Once again, keep those letters (and questionnaires from DRAGON® issue #124, if you haven't filled one out yet!) coming. We have only one responsibility, and that is to publish the type of game you want.

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The Ecology



of the Shade

Outcasts in a shadowy world

by Dan Salas

The sleeping chamber was filled with shadows and formless black shapes. On the bed slept Carissa, the Lady of Graham Manor. Her young face was faintly lit by starlight from the single bedroom window. Until midnight, she slept undisturbed, exhausted from the day's events.

Suddenly she sat up, her wide eyes peering into the darkness. The change from dreams to shadowed reality was startling. Lady Carissa knew that she was a light sleeper, but only some nearby disturbance could awaken her so violently. The silence and blackness of the chamber only increased her nervousness. With damp hands, she reached over to her bedside table and spoke the words of a simple cantrip to light a candle. The small yellow flame did not completely drive away the darkness, but it was better than nothing. A wizardess had been able to teach her that much.

Carissa looked around as her eyes adjusted to the pale light. She saw the familiar furnishings, thick carpets, purple dragon sculptures, bright tapestries, and silk bedsheets. The heavy stones of the walls seemed to reassure her that the fortress was still strong. Then her gaze found the intruder, and she froze.

A man sat motionless in a chair across the room, dressed in gray and black. His face was partially covered by a black cloth wrapped around his jaw, and his eyes were hidden in the shadows of a black hood. He seemed more like a phantom than a man. Though his posture was not threatening, Carissa stared at him with a paralyzing fear. If she shouted for help, would anyone arrive in time? Was he an assassin?

The intruder held up one gloved hand. "Please don't call the guards," he said softly. "I've come to help you, not harm you."

Carissa's brow wrinkled. She thought that the voice sounded familiar, but she did not recognize the stranger. Being the lady of a large and powerful estate, she was even now recovering her wits and sense of command. She was on her own. "Who are you?" she whispered fiercely.

For a moment, the intruder did not answer. During this silence, Carissa noticed the dagger strapped to his thigh, the long sword at his side, and the studded leather vest under his dark cloak. Seeing that he was a warrior and not a night-demon, she gave him a steadier look.

"Tonight, I'm an advisor," he finally said. "I'm here to tell you about the man who wounded your beloved, Lord Graham."

Carissa perceived bitterness in the intruder's voice as he spoke the name of her husband. She did not understand his indignity, so she ignored it, trying to think clearly. "How do you know about my lords wound?"

"Right now, he lays in the chapel with your clerics. He'll live, this time. But you'll



need to know more about his attacker if you're to keep your husband in this world."

Carissa was taken aback. Maybe he was a spy. "You seem to know much."

"Then hear my words. Lord Graham's attacker is not a demon, nor is he a normal assassin. Your enemy is a shade."

A childhood tale drifted up from memory. "A shade?"

"Yes. Once a man, but now a creature of darkness. A shade is a person who has traded his soul to gain a permanent connection to the Plane of Shadow. There, the Positive and Negative Material Planes meet in the shadow of the Prime Material Plane. Do you understand what I mean?"

Carissa nodded, fascinated. She was a scholar as well as a noble, and her interest in the metasciences was drawn out by the mysterious intruder.

"A shade receives effects from the Positive and Negative Planes," he continued. "From the Positive, he receives immunity from aging and disease, as well as powers of healing. To the Negative Plane, he loses his soul. His appearance becomes dark as night, and his personality becomes even darker."¹

"Who would do this to himself?"

The stranger chuckled sarcastically, sadly. "Anyone who finds no joy in daylight and who cares nothing for the company of others. Anyone who would gladly trade his soul for the powers of the night."

The stranger slipped into brooding silence. Feeling awkward but less afraid, Carissa asked, "How is it done?"

"There are some clerics who will make the transformation for a price — usually 3,000 gold pieces.² I don't know the exact spells that are used, but I know that the person must be brought to the Plane of Shadow, where the cleric . . . slays him and makes the transformation.³ The person is then a shade. He can never again be returned from the dead because he has no soul, no spirit. He cannot increase his skills.⁴ He cannot have children."

"There must not be many such people in the world."

**Table 1
Shade Character Class**

Die roll Character class

1	Cavalier
2-7	Fighter
8-10	Magic-user
11-12	Illusionist
13-17	Thief
18-20	Assassin

**Table 2
Shade Alignment**

Die roll Alignment

1-2	Lawful neutral
3	True neutral
4-5	Chaotic neutral
6-7	Lawful evil
8-9	Neutral evil
10	Chaotic evil

Note: Reroll result if it is inconsistent with the assassin character class.

ian. This shade came to me four days ago and asked that I help him kill Lord Graham. He seeks vengeance for some personal reason. I refused his offer."

"How do we fight him?"

"Light is your best weapon. In bright light, a shade becomes weak, and is more vulnerable to magical attacks. Have your clerics cast continual *light* spells on lanterns. Leave no passage unlit that leads to your lord. In the shadows, a shade can transport himself to the Plane of Shadow, so you must keep Varian in bright light or in complete darkness. As a last resort, use a *holy word* to force him to return to the Plane of Shadow."

"Varian himself remains on the Prime Material Plane during daylight. He sleeps in the ruins of Thurid Castle. There you can trap him and kill him."

Carissa nodded. "If your words are true, you'll be richly rewarded."

The man snorted in disgust. "I don't want your gold."

"Then why have you helped us?"

The stranger sat in silence, his vision fixed upon her. Then he stood and walked slowly toward her. Carissa shrank back from him, preparing to call for the guards, but the intruder made no move for his weapons. Instead, he sat on the edge of the bed. Still, Carissa could not see his eyes.

"I've helped Lord Graham because I know that his death would ruin you. I don't want any harm to come to you, Carissa. I still love you, even more than I did ten years ago."

Suddenly she recognized his voice, recognized the figure under the black clothes, recognized his manner of moving and speaking. Her heart jumped and she cried out, "Dimitri!"

The man leaned toward her and extended a hand. With wild joy she moved closer to him, but then he grasped the candle flame and crushed it. Shadows filled the room again.

Her heart racing, Carissa waved a hand in front of her. Dimitri was not within reach. As she frantically relit the candle with her last cantrip, she thought of Dimitri: a lost lover from her past, an honorable man whom she had loved deeply before her father had wed her to Lord Graham. Her thoughts were dazed and tangled as the candlelight returned.

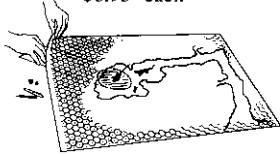
She looked quickly around the room, but Dimitri was gone. Carissa knew that he would not be back. In the silence of the flickering candlelight, Carissa covered her face with her hands and wept.

Notes

¹ A character who becomes a shade takes new personality traits, becoming sober, moody, cynical, and suspicious. Because of these traits, the character's charisma drops. To determine the exact penalty, divide the character's charisma score by three (rounding down), then

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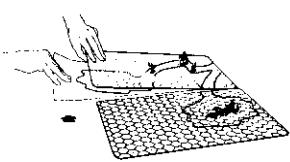
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subtract this number from the original charisma score to get the new charisma score.

The character's comeliness drops due to his new appearance: dark eyes, gray skin, black clothes, etc. Determine the comeliness penalty in the same way as the charisma penalty. Only drow elves are immune from the comeliness penalty, since the change in appearance leaves their skin no darker than before, and only affects their eyes and hair color.

² No cleric of good alignment will turn a person into a shade, whether the person is willing or not. A neutral-evil cleric is 50% likely to intentionally kill the character during the process, and a chaotic-evil cleric is 75% likely to kill the character. To perform the transformation, the cleric must be at least 10th level.

³ The process for becoming a shade begins on the Prime Material Plane, where the would-be shade drinks lethal poison and dies. The cleric then uses *plane shift* to transport himself and the character to the Plane of Shadow. There, the cleric casts *neutralize poison* on the character, and then *imbue with spell ability* if the character is not a member of a spell-casting class. The cleric then casts *negative plane protection* to allow the forces of the Positive and Negative Material Planes to enter the character's body, thus causing the physical, psychological, and magical changes. At last, the cleric casts *raise dead* (this spell even works on elves and half-orcs due to the interference of the energies from the Positive and Negative Material Planes). The character must make a successful resurrection survival check or die again — permanently.

The character now needs to recover, as noted in the description of the *raise dead* spell. Afterwards, he is a full shade, complete with special powers, special abilities, and all other effects as explained in the *Monster Manual II* and in this article.

⁴ A shade cannot gain experience points, cannot increase in class level or proficiency, and cannot gain new levels of spell ability. The mixture of the Positive and Negative Material Planes holds the shade forever at the same class level, also making him immune to magical increases or decreases in level.

⁵ For the class of a random shade, roll 1d20 on Table 1. For the shade's alignment, use Table 2; roll 1d4 + 6 for assassins, or 1d10 for other classes. The shade's level and equipment should be chosen in accordance with the PC party's strength.

The ability scores of a shade can be determined by the chart on page 74 of *Unearthed Arcana*. Note that the charisma and comeliness scores need to be adjusted as with any other character who has become a shade.

When determining the experience-point value of an NPC shade (*Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 85), consider the shade status to be an exceptional ability.

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young man dressed all in blue pushed his way into Slab's Tavern. He had the thin good looks and light brown hair of a native Zelloquan, I saw, and his robes were of good material, well cut.

Glancing around, he swallowed nervously, then started for my table. As he neared, I looked him over. He couldn't have been more than sixteen, I thought, and no one that young had much business here.

My tavern catered to none but the most bloodthirsty of clientele. Slab's had a certain reputation — well nurtured over the years — of being the toughest, roughest bar in all of Zelloque. I ought to know: I'd spread many of the rumors myself. When I took a quick glance around the main serving room, I saw pirates haggling in one corner, slavers throwing dice in another, and all manner of cut-throats bellied up to the bar for wine.

They didn't seem to discourage the boy, though. Ignoring all else, he slid into the seat opposite mine. "Ulander Rasym, I presume?" he said.

"Perhaps." I studied him: pale lips, a paler complexion, the watery eyes of someone who read too much. Indeed, far from my normal run of customers. Something extraordinary had to have brought him here. I demanded, "Who are you?"

"My name is Vril Arantine — I'm one of Pondrane's students. Perhaps you've heard of him?"

"He's a wizard. So? What do you want?"

"Your tavern has ghosts."

"Of course. Everyone knows that." It was true: among the various magical happenings in Slab's over the years, ghosts often appeared — patrons who had died, mostly, but also Slab Vethiq himself, come to check up on his tavern. And there was a table where chilled wine tasted like warm blood, and a spot (which moved from night to night) where, if you stepped too close, monsters sometimes appeared.

"Good," Vril said. "I had to make sure. I need to study them."

"What?"

"Yes." He nodded. "I'm writing a book — *Manifestations of the Dead*. It will prove conclusively that ghosts are no more than mental projections of latent magical talents."

He said it with such sincerity that I was left speechless for a moment — a very rare occurrence, I assure you. Unfortunately, I wasn't the only one who'd heard his preposterous statement. Slowly, behind his back, a luminous white mist had begun to gather.

Ignoring the ghost, I said, "So what do you want me to do?"

"I want permission to sit at a small table in the back of your tavern for a month — to watch for spectral phenomena, of course."

The mist grew thicker, began to swirl up into a human form. "What do I care," I said, watching it, "so long as you pay for your wine."

"Ah," he said eagerly, "you have put your finger on precisely the problem. I have developed a rigid scientific

Well Bottled at Slab's

by John Gregory Betancourt

Illustrations by George Barr

method for studying such phenomena —

"Ghosts, you mean."

" — and I can't drink anything but water while I'm here, since it might cloud my judgment."

The luminous fog coalesced into a short, broad man in a flowing cape. I recognized him at once: Slab Vethiq himself, my tavern's founder and former owner, whom I'd served for twenty-odd years. After his untimely death, I'd taken over his establishment and run it myself. Even dead, though, Slab wouldn't surrender his property; he had a tendency to show up at the most inopportune times to try to run things . . . like now, when I was about to have this would-be scholar thrown out.

I just sighed. Such were the problems of owning a haunted tavern.

Slab nodded to me and winked knowingly. "Let him stay," he said in a way only I could hear. "He amuses me."

"But —"

Slab shook his head in warning. Then he was gone.

I sighed again. There would be trouble, I knew, if I didn't cooperate — walls dripping blood, loud, mysterious groans, clanking chains: petty annoyances which had a habit of scaring people away. Why did Slab always have to make things difficult?

Knowing it was a mistake, knowing I'd regret my decision, I turned to the lad and said, "Very well. But stay out of the way, and I don't want you bothering the paying customers!"

"Thank you!" Vril said, beaming. "I'll start tonight!" Rising, he went to a small empty table, sat down, and drew a small parchment from some hidden pocket in his cloak. Next to the parchment he set a small jar of ink and a quill pen. Then he began eyeing the various areas of the tavern and taking copious notes. He had all the subtlety and grace of a boar at a feeding trough.

I motioned to Lur, my doorman and bodyguard, and he lumbered over. Lur was a large man — about seven feet tall — with broad shoulders and muscles enough to intimidate all but the most suicidal drunks.

"What?" he asked, with his usual eloquence.

I nodded toward Vril. "See to it he's not disturbed. Let the word get around that he's a . . . nephew of mine. That should take care of it."

"Yes, master." He lumbered off.

As I studied my patrons with a dispassionate eye, I noticed half the men at the bar giving young Vril Arantine the once-over. I knew what they were thinking: he'd be an easy mark, some nobleman's son out slumming, or just a lad who'd walked into the wrong bar in the wrong side of town.

But then Lur wandered among them, bending to whisper into an ear here, inserting a terse word or two into a conversation there. I don't know what he said, but it seemed to do the trick. The cutthroats tended to pale very suddenly, then turn back to their drinks, making almost painful efforts not to even glance in Vril's direction. Even so, I couldn't lose the feeling that the boy would be trouble.

It started out simply enough: I felt a chill breeze, then a

beautiful, glowing woman with long, glistening silver hair emerged from the thick stone wall to my right. I jumped a bit as her gown brushed my foot, sending little knives of cold shooting the length of my leg, but it was nothing unusual. I'd seen her kind of ghost every now and then.

Ignoring everyone else, she walked straight to Vril, curtsied a bit, then held out her hand as though asking him to dance. He scarcely glanced up from his note-taking.

Finally, the ghost-woman walked on, moving through his table, through the stack of parchments he'd already filled with his tiny, cribbed writing. As she vanished into the wall, I saw a look of puzzlement blended with frustration on her face.

Interesting, indeed! Something was going on, and I didn't like it, not at all. I vowed then and there to see it stopped. But how? Why would ghosts bother Vril Arantine? And why would Slab Vethiq — never a man (or ghost) known for his generosity — take an interest in the lad?

I had to find out more about young Arantine. Rising, I fetched my cloak from the storeroom. A visit to Vril's master, the wizard Pondrane, seemed in order.

The wizard lived in the better part of town, in a tall, rambling old house surrounded by a high stone wall. I walked up to the gate, Lur at my side, and rang a little silver bell. Instantly, it seemed, a gray-bearded servant appeared from the shadows. He unlocked the gate, pulled it open, and bowed humbly to me.

"This way, Ulander Rasym," he said.

I didn't move. "How do you know me?" I demanded.

"The master is expecting you." Turning, he started up an overgrown path toward the house.

I glanced around once and, seeing nothing to alarm me, followed. Lur fell in step behind, mace at his side.

The servant brought us into a dark, overcrowded little workroom that stank of mold and decay. Tables lined the walls, and on them sat various tubes and bottles and scrolls, jars of diverse magical ingredients, and an odd collection of trophies from fifty years of wizardry: mummified animals, polished bones, teeth, and strangely shaped pebbles. Lur moved awkwardly here, like an animal in a room full of glass, fearful of breaking something. I didn't blame him; wizards were a difficult lot at best, and there was no telling what Pondrane would do if either of us damaged his possessions, accidentally or not.

I heard a low cough behind me. A board shifted and creaked under my feet when I turned, but I saw no one in the shadows. "Who's there?" I called. "Is that you, wizard?"

Light suddenly flickered around us, jags of gold and silver dancing through the air like fireflies. Finally, the sparks coalesced into a glowing sphere that drifted up to the ceiling and stationed itself there. By its light I could see an old man sitting on a chair in the corner: Croillion Pondrane.

He was a small man, and old beyond measure. His face had been wrinkled and creased by years spent outdoors, but now his skin was pallid as a slug's belly, his cheeks hollowed, his eyes dark and deep as stagnant pools of

water. His hands shook as he raised himself to his feet and took a step forward. The smell of decay seemed all around him, thick and damp.

"Your servant said you were expecting me," I said. It was half a challenge, half a question.

"You are Ulander Rasym, owner of Slab Vethiq's tavern, yes?"

I frowned. "Yes. I've come to ask about one of your students. . . ."

He seemed to be ignoring me. "Good, good," he murmured to himself. Slowly he circled me, examining my face, my clothes in great detail.

"About Vril —" I began.

"I have a proposition," he said. "It's worth five thousand royals to you."

That caught my interest. "I'm listening," I said.

"I knew Beren Vethiq — Slab Vethiq to you. When we were young, we played together, traveled together, drank and whored together. We were the best of friends until one sad summer day in Pavaria, when we both fell in love with the same girl. That night Beren drugged me, sold me into slavery, and sent me off to Harandel with a trader caravan. I ended up in that despicable city for ten years. I blamed him for all my troubles, swore vengeance. It was hatred that kept me going.

"I pursued him across half the world and finally cornered him in Frissa. We fought, I with magic, he with a sword. He won again by a fluke, and again he sold me into slavery. It took me fifteen years to get away that time. When I escaped, again I pursued him, but he had already died when I reached Zelloque. Only a few months ago did I learn of his ghost."

"So?" I said cautiously.

"I shall trap his spirit, put him in a tiny bottle where no one can ever find him. That will be my revenge: an eternity of solitude, an eternity of punishment for what he did to me so long ago. I will pay you not to interfere."

I swallowed, my mouth dry. "And Vril?"

"My apprentice. He is the instrument which will capture Beren Vethiq."

Lur began to growl ever so faintly, like an angered dog, and I knew I had to but give the word and he'd strangle the wizard — or, more likely, die trying. His loyalty to a dead man was touching. But what did I owe Slab? It might be worth it to sit back and let Vril capture him. The thought of those five thousand royals jingling in my pouch made my fingers itch.

But then I remembered all Slab had done for me. Sure, he'd made my life miserable at times — but he'd also done his best to keep Slab's Tavern open and running, even when an Oracle tried to tear the place apart in search of a splinter from one of his god's bones, even when One-eyed Seth tried to muscle in on business, and even when the Great Lord of Zelloque's counselors decided I was a menace and ordered my assassination.

I owed him my life many times over. The thought of Slab spending the rest of eternity alone, with Croillion Pondrane torturing him, made me distinctly uncomfortable.

Abruptly, I started for the door, before my morals took second place to my greed. Over my shoulder I called,

"We have nothing to discuss. And if your apprentice dares set foot in my tavern again, I'll sell him into slavery myself, just like Slab would have done!"

"Fool!" Croillion Pondrane shouted after me, and then he began to laugh again. It made me realize how much I hated him.

When we came in sight of my tavern, I saw a large crowd had gathered in front, all of them looking in through doors and windows, shouting and passing bets back and forth. At once I realized a brawl must have broken out, and without Lur to break it up, things had gotten out of hand.

"Come on!" I shouted, and I raced down the street, Lur thundering after me.

I forced my way through the mass of people around the door, entered the musty pleasantness of my tavern — and found myself surrounded by a whirling, screaming, shrieking storm of ghosts. Spectral figures stalked between the tables. Severed heads floated over the bar, bellowing snatches of song. Skeletons sipped wine in the booths. In every corner something writhed or slithered or chortled. The din was deafening.

At the center of it all, still scribbling notes, sat Pondrane's apprentice. Vril seemed oblivious to all the apparitions around him. Now, however, I knew the truth: he was waiting for Slab Vethiq to show himself.

With a roar of sheer rage — at Slab for sending these ghosts, at Pondrane for sending his apprentice, at all the money they both had cost me by frightening off my customers — I ran into the room and seized Vril by the collar. Hauling him to his feet, I shook him as hard as I could. His teeth rattled; he trembled all over.

"Get out!" I snarled. "If I ever see you or your master again, I'll beat you both to bloody pulp!"

I cuffed his ear, and with a yelp, he went sprawling. Lur dragged him to his feet and propelled him forcibly toward the door. The crowd there scattered.

It was then that I became aware of the deathly silence around us. All the various ghosts had vanished, gone back to whatever nightmare they'd crawled from. I began to breathe a bit easier, confident that my troubles had ended.

However, as soon as I turned, I noticed Lur had stopped. He still held Vril by collar and belt, dangling the lad half a foot above the floor, but his attention seemed focused on something else. Then I saw what: Slab Vethiq himself was slowly materializing between them and the door, blocking their way. Slab's arms were crossed, and he looked more than a bit peeved. I saw it all, then — knew he'd wanted to frighten a boy who didn't believe in ghosts. Now he wouldn't let Vril leave; his fun wasn't over yet.

"No!" I shouted to him, a sinking feeling inside, knowing it was too late. "It's a trap —"

But Vril had whipped a small bottle from some hidden pocket. He popped the cork, pointed the mouth at Slab, and shouted some magical word.

I heard a sucking sound, felt a rush of wind all around me, and then Slab was gone. The wizard had won after all, it seemed. I felt positively sick.

Lur had turned Vril Arantine upside down and begun

shaking him by one leg. Bits of parchment, several small coins, and various pouches flew in all directions. At last the bottle dropped free.

Flinging Vril to one side, Lur grabbed it up and uncorked it. He began shaking it, trying to release Slab. Nothing happened. And, I noticed, Lur had begun to growl again — a sign of his anger.

Vril had, meanwhile, climbed from the wreckage of two chairs and a table. He seemed dazed, unsure as to where he was and what he was doing. Then he saw Lur and seemed to remember, for he lunged after the bottle.

Lur held it well out of reach, raising the hole to one eye. Peering inside, he said, "Slab?"

Again Vril shouted that magic word, and again I heard the sucking noise. In the blink of an eye my bodyguard had vanished.

The bottle clattered loudly on the floor. Vril grabbed it up and bolted, but I tackled him before he'd taken three steps.

As I sat on his chest, pinning his arms, I stuffed my bulging money purse in his mouth to keep him quiet. Only then did I pry the bottle from his clenched fist.

After corking it securely, I held it up to the light, turning it this way and that, looking for some way to release its contents. The thing wasn't made of glass, I thought; it wasn't transparent and the texture felt wrong. It seemed more like ivory or bone of some kind.

Finally, giving up, I decided to have Vril reverse the magic. I could live without Lur, I was certain — hired muscle could be found anywhere — but I certainly needed Slab. He'd always watched out for me, always made sure the tavern turned a profit. And, beyond that, he'd become almost as much a fixture in the place as the huge block of marble that served as the bar, or the old tapestries on the walls, or the huge brick fireplace where toasts were made and glasses thrown on cold winter nights.

Slab's Tavern without its patron ghost would be just another bar. I could never let that happen.

Pulling the makeshift gag from Vril's mouth, I let him gasp and take several large gulps of air. Finally, he could talk again.

"All right," I said angrily, "how do I get them out?"
"I don't know."

"I don't believe you." I let one hand tighten on his throat for a second. His eyes bulged.

When I released him, he coughed and wheezed for several minutes. "It's true!" he managed to gasp. "My master did all the magic. I just had to say the word —"

Jal and Ferrin, two of my least timid servants, had dared to venture back inside by then. They tended bar and sometimes helped out at the door, when things got too busy for Lur to handle alone.

Now I glanced at them. "It's about time!"

"Yes, Ulander," Jai said, wiping his hands on his apron. He didn't meet my gaze. "It's just that —"

"Never mind. Give me a hand here. Hold him while I get up."

They seized Vril with ill-concealed glee. The lad struggled a bit when I stood, but Jal bent one of his arms back until he cried for mercy.

"Mercy?" I said, mocking him. "What mercy did you

show my friends?" I waved the bottle under his nose.
"How the hell am I supposed to get them out of here?"

He just stared at me, gritting his teeth, as Jal continued to twist his arm. I finally decided that he really *didn't* know.

Perhaps, I decided, smashing the bottle would do the trick. I fetched a hammer from the back room, set the bottle on the stone floor, and struck it as hard as I could. The hammer bounced off with a ringing sound. Again and again I pounded on it, but to no effect; it wouldn't break.

Finally, sighing, I rose to my feet. If nothing else, I'd always prided myself on my inventiveness. If I couldn't get them out, I'd get someone else to do it for me. The wizard Pondrane would certainly know how. All I had to do was persuade him.

I looked at his apprentice and smiled. "Tell me," I said, "the magic word that makes the bottle work."

He thrashed his arms and tried to break free, but Jal and Ferrin held him securely. After I'd hit him a few times, he stopped struggling and began to whimper a bit.

"Stop that sniveling," I said. "You brought it on yourself. I made a perfectly sensible request. Now, answer it!"

"You're going to put me in there!"

"Of course," I said. "That'll make sure Pondrane empties the bottle."

Vril bit his lip and shook his head, but I saw the fear in his eyes. I knew then that he'd tell.

"Save yourself a lot of pain," I said. "What's the word."

Slowly, grudgingly, he told me. When he'd done so, I drew out the bottle, uncorked it, and pointed the opening at him. He closed his eyes and turned his head away. Then I said the magic word, and in a split second, he vanished.

Unfortunately, Jal and Ferril vanished with him. It seemed the think sucked up whoever or whatever was in front of it.

Shaking my head, I tucked the bottle in a pocket, closed up shop, and headed for the wizard Pondrane's house.

The same servant who'd met Lur and me earlier that night brought me back to Pondrane's damp, dank workshop. The wizard was bent over several small jars, carefully measuring ingredients into each. He looked up when I came in, then set aside his instruments.

His voice held a hint of a sneer when he said, "So, you've changed your mind, have you?"

I smiled. "No. Rather, I've got a present for you."
"Oh? What?"

I produced the bottle. "Your apprentice."

Frowning, Pondrane demanded, "What's he doing in there?"

"He was a bit careless. After putting my bodyguard inside, he managed to do the same to himself. Needless to say, I want Lur back, and I imagine you'd like Vril."

He carried the bottle over to one of his tables, set it down, and rummaged through a stack of papers. Finally, he pulled one out, read it aloud over the bottle, then held it up to the light.

"You're right," he admitted a bit sadly. "From the

aura, there *are* living humans in there."

"You doubt my word?" I smiled.

"I had hoped you were lying. There is a slight problem with getting them out."

"What?"

"The bottle isn't supposed to hold people. It was designed for a ghost, something ethereal. I don't know what will happen if I try to release its contents — the strain might prove too great and shatter them."

"The people or the bottle?"

"Both. Either. The cage took me months to make, and I can't go wasting it, now can I?"

I made a mental note not to mention Jal or Ferrin. If two people inside the bottle worried him, four might well frighten him off. Rather, I changed tactics and said, "Don't you have more time than that invested in your apprentice?"

Slowly, almost reluctantly, he nodded. "I suppose so. Very well, then, I'll let them out. Please stand back."

I retreated into the hall. As I watched through the doorway, he removed the cork, set the bottle in the middle of the floor, then took two steps back and stretched out his arms. His eyes closed; he seemed to be concentrating deeply.

Finally, he began to speak, the words strange, slurred, heavy. The air around us took on a weird, shimmering quality, as though I gazed at him through waves of heat. I noticed a blue mist rising around the bottle, tendrils circling, twining upward, then coursing down into the bottle's open mouth. The room grew chill; I felt a cold sweat trickle down the small of my back.

Pondrane shouted a word, then came a blinding flash of light and an explosion that knocked me off my feet. Dust roiled around me, smothering and I choked and gasped

for breath. Finally, the air cleared; I gathered my wits enough to stagger into the wizard's workroom.

Everything lay in shambles: the glass bottles broken, the furniture smashed, debris all over. Pondrane himself sprawled across one of his tables, a mummified cat pillowing his head.

Lur and Jal and Ferrin lay in a jumble on the floor. I heard one of them groan and begin to stir, so I knew they were still alive. I didn't see Vril at first, but then I spotted his foot sticking out from under Lur. Fortunately, he'd broken my bodyguard's fall, as well as Jal's and Ferrin's.

Slab stood off to one side, looking faintly amused by the whole mess. I frowned. "At least you could show a little gratitude for my rescuing you!"

He laughed at me, then slowly faded away. His lack of grace in being saved hurt a bit, but he was a ghost and allowances had to be made. When all I'd done for him had sunk in, I knew he'd be grateful.

Meanwhile, I had more important things to think about — like my men. Pulling them off of Vril, I slapped their faces and called their names until they opened their eyes and looked blearily at me. After that, I breathed easier. Their skulls were hard; they didn't seem hurt by their ordeal. In fact, it took surprisingly little to get them on their feet and moving.

On my way out, I spotted the magic bottle lying on the floor, its cork beside it. Smiling, I picked it up.

Then I crossed to the wizard Pondrane, pointed it at him, and spoke the magic word. With a sucking sound and a gust of wind, he vanished. Grinning happily, I tapped the cork back into place. Then I put it on the workbench, in plain sight — just next to fifty-odd other bottles that looked exactly the same. It would probably take Vril months to notice it . . . if he ever did.

Smiling, I followed after my men. It felt good to have saved Slab. Dead or alive, a fellow had to look out for his friends.

I just hoped Slab felt that way, too.

Ω



Bazaar of the Bizarre

Treasures of the Orient

by Gregory W. Detwiler

The following is a collection of magical treasures from the lands of Kara-Tur — items which fortunate Oriental Adventures characters may discover in their travels. Some of these items may also find their ways into more traditional, medieval cultures, where they may puzzle and surprise their finders.

Cloth of Steel

This 8'-long piece of enchanted cloth, upon utterance of the command word (usually found on the cloth), straightens out as if wielded by someone who knows the martial-arts maneuver Steel Cloth. Unlike the regular cloth used in the maneuver, the cloth remains straight even when not in motion, remaining rigid until a second command word is spoken to return the cloth to its normal form. In the rigid state, the cloth may be hurled; if thrust or thrown, it strikes as a spear +1. When rigid, the cloth is so hard that it may be used as a crowbar or as a long

spike for stopping sliding walls.

XP Value: 750

GP Sale Value: 5,500

Shukenja Helm

This helm may be of any type (kabuto, hanburi, jingasa, etc.), and may be worn by any character who can wear helmets. When worn, it gives the protection afforded by the shukenja spell *mental strength*. In addition, the wearer of the helm may meditate for two hours a day (double that if he can already meditate). In combat, the helm gives the head AC -2, and, if the wearer is striking to subdue instead of kill, he gains a +1 advantage on both damage and "to hit" rolls.

XP Value: 2,000

GP Sale Value: 13,000

Multiple Rod of Dancing

Upon first glance, the rod appears to be a normal three-piece rod. However, it is +1 on both damage and "to hit" rolls. The rod may also be used as a dancing weapon, but it always functions in this capacity as if it were owned by an 8th-level monk

who specializes in martial-arts weapons.

Upon utterance of the appropriate command words, the chain links of the rod may, at the will of the owner, become any of the following things: three dancing jo sticks, a dancing jo stick and nunchaku, or one or two jo sticks and a dancing nunchaku. Other weapons may be wielded by the user of dancing weapons. As before, the dancing weapons fight for five rounds at a time (or until recalled by the owner) as if wielded by an 8th-level monk. When the command word is spoken, the weapons are fully responsive to the will of the owner. When the rod dances in several pieces, it can engage up to three opponents at a time; the pieces may also concentrate on only one or two foes. When the command word of recall is spoken or when the time limit for dancing is used up, the detached pieces reunite and fly back to the owner's grasp. All detached dancing pieces are +1 weapons.

XP Value: 4,500

GP Sale Value: 25,000

Staff of the Ninja

This staff appears to be an ordinary bo stick until checked for magic. It is +2 to damage and "to hit" rolls, and has other special abilities as well. If the appropriate command words are known, the following things may occur at the user's command:

1. A spear head slides out of one end, turning the weapon into a *shakujo yari* +2. The head retracts when the command word is repeated.

2. A sword blade juts out of the other end, turning the staff into a *shikomi zue* +2. As before, the blade retracts if the command word is repeated.

3. The staff has a saving throw vs. crushing blows of 1, making it virtually unbreakable.

4. The staff has balancing ability.

5. Once per day, each concealed weapon blade may be envenomed. The venom is wiped off and expended on the first successful blow, acting as if it had come from a *dagger of venom*.

6. The staff dances for five rounds, attacking the enemy as if wielded by an 8th-level ninja. The staff can dance as a bo stick, shakujo yari, or shikomi zue. The form in which the owner wishes it to fight, however, must be determined before the weapon is made to dance. When time runs out or it is recalled, the staff returns to the hands of its owner.

7. The staff acts as a *ring of water walking*.

8. Four times a week, the bearer of the staff can pass through stone or metal walls up to 3' thick.

XP Value: 5,000

GP Sale Value: 25,000

Statue of Substitution

Upon close examination, this statue reveals a small cavity in its back. The statue is hollow and large enough to hold one pint of blood. In order to make the statue work, the character to carry or use

it must have one pint of blood removed from his body and poured into the statue, which magically seals when full. Once this bond has been created, the *statue* benefits the character using it as if he were using the shukerja spell *substitution*. The first 20 hit points of damage the character takes in combat are absorbed by the *statue*, which disappears automatically when the limit is reached. The *statue* will benefit no one but the character whose blood it holds, and only one statue may be so used by a character at a time. If small amounts of blood from several characters are poured in, the *statue* will not give each of the characters limited benefits; it will, in fact, be worthless.

XP Value: 500

GP Sale Value: 10,000

Stirrups of Horsemanship

When fitted on a horse, these *stirrups* give any character who rides that animal the same skills at riding that he would have if he had the horsemanship proficiency (this applies to riding skill, leaping onto the animal, using two-handed weapons on horseback while guiding the animal with the legs alone, etc.). The *stirrups* may be used on any horse or horselike animal (ki-rin, unicorn, etc.), and must be attached to the saddle trappings if they are to work properly. No additional bonus is given to characters who already have the horsemanship proficiency.

XP Value: 2,500

GP Sale Value: 12,500

Tea Set of Skill and Grace

This *tea set*, made of the finest materials, enables its owner to conduct a tea ceremony as if he had filled a slot with the tea-ceremony proficiency. Possession of the set adds +4 to the chances of attaining utter concentration while conducting the ceremony; this benefit is the same whether or not the character has regular proficiency in the tea ceremony. The same +4 bonus applies if the character uses the set when engaged in a contest. If the character used the set while learning the ceremony, he will still have +2 on the chance of contest-winning and attainment of utter concentration without the set.

XP Value: 1,500

GP Sale Value: 2,000

Dragon Lantern

This hooded *lantern* is shaped like the head of a dragon. When the handle is manipulated to reveal the light, the dragon's jaws are opened. This special *lantern* secretes that most brilliant of illuminating agents, dragon fat, producing enough so that the *lantern* may be used up to 20 turns a day. (Incidentally, regular dragon fat may be burned in ordinary lanterns; the amount needed to fill a lantern once is worth 3,000 gp.) The light from this lantern brilliantly illuminates an area equal to that covered by an ordinary

lantern's light, but in this case, the lighted area is equivalent to broad daylight. In addition, the light can be seen from a great distance, until the point the *lantern* is hidden by the curvature of the earth (thus, the *lantern* may also be used as a signalling beacon). Any creature who looks directly into the dragon jaws (equivalent to the chance of being caught by the gaze of a basilisk) is blinded for 10 turns unless treated by *cure blindness*.

XP Value: 3,000

GP Sale Value: 12,000

Dragon Pearl

This is the magically-treated pearl carried by every oriental dragon. It always glows with a brilliant light so penetrating that it can light up every room in even the largest castle. (Only a special carrying sack of dragon hide or similar special leather will conceal the light.) When carried, the *pearl* acts as a *periapt of health*. In addition, it can increase the size or amount of any ordinary substance it comes in contact with. People and animals grow fatter and healthier, crops grow larger, and piles of food (such as rice) increase in size. If placed in a barrel with a few drops of water, oil, or some other liquid, the *pearl* will soon have the barrel full to overflowing. However, this ability only works for ordinary materials; it cannot multiply a pile of coins or make gems increase in value. If buried, the *pearl* reveals its presence by the fact that the grass over it is always green and healthy, even in winter or in times of drought.

XP Value: 10,000

GP Sale Value: 20,000

Dust of Revealing

This special *dust* is commonly found in one or more eggshell grenades, the price being that of one such powder-filled grenade. When released into the air, the *dust* magically expands to fill a 30'-radius area. Everything in this area affected by disguises is revealed for what it truly is. Shapechangers (such as lycanthropes and hengeyokai) are forced into their natural forms, all magical and mundane disguises

are removed, and spells such as *face* and *apparition* are nullified. Unlike *dust of appearance*, *dust of revealing* does not reveal invisible, astral, ethereal, or out-of-phase creatures.

XP Value: 1,000

GP Sale Value: 4,000

Wand of Rust

This *wand*, which may be used only by wu jen (magic-users), is a potent weapon against armored foes. Every time a charge is expended, a pencil-thin ray of a rusty red color streaks out. Any metal object hit acts as though a *metal to rust* spell had been cast on it. Note: Because the beam is so thin, a save vs. wands means that the beam has missed, and could thus strike something else. The beam will travel 100' before dying out if it hits nothing.

As with the spell, the *wand* may also transform rust to metal. If one charge is expended while the *wand* is swirled around in a pile of rust (here the rust may be due to any cause), the affected item is restored as per the spell. If less than 90% of the item's rust is in that spot, the spell will not work, but the one charge will still be expended. The *wand* may be recharged.

XP Value: 6,000

GP Sale Value: 35,000

Sword +1, Whirlwind Blade

This *sword* has from 8-16 charges which, once used, are gone for good. Whenever one charge is expended, the wielder of the *sword* may launch a whirlwind attack in the manner of an 11th-level kensai. All strength bonuses and the like possessed by the character still apply. Even a kensai may use this weapon, provided that it is not a magical version of his weapon of specialization. A kensai of 11th level or higher, if he can use the *sword* at all, may use the abilities; he may also still use his own innate whirlwind attack potential. If the character expends a charge while conducting a whirlwind attack of his own; however, no additional benefit is gained, and the charge is wasted.

XP Value: 500

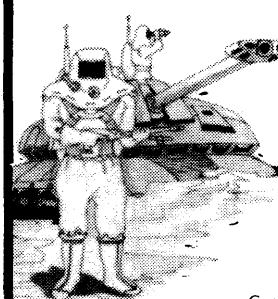
GP Sale Value: 2,500

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A Ghastly Grimoire

*New spells for
the CALL OF CTHULHU® game*

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No investigation into the unknown and the unspeakable would be complete without a few new and bizarre magical spells — many harmful, some helpful, and all of them carrying the risk of madness. These spells may be dropped into any CALL OF CTHULHU® game campaign setting, appearing in arcane books or forgotten papers. Many of them can have adventures designed around them with ease. Haunted houses will never be the same again....

Activate Eidolon: An eidolon is an enchanted statue that a Great Old One or (less often) an Outer God may animate for short periods. These statues can be small enough to fit on a bookshelf, or they can be as big as a Great Old One itself (though it is not recommended that an eidolon be more than 15' high, corresponding to a SIZ of about 35). A good CON for an eidolon is half that of the Great Old One represented; INT is (of course) the being's own; STR and DEX are whatever the Keeper thinks appropriate; and, POW depends on how many sacrifices the eidolon has had, up to the POW of the being the eidolon represents. A Great Old One or Outer God can cast spells through an active eidolon of itself if it wishes. When an eidolon is activated, it can only be harmed by magical weapons — meaning the

statue might be indestructible. An eidolon encounter makes a good climax to an introductory adventure, since it lets the investigators face the awesome power and hideous visage of a Great Old One without the slaughter that such contact usually produces — that is, if the PCs are lucky and fast.

This spell activates the latent magic of an inactive eidolon, thus giving the deity represented the ability to sense and act through the statue. At the moment the eidolon is animated, the deity is aware of the statue's existence. Activation costs 1 permanent point of POW and 2d4 SAN — assuming that the caster (who is probably some demented priest or evil sorcerer) has any SAN left. In addition to the usual chanting and visualization of bizarre geometric forms, the caster weaves a loop of silver wire and ties it into a complicated knot. The sacrifice of a sentient being is then performed in a fashion appropriate to the deity, and a bowl of "burning blood" is prepared by mixing the blood of a human with some flammable liquid. The blood-fire must be very hot. Finally, the knotted wire is thrown into the burning blood. When the blood is completely burned and the chant finished, the eidolon is fully activated. At this point, it has as many points of POW as the total number of victims sacrificed to it, up to the limit of the represented being's POW.

What matters for investigators is that a variation on the spell can be used to deac-

tivate an eidolon. The main difference is that instead of the sacrifice, an enchanted knife is driven through the center of the wire knot on the final word of the chant, thus severing the deity's link to the eidolon (that is, unless someone later reactivates it). A deactivated eidolon is vulnerable to normal damage and can thus be destroyed in this manner. Another notable difference is that the reversed spell actually *raises* the caster's SAN by 10% of the amount that would be gained by defeating the deity itself. This percentage is most definitely well-earned, since the deity animating the eidolon is aware of what the caster is trying to do, and it may use the eidolon to attack the caster in numerous ways.

Blur Form: This spell creates a light-distorting field around the caster, blurring his appearance. Anyone who hopes to identify someone who is using this spell must make "special" Spot Hidden or Idea rolls. (This "special" roll is the skill equivalent of the "impale" attack.) The spell costs three magic points and lasts one turn. The caster must make a SAN roll or lose 1-2 SAN points. The caster must wear a special ring carved of rock crystal; the band is triangular in cross-section at every point, like a long prism bent around into a torus, but given a 360° twist so each face of the prism has become a mobius strip. (Unlike material components in the AD&D® game, the ring may be used over and over again.)

Brew Anagathic: There is more than one form of this magical drug; it can be an ointment, a drinkable liquid, an injection, or whatever. Some of the ingredients will always be exotic, but in most versions all are natural. Typical examples of "active ingredients" are ginseng roots (the legendary longevity drug of the Orient) and glands from large, old carp (supposedly, carp can live forever; see the stories "Homonculus" or "The Digging Leviathan" by James I? Blaylock for further details). In the course of compounding the anagathic (any drug which slows or stops the aging process), the caster infuses it with two magic points, which costs no SAN. When used, the drug totally arrests aging within the user for one week.

The catch is that if one stops using the anagathic, the deferred aging returns; the longer aging has been prevented, the faster it comes back. The number of days it takes for aging effects to fully return equals seven divided by the number of weeks the anagathic has been used (extra hours and minutes can easily be calculated). Although the exotic ingredients are typically potent enough (small amounts suffice in making suitable doses-of anagathic), one can see that the anagathic is really nothing more than a trap — in time, maintaining one's supply slowly becomes a matter of life and death, rather than a matter of vanity. Clearly, aging return can be fatal; the chance of survival is CON x 5% x $(70/c)^3$, where c represents the

recipient's chronological age, and 70 represents the classic "three-score and ten" limit of human life expectancy. When c is less than 50, survival is almost certain, even for modest constitutions. When c passes 70, the chance of survival drops rapidly. After c reaches 120 or so, having the inevitable death climax with the body withering to dust makes a nice touch.

When aging from anagathic withdrawal is obvious (following 10 years or more of continuous use), the anagathic should cause SAN loss – both in the person aging, and about half as much in acquaintances who see how the years have suddenly returned. The exact amount of SAN loss is left to the Keeper's judgment. Seeing someone die of anagathic withdrawal should be a major shock: 1d10 SAN lost for experiencing this "grisly, bizarre occurrence" is about right.

Earthquake: This spell enables the caster(s) to create a local earth tremor similar to those created by chthonians. As with chthonian earthquakes, the Richter-scale force depends on the number of magic points expended; however, the spell's force equals the magic points divided by 10 (instead of by 20, the chthonian ratio). The base diameter of the earthquake is still 100 yards. As with chthonian earthquakes, the diameter of the effect can be expanded by another 100 yards for every point taken off the tremor's Richter-scale force. A constraint on the spell is that for every desired point of force past five, the earthquake area must be expanded at least 100 yards. Thus, the smallest area in which a Richter-scale force 8 earthquake could be made is 400 yards in diameter, costing 110 magic points.

Of course, very few sorcerers have the magic-point reserves to use this spell to great effect. More often, a group of sorcerers will gather to cast it, pooling their magic points. They can be backed up by cultists who don't actually know the spell but chant along anyway, thus donating one additional magic point each. Up to 15 cultists per sorcerer can augment the spell's power in this manner.

The Earthquake spell is thus more powerful in some ways than the chthonian earthquake power; at least, it's more efficient in its use of magic points. This spell, however, also carries some restrictions absent from the chthonian power. The area restriction has already been described. The spell also requires about an hour to cast. While chthonians may well require as much time to create their tremors, they don't have to worry about being interrupted. What's more, the spell requires some rather awkward ritual paraphernalia. Each sorcerer casting the spell must carry a special enchanted rod while they chant, gesture, and carry on as they promenade around a megalith at least nine cubic yards in volume. The megalith must be previously consecrated by

sacrifice of a mammal of SIZ 10 or greater, then smeared with a dab of each caster's own blood. The bones of the sacrifice are burned in a fire atop the megalith while the spell is being cast.

The people who cast an Earthquake are unaffected by the spell. The tremor rolls out from a circle 10' in radius, centered on the megalith. Within that circle, the ground remains unshaken.

Horror Stench: This spell creates one of those hideous, mind-blasting stenches Lovecraft enjoyed describing. The material component is a cone of special incense. Each batch of incense takes a Chemistry roll to successfully compound. Typically, no more than 10 cones of incense are made in a batch. Some of the ingredients are quite expensive, and the process requires precisely controlled temperatures and quick, uniform mixing – controls which are difficult to achieve in large batches.

The smoke from the incense smells quite foul by itself, but when the spell proper is cast on the incense, the odor becomes even more offensive. The spell takes only one combat round to cast, and costs 1d3 SAN points and up to 10 magic points. For each magic point put into the spell, the incense's stench has two points of poison POT. Within the first round of burning, the stench expands to fill an area 10 yards in radius. Anyone caught within this area must pit his CON against the smoke's POT in the usual manner. If the person fails the resistance roll, he has a (POT -CON) x 5% chance of passing out, and his STR, DEX, and all skills are cut in half. Even if he makes the resistance roll, nausea reduces all his skills and DEX to three-fourths their normal value. On top of all this, anyone who smells the full odor of a Horror Stench must make a successful SAN roll or lose 1d4 SAN points.

Lost skill, STR, DEX, or consciousness are regained 10-(CON/3) minutes after the spell ends or after the victim leaves the area of effect. A cone of incense burns for five minutes. Casting the spell more than once or burning more than one cone of incense extends the area of duration of the stench, but does not make the effect more severe. A moistened handkerchief held over the nose and mouth reduces the odor's effect to the reduction of skills and DEX to one-quarter normal levels if the resistance roll is failed, and no loss at all if the roll is made (but SAN loss remains). Only special air filters, such as those in gas masks, can fully block the hideous odor.

Suspend Animation: This spell magically reduces metabolic processes so the caster or a designated target is able to exist without food, water, or even air for great lengths of time. A drawback to this spell, however, is that a person using Suspend Animation is unable to move while under the spell's power. The caster

SAN Loss Table: Suspend Animation

Days duration of suspended animation	SAN loss
0-3	0
4-8	1
9-16	1d2
17-32	1d3
33-128	1d4
129-512	1d6
513-2,048	1d6
2,049-4,096	1d8
4,097-8,192	2d4
8,193-16,384	1d4 + 1d6
16,385-32,768	2d6
32,769-65,536	1d6 + 1d8
65,537-131,072	2d8
131,073+	2d10

or target retains a minimal level of consciousness through suspended animation, which is roughly equal to that of deep sleep – in other words, at a shallow enough level to allow the person to be roused to a greater consciousness if there is some change in their surroundings and the person makes a Luck roll. Thus, this state of alertness is similar to a meditative trance. From this state of mind, the person may awaken fully within 10-30 minutes, thus ending the spell.

Suspending animation for a day or less costs only two magic points and no SAN at all. Each additional magic point expended doubles the maximum length of time the person can stay in suspended animation: in other words, 2 days for 3 magic points, 4 days for 4 magic points, 8 days for 5 magic points, and so on. A caster who has 15 magic points to use could stay in suspended animation for over 22 years without any immediate loss to SAN. Over great lengths of time, however, loss of SAN becomes more of a possibility. Suggested SAN losses for various time spans are listed on the SAN Loss Table in this article. It is unlikely that investigators will ever have reason to use Suspended Animation for decades at a time, although the possibility nevertheless exists.

Terror Wail: All who hear this fearsome, magically enhanced ululation must make a SAN roll or lose 1d3 SAN and flee in blind panic for 2-5 rounds. Even those who make the SAN roll feel twinges of fear and if they don't know or suspect the source of the wail, they might decide they'd rather not find out. The spell requires a full round of concentration before uttering the wail, and costs three magic points and one SAN.

Yellow Sign: This notorious talisman of Hastur and the enigmatic King in Yellow

must always be drawn in something yellow, whether it be yellow chalk on the ground or yellow gold covered with black enamel outside the Sign's outline. Once the Sign is drawn, the caster invests it with one permanent point of POW and loses 1d6 SAN. Anyone who sees such an enchanted copy of the Sign for the first time even if he has seen other copies of the Sign before — must make a SAN roll or lose 1d2 SAN points. If he makes a Cthulhu Mythos roll at double normal chance of success, he recognizes the Yellow Sign for what it stands for, and will therefore lose 1d6 SAN instead, or one point of SAN even if he makes his SAN roll.

More importantly, anyone who knows this spell can cast five magic points into an "energized" Yellow Sign, losing 1d6 SAN in the process. Anyone who sees the resultant Sign on that round must make a SAN roll or lose 3d4 SAN (and 1d6 SAN even if the roll succeeds). Cthulhu Mythos knowledge does not affect this in any way.

A Yellow Sign remains energized for as long as it remains unmarred: a few scratches won't dispel its power. To dispel this item's power, the Yellow Sign must be defaced until its shape is no longer recognizable. Defacing an active Yellow Sign nets the defacer one SAN point if he fails an Idea roll. If the person makes the Idea roll, he realizes how futile his action is, and so does not receive the SAN point. □

(continued from page 3)

Friday: Bad luck continues when Jeff Grubb falls and dislocates his left shoulder on another escalator. On the good side, I find a copy of the "Ollie North Coloring Book" and some 15mm space marines. Six people come by the magazines booth looking for Bruce Heard. Robin Jenkins' brother agrees to send me a picture he took showing Robin riding a giant pig statue in a local restaurant. FASA and Twentieth Century Imports duel it out in a BATTLETECH® game in which the attacking players get to hit the miniature figures of their targets with a hammer; bits and pieces of lead are scattered everywhere, and the crowd loves it.

That evening, Barbara and I take DUNGEON Adventures authors Grant and David Boucher out for dinner at a nearby restaurant. During the meal, I manage to spill my glass of milk all over the table as well as over David Boucher. Everyone takes it well, though I consider entering a monastery to hide my shame. Later on, a friend tells me that a friend of his overheard a guy tell someone else that I must have really tied one on the night before. "What?" I ask. "Why did he say that?" "I dunno," says the friend. "Just thought you'd like to know."

Saturday: Escalators now scare me, but I ride them anyway. The superheroes seminar goes well, though Jeff Grubb could not attend. Warren Spector accidentally describes the Marvel Universe as the "real world," and lots of exciting ideas are exchanged, none of which I can remember right now. Nine people come by the magazines booth looking for Bruce Heard. While chatting with the people from STARDATE Magazine, I discover that their art director is just as bizarre as our own, and I offer to send Roger Raupp over as part of a cultural exchange on editor abuse. A lot of babies suddenly appear at the convention, among them my son John and Lorraine Williams' daughter Alexis, who tries to pull the buttons off John's suit. We start selling old DRAGON® Magazines for only \$1

each at the booth, and the sale turns into a feeding frenzy. When I get back to my hotel room, I lay out all the articles I have to read for the coming magazine deadline, then fall asleep for 11 hours straight.

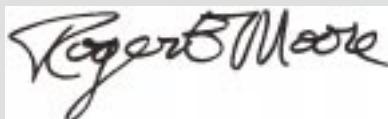
Sunday: In order to spur sales, Roger Raupp draws a glowering caricature of my face on a helium balloon with the legend: "BUY OR DIE!!!" and flies it over the magazines booth. Either because of that or the continuation of our dollar-a-DRAGON Magazine sale, we sell a lot and even give away all the copies we have of AMAZING® Stories. I lose count of how many people are looking for Bruce Heard, but it's all irrelevant since he's already gone home. We have our DRAGON Magazine seminar and it's all over.

The convention ends at 4 p.m., and we tear down the magazines booth in one hour. Everyone leaves but me, since I have to haul some boxes out to my car, which I can't get into the loading dock until the current traffic jam dies down. When the jam ends, I run back to the parking garage to get my car — and discover that I'm \$3 short to get the car out. I run back to MECCA, borrow some money from Judy Gifford (TSR, computer department), and run back to the garage.

"Hey, man," the attendant says. "We made a mistake. Are you with the convention?" I say yes, and the attendant turns and yells, "I told you so!" at another attendant. "Yeah," he says when he turns back. "We charged you the wrong rate 'cause we thought you were being held in the drunk tank and your car was impounded." I realize that the city police station is directly above the (underground) parking garage, and sigh. I pay a much reduced parking fee and drive to MECCA, where I get my possessions, and I drive home.

The grass in the front yard needs to be mowed, I'm behind on deadline, and my attention span is about 60 seconds long. "Well," I tell myself, "at least that's over with." The next morning, I wake up with a head cold and discover the car is leaking brake fluid.

See you next year. . . .



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(continued from page 6)

Foley would also have us believe Allycia and her companions are fair prey for Scud to ambush them at night, slaughtering Allycia's low-level retainers with ease after bashing in the sleeping elf's head with a rock. Please re-read the opening paragraphs of the jousting example on page 25 of issue #118. I wrote: "The elven warrior-maid Allycia is traveling with her retainers and fellow party members . . ." However invincible Scud thinks he is, an unarmed 8th-level fighter is no match for a party of well-armed and intelligent mid-level characters, especially when one considers that Scud has been sorely injured in losing the battle to Allycia. Scud would have been in no shape to challenge Allycia again, unless he had a quick access to healing magic, which is unlikely. And considering that Allycia claimed Scud's horse when she won the joust, Scud would have to be a very fast and hardy runner, and possibly also a skilled tracker, to be able to catch up to Allycia's mounted party.

When Scud surrendered to Allycia, Scud's fate was not detailed at length because that would have been digressing from the point of the jousting example. But since Foley speculated on what might have happened next, I shall as well. Had Allycia claimed Scud as a hostage, as was her right by feudal law, he might have proven a great hindrance to the completion of Allycia's quest. If the party had gone astray from the quest to secure Scud's ransom, the quest would have been delayed. A chivalrous knight should not give in to the temptation of greed when a higher duty calls. If the party had dragged the unwilling Scud along on the quest, he would have been another potential adversary for the party to worry about, threatening the accomplishment of the mission.

The smart thing for Allycia to do would be to see to it that Scud returns to a place of safety, escorting Scud there if the land is hostile, or letting Scud walk to the nearest village, leaving plenty of food and water if the countryside is civilized. A charm spell cast by the party's magic-user could insure that Scud tries no hostile act against the party in the near future. Allycia would donate Scud's possessions to her loyal retainers and continue with the aforementioned quest.

While the military ethics of ancient Greece is an interesting topic, I fail to see what that has to do with the chivalric code of a high-elven cavalier (Allycia is not a gray elf as Foley wrote). If Allycia had treated Scud as so much chattel and had sold Scud at the next marketplace, she would have been guilty of the crime of enslavement and would surely have jeopardized her neutral-good alignment.

Allycia would have to be a total idiot to ask Scud to become one of her henchman. If Scud were a lawful- or good-aligned character with a true devotion to chivalry, then an offer to serve Allycia might work, but Scud is not such a character. Scud's true-neutral alignment (easily discovered through a know alignment spell cast by the party's cleric) would cause alignment conflicts between Scud and the devoutly good Allycia. Scud's immense ego ("I am Scud the Invincible, and don't ever forget it!") would make his attitude insufferable and his loyalty questionable. Scud would likely bide his time, gain a few cutthroat allies, then attack Allycia and her friends when they are most vulnerable, restoring Scud's hurt ego and netting the party's possessions. If I were running Allycia, I would not play her as a trusting fool.

On a related subject, those who would like to add a touch of romance to a tourney [such as described in the article, "Surely, You Joust!" in

issue #118] should try using the "paramour's favor" rule. When a paramour favors a particular knight, she or he bestows a token to the knight - usually a personal item of clothing such as a scarf or kerchief. The bestowal of this favor grants the cavalier a morale bonus in the tournament somewhat similar to the effect of a bard's song. A favored knight is +1 "to hit" in the joust and gains a +1 bonus to a save vs. unhorsing roll. The morale bonus remains in effect for as long as the cavalier is able to see his or her paramour, and for as long as the paramour continues to show support for the knight, such as by cheering the knight on, flashing an encouraging smile, or waving a pennant bearing the knight's colors.

If the paramour suddenly shows disfavor to a knight when great favor was previously shown, then all favor bonuses are lost. Furthermore, the knight may be so demoralized by the paramour's rejection that the knight must roll his wisdom or less on 5d6, or suffer penalties of -1 "to hit" and -1 to the save vs. unhorsing for all future combat in or out of the tourney. This morale penalty may only take effect if the knight is at fault, such as by disgracing himself in the tourney or by doing something discourteous to upset the paramour.

The cavalier can regain the paramour's favor if the knight tries to make amends, such as by proclaiming to go on an important quest on behalf of the paramour. If the paramour is an NPC, and the DM is satisfied with the cavalier's sincerity, then the paramour will restore her favor with a successful reaction roll based on the knight's charisma. If the reaction roll yields a friendly or enthusiastic response, then favor is restored and the knight may again receive the morale bonus.

If the differences between knight and paramour are irreconcilable, then the morale loss may remain in effect for a long time. The knight may eventually get over being demoralized by trying 4d6 wisdom checks once per game week, with a cumulative modifier of -1 to the roll for every wisdom check after the first (i.e., -1 on the second check, -2 on the third check, and so on). Making the wisdom check indicates the knight has finally reconciled himself with the loss of the paramour.

On another note, W. Brian Barnes was quite correct in pointing out in issue #122 how weak beginning magic-users really are. Giving the class a spell bonus for high intelligence is one way to give the class a boost in playability. Below is the spell bonus table I use for magic-users in my campaign.

Spell Bonus Table

Intelligence score	Spell bonus
11	None
12	One cantrip
13	One cantrip
14	One cantrip
15	One cantrip
16	One 1st-level
17	One 1st-level
18	One 2nd-level

This bonus gives the magic-user much more to do at low levels without making the class too powerful at higher levels. I also mandate that magic-users do not gain the ability to memorize the same spell more than once until the 5th level of experience is attained. This forces the

player to use a broader range of spells instead of loading up on nothing but magic missile, sleep, and web spells.

Len Carpenter
West Chester PA

In issue #123, Steven Van Veen wrote a letter discussing the suggestion of a D&D video. Although a costly project, this is one of the best ideas for the further promotion and enjoyment of the game. Both the "how to" and watching another DM's session would be wonderful. These could only be a great help to the popularity of the game if done up in an interesting and professional manner. Included could be a history of the game, advice as in the DRAGON Magazine's Forum and articles, convention coverage, some of the famous AD&D® game artwork, shots of prize-winning miniatures, etc.

Imagine: Some boring weekend, a kid goes into a video shop to pass time. He spots an eye-catching video about the D&D game. He's never considered playing because he's never had the time, never heard of it, heard the wrong things about it, or whatever. But he decides to take the video(s) home for a "good laugh." He winds up fascinated and hooked. Presto! Another avid gamer.

A video might also show those that accuse and ridicule the game without knowing much about it what it's really like and how fun it can be.

Personally, I only see how such a video could help, and suggest work toward it.

Chuck Amburn
Casselberry FL

I am writing in response to Mr. Ristow's protest against banded mail in issue #123. I know something of armor, being the proud owner of a set of homemade chain mail, and the description given by Mr. Ristow would indeed be both difficult to manufacture and uncomfortably stiff to wear. However, the description in the DMG, page 27, of both banded and splint mail presents a more feasible approach. While it does not specify what the bands of armor on banded mail are, I am assuming that plate is meant. Although this would still be difficult to construct without the aid of a blacksmith and forge (as are all armors that are more protective than chain mail), it would not be nearly as difficult to wear. This type of armor would probably be less constricting than splint mail which, according to the portrayal in the DMG, would restrict waist movement in a manner akin to wearing a barrel (metal breastplates share this disadvantage). I share Mr. Ristow's desire to hear from others more knowledgeable of armor, especially of true descriptions of medieval armors.

J.R. Porter
Yongsan, Korea

I just read the letter by Alan Ristow in the Forum (issue #123) concerning banded mail. He is right - "banded mail" never existed. The 12th- and 13th-century illustrators of manuscripts who found themselves filling in row after row of tiny circles to represent warriors' ring mail resorted to drawing only a fragment of a fighting man's cuirass with a representation of ring mail, and then filling in the rest of the illustration with what appeared to be a different type of armor entirely - "banded mail!" Sometimes, they did half the work, accurately portraying ring mail on one line and alternating that with a simpler line of "mail" which didn't have individual rings or circles - just shading, which was quicker to draw.

The cover of issue #97, "Music Lover," has a

fantastic painting of a dragon. The commentary on the painting by the artist, Robin Wood, includes her apology for her lateness in delivering the painting to TSR, Inc., with words to the effect that "there were all these scales, see." Once it came time to do the detail work and actually draw each individual scale on the dragon, Miss Wood had the same labor before her as the medieval illustrators did. Being less industrious than the esteemed Miss Wood, they took shortcuts rather than portraying ring mail realistically.

By the time historical research had reached a professional level in the 19th century, it had been a long time since anyone had actually worked with or used armor; wholly apocryphal armor types were invented by historians poring over the old manuscripts, trying to identify what they saw. Hence came "banded mail." Only late in this century did historians think they had the truth. A piece of banded mail had never been found or unearthed. The "lazy-illustrator-and-credulous-historian" explanation for the controversy of banded mail is found in Sean Morrison's *Armor* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1963), a "juvenile" book I'd recommend as an excellent introduction to armor. Other types of armor which never existed are found in older books on the subject. These include "mascled," "rustred," and "trellised" armor, and also "chain mail" though this last term suffices when used to mean a *ring mail* byrnier or shirt, which is an unbroken sheet of interlocking rings (versus a *cuirass* of rings) stapled to a leather base. This is what the term "ring mail" means in D&D game terms.

In summary, "banded mail" never existed and should be abandoned from a campaign for this reason. Doubtlessly, E. Gary Gygax got his original information from one of the older authorities on medieval armor. My campaign hasn't had banded mail in years. Ring mail and chain mail are historically viable.

As a postscript, old ads for FGU's CHIVALRY & SORCERY game included a drawing of a knight with his armor's pieces each identified, including something called a "tace." Wrongo. Morrison insists that there was never such a piece of armor. (These have been incorrectly deduced from "tassets," which did exist.) Morrison's book is really quite good for that.

Jay Kaufman
Moorhead MN

I am writing in response to Alan Ristow's letter printed in issue #123. In Mr. Ristow's letter, he spoke out against the use of banded mail on the pretense that it had never existed in history, except as a different representation of the same armor. This letter prompted me to do a little research of my own.

In the information I uncovered, banded mail as an armor type was never mentioned. However, certain descriptions of unnamed armor resembled the explanations given in Mr. Ristow's letter. Unfortunately, the problem of stiff and bulky armor still stands in all descriptions given.

This evidence does not mean that banded mail should be banished from the game, although I agree that it is a matter of opinion. The description in the DMG may still be used, but it needs some clarification.

Banded mail is described as layers of padding, light chain, and a "series of overlapping bands of armor in vulnerable areas." What kind of armor are we talking about? One might think of metal bands, but leather must be used or banded mail would then become as protective as plate mail. So, banded mail may be defined as a

base layer of padding, topped by light chain, which is reinforced by a cuirass of horizontal, "clinker-built" (partially overlapping) bands of hardened leather. Legs and arms would be protected by greaves and knee guards strapped over the light chain.

This configuration would allow banded mail to keep the superior movement rate over splint mail (9" as opposed to 6") because the horizontal bands would allow more forward movement than the vertical bands of splint mail (a man must lean forward to run). In addition, the vertical bands mentioned with splint mail would also have to be hardened leather instead of the "pieces of plate" as stated in the DMG.

Whether or not you allow banded mail in your campaign is up to you; it is really just a matter of whether or not you, as DM, prefer a historically accurate campaign. My purpose in writing this letter is to show how banded mail is possible. In any case, enjoy the game.

Anthony Speca
Kingwood TX

I am writing in response to Steven Van Veen's Forum suggestion concerning orcs. It seems to me that if anyone wants a humanoid challenging to the players, they may take an ogre or troll. These orcs that are supposed to have achieved 3rd level or above – let's call them "super-orcs" – are very similar in terms of nastiness and strength to many humanoids we already have. So what's the point? Orcs are for lower-level characters and were always meant to be. For anyone who still insists on stronger orcs, then take a look at this: Even without super-orcs, there are tough orcs already, though these are seldom used. It seems to me that an average 3rd-level party with five players wouldn't exactly be "laughing and joking" when confronted with a council of 4th/5th-level orcish witch doctors and their guards! Furthermore, you must remember that orcs aren't exactly the most intelligent creatures. If an orc sees a sword +2 that is chopping his friends to pieces, and his morale check succeeds, he may well try to grab for it. While this would be stupid for a party member to do, that's just what orcs are: stupid. And if enough orcs tried it, you never know. Also, as orcs have a craving for strong drink, suppose they smelled the beer the party magic-user was carrying in a flagon, and happened to make a mistake and steal/drink the party magic-user's potion of mind control?

To wrap it up, enough can happen without super-orcs. Although I can understand an orc leader being above average in fighting ability, I honestly cannot see a tribe of 100 or so super-orcs rampaging the countryside.

Toby Myers
Hamilton NY

Looking at the recent letters of Stephen Licata (issue #117) and S.D. Anderson (issue #122), it seems that the details of encumbrance are being ignored. While this may be true in some cases, most PCs that I have seen find a solution to the rules: They use *portable holes* and *bags of holding* as if they were embroidered with certain runes of power such as "Kirby," "Hoover," and "Eureka," to name just a few. I myself am not immune to this problem, as I have one character with 21 *portable holes*. What follows is a DM's solution to the player's solution.

First, in the case of the *portable hole*, a 10' x 6' cylindrical volume is a lot of space to look for something you need in a hurry. Unless you outline a plan of storage in advance, it will take

time to find the object you are looking for. Plus, if you have more than one *portable hole*, how can you be certain that you have the right one? Time involved should be at least 10 minutes to an hour, depending on the object searched for. Also, bear in mind that telling a monster that you have something that may interest him, then searching through mounds of stuff to find it, just may get him more interested in killing you to take *everything*.

Next, since most players toss things in with impunity, give them another *portable hole* or *bag of holding* (possibly concealed in another object), then watch the fireworks as they toss one inside the other. Or you can invent a monster like an "Astral Termite" which eats through the walls of either object with the result being a loss of contents, and the possibility of the PC, upon opening an item, being sucked in, or an astral dweller coming out for a stroll.

Of course, the possibilities are up to the DM, but it should be recommended that these tactics be reserved for those that use portable, ever-sucking vacuum cleaners.

James Allen
Kalamazoo MI

As a player and a DM for many years, I have recognized a great imbalance in the AD&D game system. This imbalance is so great that I felt I should make a point of it. This imbalance is nothing less than a lack of goodness in the system. In other words, there are very few uses for the "good" character!

I have done some research into this matter and was astounded by what I found. The imbalance stems from the great versatility of the system – the very thing that makes the game great! The problem is that the rules are too versatile.

An example of this imbalance is the use of poison (a must for nearly every campaign). How else could Agorus the 2nd-level assassin kill Lord Ferdinand, a 20th-level fighter with 110 hit points? The use of poison, however, is considered evil, which puts the good fighters and magic-users at a distinct disadvantage to the evil ones who can obtain it.

Yet another example of the imbalance is in spell use, a major part of the fantasy frame. By definition, the reversal of a spell, clerical or magical, is evil, meaning it is no problem for the evil wizard to cast. In the case of the good wizard, however, spells are not to be reversed except in life-or-death situations. In other words, a good cleric would not be able to reverse his *cure light wounds* spell to ambush a kobold guard. That same cleric however might be able to reverse his spell if he was standing on the brink of a 300' drop with an army of kobolds closing in on him (but only if his deity permits!).

There is a bright spot in the imbalance. There are no evil counterparts to the paladin, ranger, or druid classes, but then again, there is no such thing as a good thief or assassin, so these classes equal out, still leaving the balance negative.

I do not feel this imbalance was created on purpose, but rather that in the search for a versatile game system, this imbalance became an unfortunate side effect. I also do not feel that the game system should be abandoned, but rather adjusted. Perhaps poison should be made more expensive, thus making it harder to obtain, I don't know. I do know that some kind of adjustment needs to be made in order to restore game balance.

S. Eric Pollard
Virginia Beach VA

The other day, I ran the "Aesirhamar" module found in issue #90. The party had little trouble taking out the main opponent in it (Hargnar the giant) due to the weapon specialization rules and the fact that the PC who fought Hargnar was an 11th-level ranger wielding a two-handed sword while wearing *gauntlets of ogre power*. The giant took two hits from a surprise attack, took two more hits due to losing initiative, swung once and missed AC -9 on a roll of 2, lost initiative again, and died before getting a second swing.

I bring this up not so much to point out the flaws of specialization for high-level characters, but because the player of the ranger insisted on getting a truckload of experience for taking out the giant in one-on-one combat.

The problem is that experience points awarded for slaying or capturing a monster are the same no matter how the victory was achieved. If you want to use the dictionary definition of the word "experience," you'll find it indicates things that people (or characters) have learned something from.

Is using a *holy word* spell to get rid of a 1000 + army of undead really a greater experience than using the same spell to get rid of a 500 + undead army? Or 30 to 40 minor demons? I don't think so. Experience earned should be proportional to the risk and effort spent to achieve a victory. Use of skills or magic items that are specifically aimed at a particular foe (in the above case, ranger bonuses vs. giants) reduce the effort needed to win, and should thus reduce the experience reward as well.

I'm not going to print up some set of complicated calculations to modify xp rewards; it's too disgusting a process as is. I am going to suggest a couple of rules of thumb, however.

Unless the PC is an assassin, slaying a foe before it gets an attack is merely a way to keep your character from being killed (something quite useful in and of itself). At best, 10% of the "listed" xp value should be given to the players for such a kill. (Obviously, some gamers will let alarms be sounded so they can get full xp value, thus letting the party get into a lot of trouble under this system. Of course, PCs who hang around characters with that sort of mentality were doomed anyway.)

If combat does ensue, multiply the creature's number of attacks by half its hit dice or levels and call that number par. If the creature manages to get that many attacks or more in the combat, the creature is definitely worth its full xp value. If it received fewer attacks, ask yourself why.

If a spell damage accounts for the reason, check to see if the average damage was equal or smaller. If so, use the full value. If the average damage from the spell automatically kills the creature, it was too easy of an opponent anyway, and a penalty should be applied.

If bonuses or something like poisons or *arrows of slaying* are used, penalties should apply, since a lot of the work was done for the character.

The exact amount of the penalty is strictly for the DM to decide, because no two kills are alike.

Charlie Gibbons
Vista CA

Most of what has been written about the nine alignments of the AD&D game universe is quite arcane. It's time to state clearly what alignment means in terms of character behavior. Let me share what has worked for my group.

When we speak of our own neighbors as

"good," "bad," "living a chaotic life," "an organization type team-player," etc., we are describing the way they feel about whatever they do. It's surely the same in the worlds of fantasy. Good people are those who are proud to do some kind and generous deeds. Evil people are proud of how much they hate someone or something. Lawful types are those who take special pride in their ability to carry out orders in doing what they believe is important. Chaotics are capricious loners. Yet all these types can work together — just as they do in our world.

Too often, I've heard a "true-neutral" player from another campaign say, "I guess I just did a good deed, so I must now do an evil deed to balance it." This is silly. Guidelines for alignment behavior should be clear and concise without adding metaphysics. Here are my suggestions.

Good characters deviate from their alignments by using poison, causing unnecessary suffering, or failing to give what help they can to the poor, the sick, and the oppressed. Evil characters deviate from their alignment by showing pity (except in cunning self-interest, of course). Characters who are neither good nor evil may act in their own interest, although acts of great kindness or cruelty are uncharacteristic.

Lawful characters are always identified with some organization. They deviate from their alignments by doing anything that is clearly contrary to the organization's interests. Lawful-good characters typically work for the lawful-good churches — those governing by consent of the governed, the underground resistance against the evil ruler, etc. Lawful-neutral characters are champions of the fighters' union, the big corporation, the mafia, the thieves' guild, the karate society, the "one true church," the police state, etc. Lawful-evil characters devote their lives to serving the secret racist society, the cruel dictator, etc.

Chaotic characters deviate from their alignment by joining any of these lawful organizations (except as infiltrators, of course). Characters who are neither lawful nor chaotic may support organizations or not as seems best, but they are unlikely to be chosen for higher offices. True neutrals deviate from their alignment only when they worry about the morals and ethics of particular actions.

One of my friends has developed a code of conduct for the adventurers whom he sponsors, to which members of all alignments can easily subscribe. The PCs are licensed to kill living creatures only under certain circumstances. They may kill persons encountered only if the persons are bad enough to radiate evil (if this is consistent with other evidence of evil behavior). For instance, a name-level evil cleric will radiate slight evil. In other instances, PCs may kill persons who are doing obvious evil and cannot be safely apprehended — especially when attempting to negotiate would be unsafe or has already failed. They may kill persons who are wanted, dead or alive, by lawful-good, lawful-neutral, lawful-evil, or neutral-good rulers. They may kill monsters that are normally evil-aligned, if there is no reason to think the particular monster is any exception. They may kill neutral monsters that pose real dangers to humans and demi-humans. Undead and dangerous non-living monsters may always be attacked. There is a 100% experience-point bonus for bringing such creatures back alive for trial (criminals) or for scientific study (monsters). Conversely, there are no experience points awarded for killing avoidable, non-evil monsters. (If PCs blunder into a trap containing a purple worm, they can expect to gain nothing.) Fighters are also expected to serve in the national guard, clerics to help

decent creatures in need, magic-users to offer academic services, and thieves to serve as security consultants. In exchange, a major NPC equips beginners at his expense and gives free clerical spells between adventures. Evil characters could easily subscribe because of the many selfish advantages this arrangement offers.

Lawful adventurers can expect to be offered positions of responsibility in the government when they reach higher levels. I've required chaotic adventurers to roll their charisma or less on 1d20 before each adventure or end up in jail "for having done something." The jail, never keyed, is positively escape-proof. Terms of release are negotiable and usually involve accepting a quest to undertake the session's adventure. (This does no one any harm, and players like it — I have the jailed chaotics tell the rest of the group what they think their character probably did.)

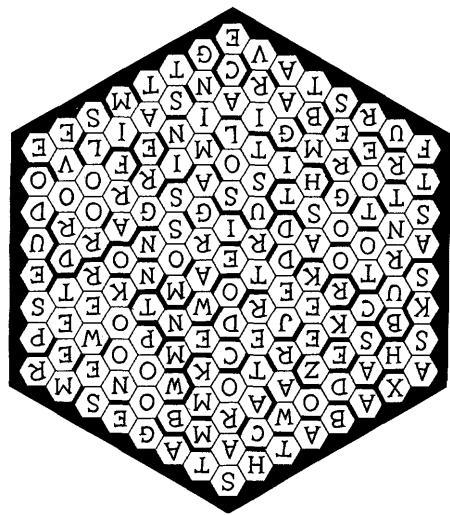
I believe that the real magic in our own mysterious universe works for good, and I hope that it is the same in fantasy worlds. I especially hope that levels are never lost by an evil character for deserting evil, nor by any character for becoming good. As *Oriental Adventures* hints, there are rehabilitated neutral-good and chaotic-good thieves and assassins who progress in their profession as adventurers. (Lawful thieves have always been rare, but one could nonetheless be lawful good.)

Let me urge that no DM ever inflict an involuntary alignment change on a beloved PC. Physical violence is part of the game, but violence to one's convictions is unacceptable. Rather, allow the good character who tries on the *helm of opposite alignment* to be teleported alive to his or her alignment plane and replaced by an imposter, thus returning at the imposter's death at the hands of the party.

My experience has been such that if characters start fighting among themselves (due to "alignment hatred," or any other cause), it tells the DM that he is not doing the job of presenting interesting opponents and obstacles. The real fun of any AD&D game is running characters with radically different skills, all working together to achieve a common goal. The characters' outlooks on life can differ too, without their having to be involved in open conflict. I'm glad things work out this way in our own world, too.

Ed Friedlander
Johnson City TN

WORMY PUZZLE SOLUTION



LETTERS

(continued from page 3)

Anyone who is seriously interested in collecting games and gaming magazines would do well to invest in a copy of the Game Buyer's Price Guide, a book published by TSR, Inc., in which the sale prices of many hundreds of items from the GEN CON Games Fair auctions of 1983 and 1984 are given. Prices have tended to be fairly erratic for many of the older issues, but the price guide at least gives you an idea of your collections minimum worth. The guide can be ordered from the Mail Order Hobby Shop, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. It costs \$5.95 and is stock number TSR9977.

The color of monsters

Dear Dragon:

I love playing the D&D game. As a hobby, I also love to paint and collect metal miniatures. Oftentimes, I have difficulty getting information from the manuals about the specifications of the miniatures. Do you know where I can find specifications (i.e., color, size, etc.) of monsters?

Derek Ho
Sherborn MA

Much of the specific information on the color, size, and so forth of various monsters and races in the AD&D® game will probably be covered in the second edition of the game, and the same information may be used in the D&D game. Until then (and even afterwards), you are free to use your imagination when painting fantasy miniatures. I've seen orcs of every color, including blue, green, and orange; no one version is "correct."

Letters and Forum pieces for this magazine come to me (Roger Moore); I read them all eventually, though some delay is inevitable. I respond to some when I can; others are dropped into files for use in future columns if they seem interesting enough. You send it, and we read it — no secretaries, no computers, no random selection. Deadline and scheduling pressures prevent fast responses, but we're working on it.

Where letters go

Dear Dragon:

Just a quick request: What exactly does happen to these letters and Forum comments we send in? Who reads them? Who handles them? Where do they go? Just out of curiosity, I wonder what happens to all of my letters. Are they all read by the head people there and responded to? Or does some secretary, who doesn't know a thing about the games, pick the ones that look interesting, or does a computer pick randomly a few which make it to the important people? What's the scoop? What goes on behind the scenes? I'm sure everyone would be interested in knowing.

Chuck Amburn
Casselberry FL

You're the only one to have asked this question, actually, but the usual situation is this: The mail is opened and read by Eileen Lucas, then sorted out to the appropriate staff member.

BEFORE YOU START ...

Write for a free copy of our writers' guidelines before you turn on your typewriter. Take a self-addressed, stamped envelope (4" x 9½" long size is best), place it inside of another envelope with a brief cover letter, and send it to: Writers' Guidelines, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. We have separate guidelines for gaming articles, fiction, and artwork, so let us know which ones you'll need. Don't get off on the wrong foot before you begin — get our guidelines first.

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The Dragon's Bestiary

*Mutants and monsters of the
GAMMA WORLD® game*



by John M. Maxstadt

This selection of mutated monsters from the radioactive lands of a future Earth provides second-edition GAMMA WORLD® game statistics. Conversion to third-edition rules should not be difficult.

Buzzbirds (Flitters)

NUMBER: 1d20 -8 (minimum of 1)

MORALE: 1d4 + 1

HIT DICE: 2d6

ARMOR: 10 (-7 to be hit)

SIZE: 7 cm tall

AIR SPEED: 2/1200/30

MS: 3d6

IN: 1d8 + 8

DX: 1d10 + 11

CH: 1d12 + 4

CN: 1d4 + 2

PS: 1d4

ATTACKS: See below.

ORIGINAL STOCK: Ruby-throated hummingbird.

MUTATIONS: Light generation (variant), sonic attack (variant), speed increase (improved), and telepathy.

HABITAT: Warm, temperate and tropical scrublands.

DIET: Flower nectar and very small insects.

Dagmits (Purple Pygmies)

NUMBER: 2d8 + 2

MORALE: 2d4

HIT DICE: 6d6

ARMOR: 3

SIZE: Up to 1 meter tall

LAND SPEED: 6/600/12

MS: 2d6

IN: 1d4 + 6

DX: 3d4

CH: 2d4

CN: 2d6 + 6

PS: 2d4 + 2

ATTACKS: As per weapon type.

ORIGINAL STOCK: Human

MUTATIONS: Density increase (special), physical reflection (nuclear), radar, and fear impulse (D).

HABITAT: Deserts and radioactive wastelands.

DIET: Desert creatures or passing animals (including humans and humanoids).

DESCRIPTION: These vicious, carnivorous humanoids are active day and night, using their radar to locate prey they can't see. They attack almost anything that moves, but are terrified of large, self-propelled machines such as robots and vehicles (they do not usually recognize androids as machines until too late, however). All artifacts make them uneasy, and they use only Tech Level I weapons themselves — notably spears, javelins, blowguns, bolas, and slings with stones. The blowguns are equipped with insinuative poison needles of poison intensity 9.

DESCRIPTION: The buzzbird is extremely dexterous and fast-moving. It seldom lights unless it believes it is absolutely safe. In general, buzzbirds are friendly to intelligent creatures and frequently associate with lis. They are also peculiarly attracted to the color red, and react at a +2 modifier to creatures which are red or primarily clothed in red. They seldom attack anything except to defend themselves or their friends.

The buzzbird's *sonic attack* does no hit-point damage, but it affects the nervous system of creatures so endowed. It "hits" as a mental attack of MS 7, and does not affect unintelligent plants, invertebrates, or deaf creatures. If a creature is affected, the GM should roll 1d10 on the appropriate table.

Affected creatures do not recognize friends if an 8, 9, or 10 is rolled on the table. They rarely attack the buzzbird, which attacks while flying rapidly past its opponents. The attack affects all creatures, friend or foe, within a 5-meter radius, and is +2 to hit creatures with better-than-human hearing. Covering one's

Though limited in intelligence, dagmits are very clever at setting traps; a dagmit encounter often begins with a deadfall, pit trap, or snare, as is appropriate to the terrain. Sometimes, dagmits capture intelligent creatures alive and torture them before cooking and eating them — particularly Pure Strain Humans, as dagmits have Mutationist leanings.

Dagmits are small (usually 80 cm tall and broad in proportion), but very dense (up to 200 kg). This *density increase* is constant in dagmits from birth, and they cannot control it. It gives them a good armor class and makes them proof against all hurled and nonpowered missile weapons, needlers, and the claws and teeth of any creature with fewer than 16 HD. Nonpowered edged weapons, such as axes and swords, are blunted (-2 to hit, -1 hp damage until sharpened) on an attack roll of 1 of 2 against a dagmit. Despite their extreme density, dagmits have retained the ability to move and fight at near-normal speeds, although their dexterity is low and they cannot run as fast as unburdened Pure Strain Humans.

Dagmits have metallic-purple skin, straight, ochre-colored hair, and wizened, wrinkled faces without beards. They only wear animal skins and live in huts made of debris or stuhumphagus shells (see below). Serfs sometimes enslave small numbers of dagmits.

Sonic Attack Effects Table

1d10 roll	Attack effect
1-3	Creature falls on the ground holding its ears for two action turns or for the duration of the buzz, whichever is shorter.
4-5	Creature runs away at top speed for three minutes.
6-7	Creature runs around in circles, or otherwise moves rapidly and aimlessly in the same area for two action turns or for the duration of the buzz, whichever is longer.
8-9	Creature physically attacks the nearest other creature at +2 to hit and double damage for two turns or for the buzz duration, whichever is longer.
10	Creature attacks the nearest object, as above. If no object is within arm's reach, the creature may attack the ground (but not itself or its own gear).

ears has no effect on this attack. The buzzbird can continue this attack nonstop for an indefinite period of time. If a creature recovers from one of the effects on the table but is still in the area of effect of the buzz, a new attack should be rolled; if the creature is affected again, a new 1d10 should be rolled on the table.

Buzzbirds may use their speed *increase* one hour per day, as usual, but they may split that hour up into smaller units (as little as one action turn) if they so desire. Their *light generation* has a smaller radius (10 meters) than usual and is not directional, since it emanates from their bodies rather than their eyes.



Giggle Bugs

NUMBER: 1 (5% 1d4)

MORALE: 10 (never retreat; cannot be recruited or hired)

HIT DICE: 5d6

ARMOR: 10

SIZE: 1% meters long, with S-meter wing-span

AIR SPEED: 8/1200/24

LAND SPEED: 4/300/6 (0/60/6)

MS: 1d4 + 2

IN: 1d4

DX: 1d6 + 6

CH: 1d4

CN: 2d6 + 5

PS: 1d8 + 6

ATTACKS: Does not attack.

ORIGINAL STOCK: Puss moth.

MUTATIONS: Beguiling (special), poison immunity (special), and taller.

HABITAT: Temperate forests and scrublands.

DIET: Green plants, especially poisonous ones.

DESCRIPTION: Giggle bugs spend most of their lives as caterpillars (the statistics in parentheses above refer to the adult moths, which do not have the *beguiling* mutation). Unlike most caterpillars with protective coloration, giggle bugs are quite prominent and distinctive: spotted, striped, and checkered in green, yellow, pink, red, blue, and white, with a clownlike false face on each end and mobile projections that resemble pinwheels and party noisemakers. The effect is magnified by its mutational powers to become highly comical — so much so that most intelligent creatures that see a giggle

bug must make a successful check vs. their MS x 2 or collapse in helpless laughter. A new MS check is rolled every 6 action turns after a failed one; if a creature makes a subsequent roll, then it may stop laughing and crawl away. However, if a creature having made a successful MS check continues to look at the caterpillar, however, or even thinks about it clearly enough to make an attack, another MS check is required every action turn.

If a creature laughs without rest for more minutes than it has points of CN, then exhaustion sets in, incapacitating the creature for 3 search turns. During this time, the creature may make no attacks, and must move at half speed. Creatures (including PCs) with IN less than 4 or greater than 16 are not affected by the giggle bug's comical appearance. Blind creatures and machines with purely artificial intelligence (like androids and robots) are also immune, but cyborgs, with their human brains, are not.

Giggle bugs are immune to all kinds of poison, and they habitually feed on poisonous plants; consequently, their bodies are also poisonous (roll 3d6 for poison intensity for any giggle bug that a character tries to bite or eat). Giggle bugs remain in caterpillar form from March through November. They pupate in the winter and emerge the following March as huge, gaudy moths that live only long enough to mate and lay eggs. The eggs take a full year to hatch. Eggs, pupae, and adult moths are all harlequin-colored; they cannot excite laughter as the caterpillars do, but they are equally poisonous.

Molnangs (Death Snails)

NUMBER: 1d4 - 2 (minimum of 1)

MORALE: 1d4

HIT DICE: 14d8

ARMOR: 1

SIZE: 4-meter-diameter shell

LAND SPEED: 10/480/8

MS: 1d10 + 8

IN: 1

DX: 1d4 + 3

CH: 1

CN: 1d10 + 11

PS: 1d20 + 30

ATTACKS: See below.

ORIGINAL STOCK: Garden snail.

MUTATIONS: Death ray (special), acid secretion (special), death-field generation, physical reflection (greatly improved), and taller.

HABITAT: Temperate forests.

DIET: Plants and animals of all kinds.

DESCRIPTION: Horribly dangerous and destructive predators, molnangs leave an unmistakable trail of blasted earth (no living plants or animals or even their remains) wherever they go. For this reason, they are sometimes called "pathfinders" or "roadbuilders" in moments of dark humor. If this path is touched before it is a day old, the victim takes 1d6 hp damage from the residual acid. About 50% of all molnang encounters begin with the discovery of a molnang track, so molnangs are

Reptoads

NUMBER: 1d4 - 2 (minimum of 1)

MORALE: 1d4 + 4

HIT DICE: 1d6

ARMOR: 10 (-4 to be hit without repulsion field)

SIZE: 7 cm diameter

LAND SPEED: 1/150/3

MS: 2d4 + 13

IN: 1d10 + 11

DX: 3d6

CH: 1d4

CN: 1d4 + 4

PS: 1d4

ATTACKS: See below.

ORIGINAL STOCK: Western spadefoot toad.

MUTATIONS: Repulsion field (greatly improved) and physical reflection (thermal and nuclear).

HABITAT: Mud banks, dry grasslands, deserts, beaches, and other areas with loose, sandy soil.

DIET: Small insects and invertebrates.

DESCRIPTION: Reptoads appear to be nothing more than normal, olive-brown



often surprised or left alone.

Molnangs cannot hear, but if they see a living creature within 30 meters in front of them, they train their eyestalks on the interloper and fire a beam equal in every way to that of a black ray gun. If hit from behind, a molnang turns (this takes an action turn) and fires. It can fire a ray every other action turn.

The molnang secretes a powerful acid all over its black body. If touched in combat, the acid does an automatic 10d6 hp damage to the snail's opponent, its weapon, or its armor (as appropriate). The acid ruins any weapon except one made of duralloy, which can survive one (and only one) hit. When an attack misses the snail's body, it is assumed to hit the massive, golden shell, which is as sturdy as duralloy, reflects all kinds of energy except kinetic (including heat, cold, radiation, electricity, sound/blasters, and light/lasers), and is proof against acid and black rays.

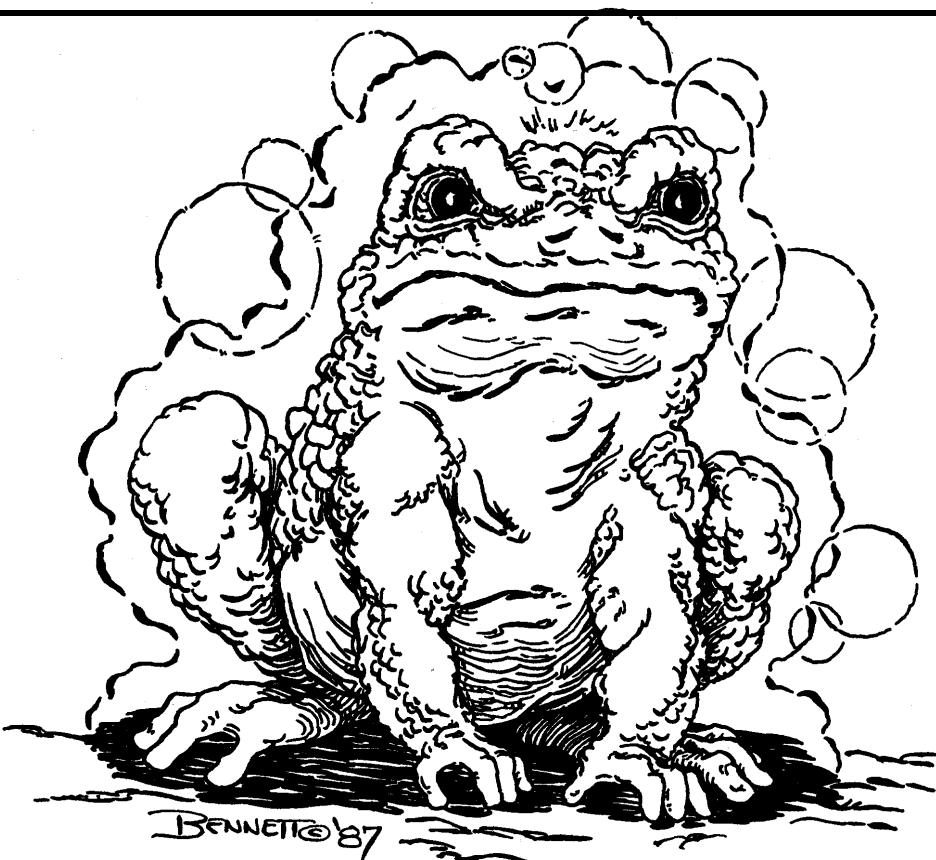
If it fails a morale check (most likely, if hit more than once or twice in combat), a molnang withdraws into its shell, pulls the operculum shut, and generates a *death field*. Thereafter, it is unable to fire its *death ray* (even after regaining consciousness) for the rest of the day. Strength equal to the molnang's (in one creature) is required to pull the operculum open while the molnang is alive inside (even if it is unconscious). The molnang can, however, be attacked by a *life leech* and other mental mutations. Vibro weapons and energy maces are not reflected by the shell.



Molnangs are good to eat, once they have been leeched of their acid content. However, they contain muscleworm larvae (DRAGON® issue #108) 75% of the time, and so should be cooked carefully. The brilliant metallic gold shell is a far greater prize, as it can be cut with vibro tools into shields which reflect beams of heat, light, radiation, sound, etc., as well as acid and black rays. (They are no help against a burst of energy such as a bomb or a sonic

blast however.) Such actions require a check vs. DX x 4 for a character to bring the shield into play during normal combat conditions (assuming the character is not surprised). The shell weighs 500-800 kg and is worth twice that in gold pieces to someone who can make use of it.

Molnangs are seldom hired or recruited because it is all but impossible to safely communicate with them.



toads. They dig their lairs in sand, loose soil, or mud, leaving only their dark brown eyes showing. Unwary creatures have no chance of noticing these eyes. Creatures without *heightened vision* have only a 2% chance per action turn even if they are scanning the ground in search of a reptoat; creatures with heightened or otherwise highly superior vision have a 10% chance per action turn, and creatures with heightened or otherwise highly superior smell have a 5% chance per action turn of locating a reptoat if they are actively trying.

The mastery that reptoats have gained over *force fields* and *repulsion fields* is unparalleled in GAMMA WORLD game lands. Like standard *repulsion fields*, these fields last as long as the creature concentrates on them. Reptoats can create an unlimited number each day. However, the reptoat has developed concentrative powers sufficient to maintain up to eight *repulsion fields* at the same time. The fields have a surface area of no more than 24 square meters, and must remain within 20 meters of the toad, but within those strictures, a reptoat can shape its *repulsion fields* into any shape it wants — a 2-meter cube, a circular band to bind opponents together, a 2 x 8 x 8 meter

cage (with *repulsion field* "bars" and gaps between), or a toad-shaped *force field*. (Reptoads keep any one of these fields around their bodies at all times.) When it wishes to eat, a reptoad simply puts up an outside *repulsion field* around itself and its prey, and only then takes down the inside one surrounding itself; thus, it is never vulnerable.

All of a reptoad's *repulsion fields* are proof against any normal physical attack; physical objects cannot pass through or damage the field. Also, laser, blaster, and energy-weapon attacks cannot pass through the field, but they can hit and automatically do normal damage to it.

Each field has 50 hit points, but the reptoad can instantly renew any broken *repulsion field* if it is alive, conscious, and still within range. Radiation, heat, cold, gas, mental attacks and stun rays do not affect the *repulsion field*; these attacks pass through the field, although the first three attacks cannot harm a reptoad.

Twice per day, a reptoad can also create a long-lasting *repulsion field* identical to the others in every way except that it does not require the toads continued concentration to keep it up. These shields stand for $50 + 1d100$ days or until destroyed by energy attacks, even if the reptoad dies, is stunned, or goes away. The area around a

reptoad's lair is often cluttered with old, forgotten, invisible "cages."

Reptoads are vicious and cruel, hating all larger forms of terrestrial life. Their favorite pastime is to trap creatures in *repulsion fields* and watch them slowly dehydrate or starve to death. Fortunately, reptoads have never been known to cooperate with anyone — not even the Red Death. They care nothing for treasure or artifacts. The only creature feared by a reptoad is a sleeth, for a sleeth can dispel all of a reptoad's *repulsion fields* just as if they were *force fields*.

Stuhumphagias (Stupmers)

NUMBER: 1d4 -2 (minimum of 1)

MORALE: 1d4 +2

HIT DICE: 15d8

ARMOR: 3

SIZE: 7 meters long, 4 meters high

LAND SPEED: 12/500/9

MS: 1d8 +10

IN: 1d8 +7

DX: 1d4

CH: 1d8 +1

CN: 1d12 +9

PS: 1d20 + 30

ATTACKS: No special attacks.

ORIGINAL STOCK: Desert tortoise.

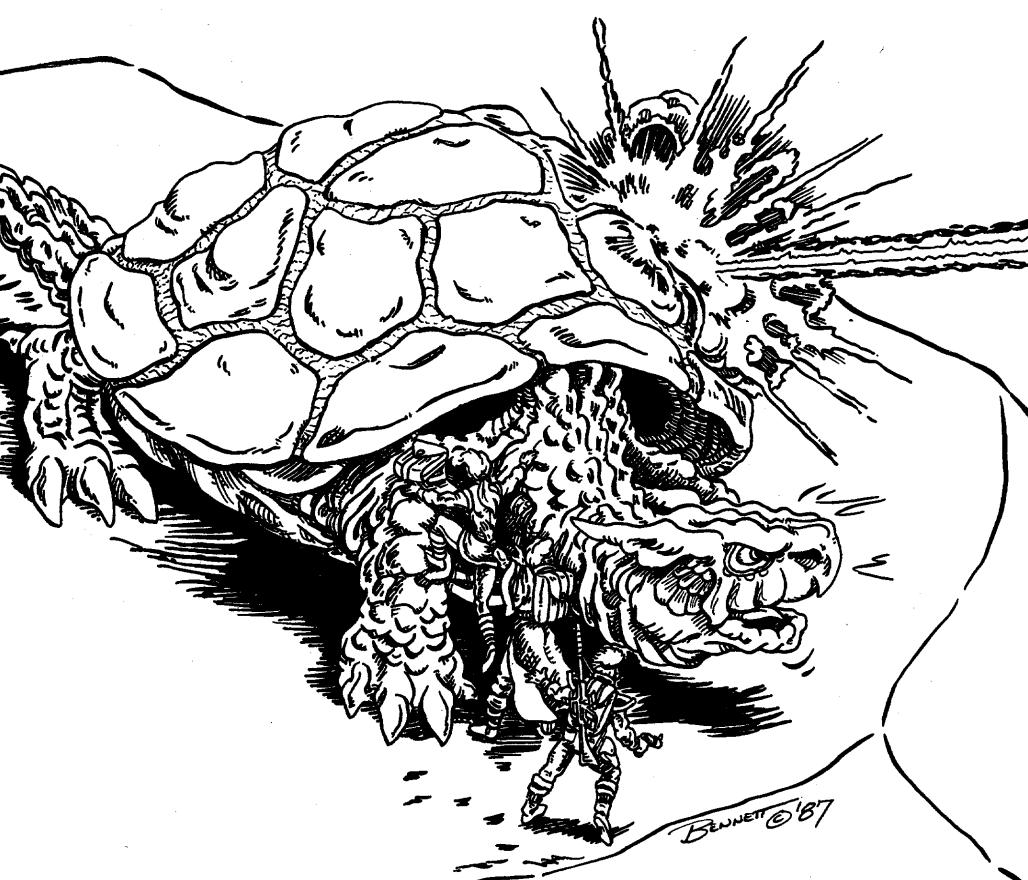
MUTATIONS: *Stunning force* (improved), *thought imitation*, *telepathy*, *physical reflection* (nuclear), *directional sense*, and *taller*.

HABITAT: Deserts, dry grasslands, and radioactive deathlands.

Dry grassland plants.

DESCRIPTION: These gigantic, kindly nutured tortoises roam radioactive deathlands and other dry, desolate places. They are always willing to *telepathically* talk to any intelligent creature, and generally try to help anyone in trouble or need. The only exception here is a dagmit. This is understandable, since dagmits kill and eat stuhumphagias whenever they can, and make their homes out of the empty shells.

When a stuhumphagus is attacked, it immediately withdraws into its shell. It is able to pull the undershell shut so that it is completely protected. In this state, most attacks can only hit the shell (which is still AC 3). Thrusting and slashing weapons, such as spears, arrows, and all but two-handed swords, do not harm the shell even if they hit. Cutting and crushing weapons, such as axes, two-handed swords, and maces do full damage to the shell, which can take damage equal to the stuhumphagus's hit-point total before splitting open. Damage from energy attacks such as *sonic blast* and *heat generation* are split evenly between the shell



and the tortoise inside, but lasers and energy weapons do their damage to the shell only. Blasters treat the shell as nonliving matter — they put a 10-cm hole in it.

The tortoise relies on its defenses as long as it can, and saves *stunning force* for cases of absolute necessity, even though it can use that mutation three times per day. A stuhumphagus uses *thought imitation* when attacked with a mental mutation.

Stuhumphagias have extra room in their shells; one can carry three human-sized creatures. A stuhumphagus can carry or house friendly, intelligent creatures in its shell at need. The passengers gain all of the shell's protection, including immunity to radiation outside. Stuhumphagias some-

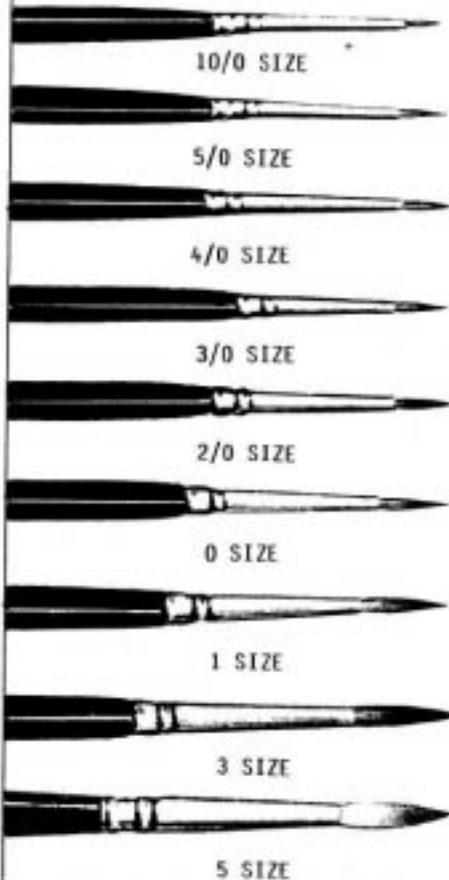
times carry Healers through deserts and deathlands, functioning as small mobile hospitals. Stuhumphagias need very little food and water to survive (considering their bulk), but they always know where safe food and water can be found. Stuhumphagias weigh approximately 25 metric tons each. If one steps on a smaller creature (something they never do intentionally, even to a dagmit, and something they certainly cannot do as an attack in combat), the victim takes 2d6 hp damage. Stuhumphagias heal all damage to their shells at the same rate as they heal damage to their bodies. No known medicine can speed up the process.



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There Are Ways of Making You Talk. . . .

Modifying the TOP SECRET® game's contact system

by Kevin Marzahli

The TOP SECRET® game is a fine, well-written, and fairly complete role-playing system. I have encountered few problems with it, and most of those were easily solved. One problem, however, took a little more work: it dealt with the rules for contacts (TOP SECRET rule book, pages 13-15).

The Contact Reaction Table (CRT) and the key on page 14 of the rule book are excellent, but I have two objections to the system. First, there are nine methods of contact, many of which are similar if not the same. What is the difference between Dazzle and Fascinate? To Impress means to have a marked effect on emotions or to strongly influence; this is very similar to both Scare and Force.

Second, the agent and the contact use the same traits for comparison on the CRT. In some cases, such as with Fooling, this works. However, if an agent is attempting to Scare a contact, is Courage the proper trait to use? Shouldn't the agent use his Physical Strength, and the contact use his Courage? After all, the agent is the one applying the psychological pressure, and the contact trying to resist it.

To remedy these situations, I modified the contact methods. I reduced the number of methods to six, and added a seventh of my own. Fool and Bribe have remained the same; Scare and Con retain their names, but the traits involved have changed. I have combined Force and Impress into Interrogate, and Fascinate, Dazzle, and Lure into Seduction. Lastly, I have added a new method called Negotiation. The new contact methods are listed

on Table 1 in this article, along with the traits which the agent and the contact compare using the CRT, and a new interpretation of the Contact Reaction results.

Con and Scare

These two abilities are not similar, but they are both easy to understand.

Con is the easier of the two. Fast-talking, tricking, bluffing — these are actions that Con involves. The agent uses his Deception and the contact his Perception; compare these on the CRT, then consult the key.

Scaring a contact usually involves threats of violence. Therefore, the agent uses his Physical Strength, together with the HTH value of any weapon that he may be brandishing (and this means only brandishing, since an NPC who is attacked will defend himself if possible; if he is incapacitated, the use of a weapon turns Scare into Interrogate). The contact uses his Courage for comparison. If the contact is brave enough, he won't give in to scare tactics, but if he is a coward, getting information should be easy for the agent. If more than one agent is present, then the Physical Strengths of the agents (and any appropriate HTH values) may be added to the interrogator's score. Likewise, if more than one contact is present, their Courage ratings may be added together (there is strength in numbers).

Interrogate

Interrogate takes the place of Force and Impress. It can (but does not always) involve truth serums and torture. In its simplest form, Interrogation resembles Scaring; simply compare the agent's Physical Strength and any appropriate HTH

weapon values to the contact's Willpower.

If the agent cannot get information in this manner, he may resort to other means. One of these is a technique called narcoanalysis, in which truth serums (drugs such as sodium tiopental and scopolamine) are used to place the contact in a dreamlike state, during which he is questioned. Administrators should use the rules given in the TOP SECRET rule book (page 39) if drugs are used. In addition, there is a chance of death when truth drugs are used. The base chance is 5% for the first dose and an additional 5% chance for each additional dose administered within an 1b-hour period. Also, the average agent does not have the knowledge required to properly administer the drugs. Only agents with a superior Medicine/Physiology AOK, or with a Knowledge of 102 or above, have the proper training. Consequently, there is an additional 5% chance of death if an untrained agent administers the drugs. If the dice roll indicates death, the contact falls unconscious and dies within 2d10 minutes.

Another alternative is torture. This is a rather gruesome subject, and particulars are avoided here. Instead, the modifiers listed in Tables 2 and 3 are added to the agent's Physical Strength if appropriate. These modifiers are cumulative and it is possible to use all of the methods together. If, for example, the contact is subjected to bright lights, complete darkness, white noise, then back to bright lights and so on, in a continuous cycle, the modifier would be +25. However, if the total modifier is +20 or above, there is a 25% chance of unconsciousness every five minutes. For every additional +10 to the modifier, the chance of unconsciousness goes up by 5%.

Table 1
Contact Methods

Contact method	Agent trait	Contact trait
Bribe	Cash value divided by Willpower	
Con	Deception	Perception
Fool	Knowledge or AOK	Knowledge or AOK
Interrogate	Physical Strength + HTH weapon value (or special)	Willpower
Negotiation	(Knowledge + Deception)/2	(Knowledge + Willpower)/2
Scare	Physical Strength + HTH weapon value	Courage
Seduction	Charm	Willpower

Table 2
Interrogation Modifiers: Life Level

Life Level of contact	Modifier
Normal	-10
2/3 normal	-5
1/2 normal	0
1/2 to 1/4 normal	+5
Below 1/4 normal	+10

Thus, a modifier of +30 would give a 30% chance of unconsciousness, a modifier of +40 would give a 35% chance, a +50 would give a 40% chance, and so on. Also, if the modifier is +50 or more, there is a 5% chance that the contact dies. For every +15 added to the modifier, the chance of death increases by 5%. Thus, a modifier of +65 gives a 10% chance of death, a +80 gives a 15% chance of death, etc.

Negotiate

This new form of contact is not used to gain information; instead, it is used to lessen demands in hostage situations, such as convincing a skyjacker to surrender or release passengers. In a situation in which a compromise or bargain is involved, Negotiation is best. This method uses the average of the agent's Knowledge and Deception, compared with the average of the contact's Knowledge and Willpower. These averages are compared on the CRT as usual, but instead of consulting the Reaction Key for a result, the letter result from the CRT determines a number called the Negotiation Value. These values are listed in Table 4.

The Negotiation Value is the base percentage chance that the contact accepts a proposal made by the agent. This value can be further modified by the Political Alignments of both the contact and the agent. Cross-reference the political alignments of both parties on Table 5 to find any modifiers.

Example: "Mad Jack," an agent, is negotiating with a skyjacker for the release of women and children passengers. Mad Jack's Knowledge is 95, and his Deception

is 41, which gives an average of 68. The skyjacker's Knowledge is 62, and his Willpower is 32, for an average of 47. Mad Jack is radical, and the skyjacker is reactionary — not good! Comparing 68 and 47 on the CRT, an "E" result is obtained, for a Negotiation Value of 50. However, because of the alignment difference, the two do not see eye-to-eye, and 20 is subtracted, for a new value of 30. Mad Jack rolls a 43: no go. The passengers remain on the jet.

Seduce

The natural attraction between males and females can be used to the advantage of agents wishing to gain information. The standard procedure is used: Compare the agent's Charm to the contact's Willpower. In addition, consult Tables 6 for any appropriate modifiers.

Interpreting CRT results

As you know, the CRT gives nine possible results, designated A through I. Most of these are pretty straightforward, but results E through H have little variety; the contact either walks away or he demands that the agent leave or shut up. Not only do these results offer little variety in NPC actions, but they simply do not work in some situations. What if the contact and the agent meet in an elevator? Can the contact walk away or ask the agent to leave? He would probably stall for time until the elevator stopped at the next floor. Or what if the contact and agent were Negotiating over the telephone? Could the contact engage in HTH combat? In this instance, the Administrator might have the contact threaten the agent and hang up.

Table 3
Interrogation Modifiers: Methods of Interrogation

Interrogation method	Modifier
Sensory deprivation*	+35
Extreme heat/cold	+20
Threats against friends/family	+15
White noise	+15
Starvation*	+10
Disorientation	+23
Bright lights**	+5
Darkness**	+5
Restriction of movement	+5

* Requires at least three days to be effective.

** For every 12 hours beyond the first 12, add 5 to the modifier.

Table 4
Negotiation Values

CRT result	Negotiation value
A	90%
B	80%
C	70%
D	60%
E	50%
F	40%
G	30%
H	20%
I	10%

Table 5
Negotiation Modifiers by Political Alignment

Agent	Contact				
	Radical	Liberal	Neutral	Conservative	Reactionary
Radical	+20	+10	0	-10	-20
Liberal	+10	+20	0	-5	-10
Neutral	0	0	+5	0	0
Conservative	-10	-5	0	+20	+10
Reactionary	-20	-10	0	+10	+20

Note: The Negotiation Value may never exceed 95%.

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In most cases, the profession of the contact, the location of the encounter, and common sense determine how the contact reacts. For example, an agent has been questioning a bartender. The CRT result is "G," and the subsequent dice roll is 56, indicating that the bartender demands that the agent leave. An Administrator who stops at that is missing an ideal opportunity to liven up the game. Instead of demanding that the agent leave, the bartender could signal a bouncer to remove the nosy agent!

In another situation, a pair of agents are trying to Scare information out of a store clerk. The CRT result is "H" and the dice roll 83, indicating that the clerk engages in HTH combat. However, the clerk is relatively weak and knows that he would not stand a chance against two agents, so he activates a silent alarm; within minutes, the police arrive.

In short, Administrators should consider all of the possibilities and options available that would add excitement to the game, thus teaching the agents to be more careful. Continually being thrown out of restaurants or receiving unwanted attention from police and security forces will discourage agents from the continual use of muscle, forcing them to use more subtle methods. With seven contact methods, agents have an array of choices which they should use to their fullest potential. Ω

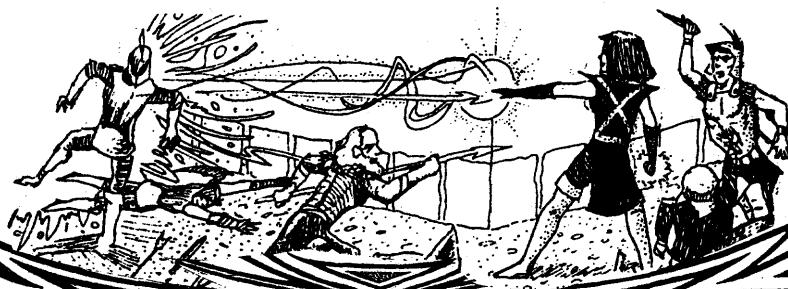
Table 6
Seduction Modifiers

Location of attempt	Modifier
In public	-10
In private	0
In "romantic atmosphere"	+10
Agent's sex/looks	Modifier
Female	+5
Male	0
Well-dressed	+5
Poorly dressed	-5
Contact's Charm	Modifier
01-25	+15
26-50	+10
51-75	+5
76 and up	0
Contact's status	Modifier
With boyfriend/girlfriend	-15
Married	-15
Busy/preoccupied	-5
Intoxicated	+15

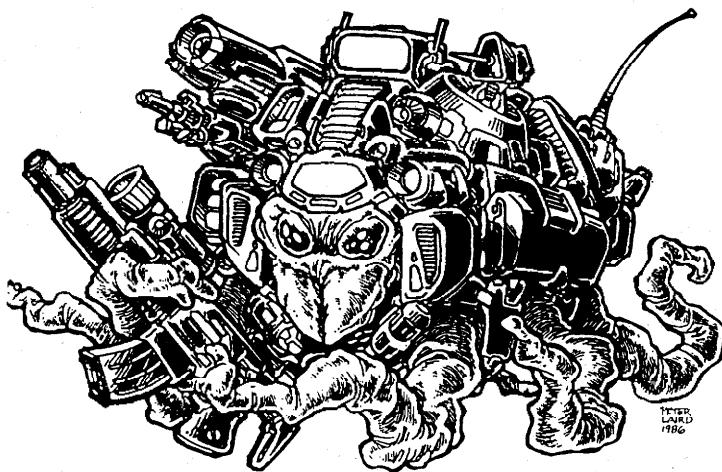
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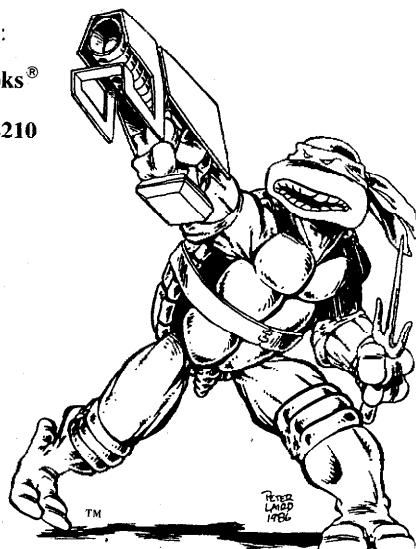
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Big Drac Attack

by Jeff Grubb

Elsewhere in this issue, you can find the AD&D® game statistics of the Lord of the Vampires, that sterling member of the undead: Dracula. His Undeadliness has also had a long and checkered career in the Marvel Universe as well, a series of deaths and resurrections that has only recently been put to a permanent end at

the hands of Doctor Strange. Without further ado, here is the worst of the vampires — Vlad Dracula, best known as Dracula. Note that what follows will not precisely match the information published for the AD&D game. The latter article draws from classical sources, while this article is from Dracula's experiences in the Marvel Universe. A fine difference, but a difference nonetheless.

vampire, the victim remained weak (-1CS on all FEATS) until an Endurance FEAT was made, checked once each week. During this time, the vampire had a limited hypnotic control over the victim, so that any FEATS against that control could not add Karma.

Regeneration: Dracula had Excellent regenerative abilities.

DRACULA™

Vlad Dracula (destroyed)
Ruler of Earth's vampires

F	RM (30)	Health: 210
A	AM (50)	
S	RM (30)	Karma: 110
E	UN (100)	
R	GD (10)	Resources: RM
I	AM (50)	
P	AM (50)	Popularity: -30

KNOWN POWERS:

Vampirism: All of Dracula's abilities stemmed from his identities as a vampire and as king of the vampires. These abilities exceeded the levels of "ordinary" vampires (see below) because of Dracula's many centuries of existence and absorption of the powers of the last Atlantean vampire.

Resistances: Under normal circumstances, vampires did not age. They could be poisoned, though not killed by poison (ignoring all "Kill" results). They could not be damaged by most physical attacks, though they could be affected by Stuns and Slams (and, in some cases, "Kills"). Most energy attacks had similar limitations. See below for those attacks which specifically affected vampires.

Transformation: Dracula could, at will, transform himself into a number of different shapes, each taking but a single round to assume. These included:

- * A mistlike cloud which allowed him passage through tight spaces and allowed him to fly at 1 area/round (he could not be harmed by physical attacks in this form);
- * A bat with Dracula's normal intelligence,

having bite attacks (Good damage) and the ability to fly at 6 areas/round;

* A wolf with Dracula's normal intelligence, having the abilities to bite (Remarkable damage), move at 3 areas/round, and use its Intuition at +1CS to reflect its enhanced senses; and,

* A man-sized bat capable of flying at 4 areas/round, with claw and biting attacks (for Excellent damage each).

Summoning and Controlling: Dracula had a number of summoning and controlling powers, given below:

* Animal control allowed him to summon up to his Psyche in number of bats, rats, and wolves.

* Summoning thunderstorms required a Red Psyche FEAT roll that left Dracula unable to use other vampiric abilities for 1-10 hours.

* As Lord of the Vampires, Dracula could control the actions of another vampire by making a Psyche FEAT against the other vampire's Psyche.

* Dracula had the ability to hypnotize ordinary humans, even if he had caught the victim's eye for only three seconds.

* Dracula could communicate telepathically with any individual from whom he had drained blood, anywhere in the world.

Vampire Bite: Dracula's canines were enlarged so that he could deliver the classic "vampire bite." This bite inflicted 6 points of damage per turn. If the victim was killed in the attack, an enzyme in the vampire's saliva caused the body to produce a greenish ichor which replaced its blood. In three days, sufficient ichor existed to turn the victim's body into a vampire. If the victim was not slain by the

vampire, the victim remained weak (-1CS on all FEATS) until an Endurance FEAT was made, checked once each week. During this time, the vampire had a limited hypnotic control over the victim, so that any FEATS against that control could not add Karma.

LIMITATIONS: Dracula and other vampires were unstoppable if opponents used most normal weapons and attacks. A number of attack forms and weaknesses did inflict damage to a vampire:

* Blood Dependency. Vampires needed human blood to survive. Voluntary or involuntary deprivation of blood resulted in weakness (-1CS on all stats for every two days without blood) and an overwhelming desire for blood. A Psyche FEAT put off that desire for one day, but the need remained.

* Soil Dependency. Vampires could not go 100 miles beyond their places of human birth without taking a pound of soil with them. This soil, usually used to line a coffin, offset the negative effects of the sun (see below).

* Direct Sunlight. The rays of the sun caused Amazing damage per round to vampires. If reduced to zero Health points, a vampire dehydrated and turned to powder. Sunlight also caused vampires not under its effects to become comatose unless in contact with native soil. Energy attacks which duplicated solar radiation (such as the new Captain Marvel's powers) could affect vampires.

* Garlic Plants. A vampire could not directly attack a victim wearing a clove of garlic (the vampire could push a wall over on the garlic-wearer, though, or perform similar actions). Further, a vampire's transformation abilities could not function within 1 area of garlic.

* Religious Objects. Vampires had an allergy of sorts to objects of religious faith, such that any religious symbol (such as the cross or the Star of David) held by someone who had great faith in that symbol would keep a vampire at bay. Such a symbol inflicted normal damage (as a club, sword, or shuriken) to the vampire.

* Mirrors. Vampires did not reflect an



image in mirrors, nor show up on photographic plates or similar mediums.

* Houses. Most vampires were bound by a code that prevented them from entering a dwelling unless freely invited. Dracula could counter that by making a Psyche FEAT roll.

* Silver. Silver weaponry could inflict normal damage on and could even "kill" vampire.

* Wood. A wooden stake through the heart produced an automatic "kill" result against a vampire. Of course, this meant holding the vampire down and getting a "Red" result with the attack. A wood stake or silver blade through the heart caused a vampire to decay into dust, but the dust reassembled and the vampire started to heal as soon as the stake or blade was removed.

* Permanent Destruction. All vampires had a tendency to regenerate lost damage over time, even if chopped into tiny pieces. Three methods of slaying a vampire were known to "kill" it forever:

1. Exposure to sunlight until the vampire becomes dust, followed by scattering the ashes.

2. Piercing the heart of and beheading the vampire, burning the head and body in two separate pyres, then scattering the ashes.

3. Using the Montesi Formula. This last method was how Dracula was finally destroyed.

TALENTS: Dracula was a trained swordsman and had Martial Arts A and B. He amassed a large quantity of mystic lore in his travels, and could be said to have occult lore from first-hand encounters.

CONTACTS: Dracula was Lord of the Vampires and could use his rulership to command other vampires, whether they were "his" or not.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Vampires were undead, and as such were not living creatures. No Karma was lost by killing a vampire.

DRACULA'S STORY: Long ago, powerful proto-deities roamed the surface of the cooling Earth. Most of these were forced into other dimensions, but one, Cthon, left

behind a store of dark lore and magic, which was gathered together and is now known as the Darkhold. The Darkhold found its way to Atlantis before that continent's destruction, where a sect of evil magicians discovered in its text a method of reviving the dead as blood-drinking bat warriors. These Atlantean Darkholders created the first vampires, who promptly slew their creators and escaped Atlantis.

The vampires spread over the Earth in the next 15,000 years, working their way into the mythos of mankind long before the coming of Dracula. They had a loose organization run by a self-styled king who, at the time of Dracula, was Nimrod the First.

Vlad Dracula was the second son of a Transylvanian nobleman. Vlad and his younger brother were captured by invading Turks, and the latter died in their hands. Vlad learned much from this experience in the ways of power and of the inhumanity of humanity.

Dracula eventually retook his father's throne and fought the Turks, earning the

name Vlad "the Impaler" from his habit of skewering his foes. During this time, he married the Hungarian noblewoman Zofia, and they had a daughter. Vlad later dissolved the marriage and sent Zofia away. His daughter in time became a vampire as well — Lilith, one of Dracula's long-time foes. Vlad later married a woman named Maria, and through this line the descendants of Dracula came.

In a battle with a Turkish warlord, Vlad was mortally wounded and Castle Dracula was taken. The warlord took Vlad to a gypsy healer to recover, but the gypsy was a vampire and killed Vlad, turning him into a vampire. The warlord killed the gypsy, but was in turn slain and transformed into a vampire by Dracula.

Dracula's ascent to the top of vampire hierarchy was swift. He defeated the current king of the vampires, Nimrod, and soon afterwards absorbed the power of Varnae, who by that time was the sole survivor of the original Atlantean vampires. This absorption of powers gave Dracula a number of abilities over and

above those that were standard for "normal" vampires.

Dracula had a number of adventures recorded in the Marvel Universe over the next 500 years, including the following:

- * Two run-ins in the 16th century with the Puritan Solomon Kane. Kane was the first person reported to have killed (however temporarily) the vampire Dracula.
- * Battles in the 18th century with the sorcerer Cagliostro in France, though Dracula fled the nation during the French Revolution.
- * A battle with Baron Russoff soon after leaving France. Russoff killed Dracula, but he was in turn wounded by a werewolf. The present-day descendant of Russoff is a werewolf as a result. [See "A Marvel® Monster-Phile," by Douglas Lent, in this issue.]
- * Several battles with Abraham Van Helsing in the 19th century.
- * An encounter in which he was slain by an American using silver buckshot in the late 19th century.
- * Battles with Van Helsing, aided by Jonathan Harker, which were later described by Bram Stoker in his book *Dracula*, which is believed by most people to be a work of fiction. Soon after the events recorded in that book, Dracula was again revived and slain by Frankenstein's Monster [Again, see "A Marvel Monster-Phile" in this issue.]

In the early 20th century, Dracula killed Lord John Falsworth of England, turning him into a vampire that would soon become Baron Blood [see "Sudden Dawn," by William Tracy, in DRAGON® issue #104 for details.] In recent years, Dracula's chief opponents were Quincy Harker, descendant of Jonathan Harker, and a number of other vampire hunters, including the Indian Taj Nitai, the American named Blade (an expert at throwing wooden stakes), Rachel Van Helsing, Frank Drake (Dracula's one living descendant), and Hannibal King, a vampire and detective. Harker killed Dracula at the cost of his own life, but Dracula was soon brought back yet again. Dracula battled a number of supernatural and super-powered foes as well, including the demon Mephisto, the disembodied brain called Doctor Sun, the Sorcerer Supreme Doctor Strange, and the X-Men.

A group of mystics devoted to the Darkhold found mystic means of further increasing Dracula's power in recent years, eliminating his vulnerabilities to silver, garlic, and religious artifacts. Soon afterward, however, Doctor Strange, aided by King, Blade, and Drake (Van Helsing was turned into a vampire by Dracula and killed by Wolverine), recovered the Darkhold and, from Castle Mordo, destroyed both Dracula and all other vampires on Earth. King was spared

because he had never taken human blood, and a complete blood transfusion replaced the ichor in his veins.

The Montesi Formula destroyed all vampires on Earth's dimension, and not only prevents the creation of new vampires, but the entrance into this dimension by vampiric beings from other dimensions. The magic of the Darkhold may be able to reverse the formula, but that book is currently in the hands of the alien sorcerer Urthona.

Vampires in the Marvel Universe

Not all vampires had the power of Dracula, though most such creatures had abilities over and above those of normal mortals. Conversion into a vampire modified one's abilities as follows:

Agility: +1CS (maximum Remarkable);
Strength: +1CS (maximum Remarkable);
Endurance: +2CS (maximum Amazing); and,

Health: modified accordingly.

A vampire in the Marvel Universe had the ability to transform as noted for Dracula, and gained Typical regenerative abilities. It suffered all the effects noted above under Limitations. It could also be controlled by the vampire who bit (and created) it, should the victim fail a Psyche

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Number 3

MAYFAIR GAMES SLOGS THROUGH THAT EXTRA MILE.

Mayfair Games line editor, Jonatha Caspian, went that extra mile to meet *DC® Heroes RPG* players in Texas this August. She did it through four feet of water.

That's right. Mayfair had a special demo set up at Buddy Saunders' warehouse sale in Texas, and on the day Jonatha was to travel to it, Chicago was plunged into its worst flood in recorded history. Cars were bobbing on the expressway. All roads to O'Hare airport were closed. Telephone switching centers were flooded, and hotels near the airport were evacuated. In short, it looked like her trip was all washed up.

But that didn't stop Jonatha. After circumventing a fire department official and plunging into the waves, Jonatha made it to the airport's National Guard station, just inside the outer fringes of the airport's grounds. There, a fine upstanding Illinois National Guardsman seeing an attractive woman wading through hip-deep water with a bag on her head took it upon himself to wade out and ask her if she needed any help. Jonatha, being nobody's fool, said, "Of course."

Liberating a canoe that had been sitting unused in front of the offices, and acquiring a senior officer who never canoed in his life, our intrepid editor and her companions set off for what was now being called O'Hare island.

Many perils did they brave: floating taxi-cabs, speeding busses, turning trucks, but they got through to the waters' edge three miles from the airport. Bidding goodbye to our brave National Guardsman, and wishing them luck on their amphibious maneuvers scheduled for tomorrow (No

lie.), Jonatha started on her trek to the terminal.

On her way, a vanload of teenagers, seeing an attractive wet woman with luggage, stopped and asked if she needed a lift. Jonatha, being nobody's fool, said, "Of course."

Well folks, she got there, and had a wonderful day at Buddy Saunders' and was treated just grandly by everybody. Which just goes to show you nobody's foolin' you, when they tell you Mayfair Games staff'll go that extra mile for you.

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Anyway, we conducted a contest through our easy-to-subscribe-to newsletter for the best new gadget. David Persinger of Portland, Oregon won first prize for his "Trakker." You have to buy the book to see that, but at the right we have the two runners up of the contest.

We regularly run contests through our newsletter. For details on how to subscribe send an S.A.S.E to:

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Control Bug

DEX: 0 STR: 14 BODY: 18
INT: 6 WILL: 8 MIND: 5
CHARGES:
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Powers: (*linked)

Claws*: 14
Control*: 8

Control Bugs latch onto mechanical objects, puncturing their skin with the base spike and clamping in place with their claws. They can use Control on any electronically driven device, turning it into a sentient being with their mental statistics. Since a Control Bug has at least 1 AP in each mental attribute, it has an artificial intelligence and can make its own decisions. However, it does not have free will, and therefore must try to carry out the intent of its owner-programmer. Since the Control Bug has no DEX it cannot direct the movement of any machine that has no DEX itself.

— by Ray Boone
Willington, FL

Stargate

DEX: 0 STR: 0 BODY: 2
INT: 0 WILL: 0 MIND: 8
CHARGES: 27
COST: 1097 HPs+\$2.4B

Powers:

Warp: 28

The Stargate is a device developed to allow Darkseid's™ elite forces instantaneous travel. He is not likely to sell a Stargate to a hero.

— by Robert F. Maharty, Jr.
Utica, NY

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As a public service to those fine upstanding brilliant individuals who have already purchased a copy of **Hardware Handbook**. We want to clear up some small inconsistent-with-reality-items (errors) that crept into the text. Nothing important mind you. Just a few minor items.

Like that "Dark Knight™" reference on the contents page, just ignore that. Didn't happen. Just a fiction.

And that Batcomputer™ without stats? Well a minor inconvenience like that is easily fixed:

Batcomputer

DEX: 0 STR: 0 BODY: 6
INT: 6 WILL: 6 MIND: 0
CHARGES: EPS
COST: 2376 HPs+\$26.5B

See. No problem.

Finally, the column shift for miniaturization should be to the right (on top of page 20) just as it is for repair attempts. After all, it is more difficult to miniaturize things, not easier.

We are happy to clear up these matters, and help you to create better and healthier campaigns for all good Americans everywhere.

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Please send your suggestions to the address below. Thank you.



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No name
Fugitive artificial being

F	RM (30)	Health: 120
A	GD (10)	
S	RM (30)	Karma: 30
E	AM (50)	
R	GD (10)	Resources: None
I	GD (10)	
P	GD (10)	Popularity: 0

KNOWN POWERS:

Body Armor: The monster has a thick skin that serves as Good body armor against physical attacks. Also, due to his unusual physical resilience, all physical combat effects against him are reduced by one color. Thus, Green results become White, Yellow becomes Green, and Red becomes

Yellow. He is therefore immune to "Kill" results from knives or bullets, and to results in a slugfest.

Rapid Healing: The monster can heal from wounds at a much faster rate than ordinary humans. He can regain his Endurance rank in Health points once every hour instead of only once a day.

Suspended Animation: Whenever the monster is subjected to cold of at least Remarkable intensity, he enters a state of suspended animation until he is revived, taking no damage from the chill. An Endurance FEAT is required to avoid this event.

THE MONSTER'S STORY: Baron Victor Frankenstein was a brilliant Swiss biology and chemistry student in the late 18th



FRANKENSTEIN'S
MONSTER™

century. Victor experimented with the reanimation of dead tissue as a key to immortality and succeeded in assembling a large humanoid using parts from several fresh corpses. Frankenstein also found a way to overcome deterioration and tissue rejection of organs from different bodies, making this work possible. Then, using a special process of his own invention, Frankenstein brought his creation to life. However, the sight of the monster terrified him so much that he abandoned the creature, hoping his creation would perish when left unprotected.

However, although the monster was as ignorant as an infant, he was also highly intelligent and quickly learned how to survive by secretly observing humans. Within a few months, the monster could speak and function as well as any normal human. He then began plotting his

LIVING MUMMY™



WEREWOLF™

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revenge on his creator for deserting him. The monster killed Victor's brother William, then struck a deal with Victor by promising to leave the baron's life forever if Victor would create a mate for the monster. Victor went back on the deal, destroying the female monster, and the monster killed his creator's best friend and wife, then fled into the Arctic. Frankenstein gave chase but died of exposure shortly after relating his tale to sea captain Robert Walton. Meanwhile, the creature lay in hibernation after being trapped in the ice, filled with regret for his deeds. Writer Mary Shelley published Walton's account of Frankenstein's story but the public considers it a work of fiction.

In 1898, Walton's great-grandson found the monster, who had since thawed out of his icy prison. The creature soon had a clash with Dracula, during which his vocal

chords were injured, rendering him mute. He was then again entombed in ice and was revived again only recently. Veronica Frankenstein, a descendent of the baron, operated on the monster's larynx, and he can again speak, though with some difficulty. The creature most recently clashed

with the Thing and Iron Man, and current whereabouts or activities are unknown. It should be noted that the creature is often wrongly referred to as "Frankenstein," though this is really the name of its creator.

LIVING MUMMY™

N'Kantu

Altered and immortal human

F	EX (20)	Health: 129
A	PR (4)	
S	RM (30)	Karma: 22
E	MN (75)	
R	TY (6)	Resources: None
I	TY (6)	
P	GD (10)	Popularity: 0

KNOWN POWERS:

Body Armor: The process that made N'Kantu a mummy also gave him super-tough skin that acts as Remarkable body armor.

Environmental Independence: Sustained completely by the life-preserving fluid in his veins, the Living Mummy no longer needs to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep. He

could easily survive in many places where an ordinary human would be killed instantly. He no longer ages.

LIMITATIONS: Because of N'Kantu's dependence on the special fluid that substitutes for his blood, any damage he takes from heat or fire gains a +1CS due to the effects of dehydration on the fluid. It is not yet known if N'Kantu could be killed by such attacks or would simply remain unconscious until the fluid had regenerated itself. N'Kantu can speak only with great difficulty since his throat is completely dry.

THE LIVING MUMMY'S STORY: N'Kantu was a chieftain of the Swarili tribe of

North Africa over three thousand years ago, when they were enslaved by the Egyptians: Bound in chains, N'Kantu and his people were forced to build a temple for the reigning pharaoh, Aram-Set. N'Kantu obeyed his captors, all the while plotting rebellion against them. When word of his plans reached Aram-Set and the high priest, Nephrus, they decided to have the slaves killed upon the temple's completion.

But N'Kantu and his followers struck before then and were able to slay the pharaoh himself before being subdued. To punish N'Kantu for his crime, Nephrus drained the Swarili chieftain's blood and replaced it with a special preservative fluid. He was then bound head to toe in bandages and entombed in a sarcophagus

beneath the sand, still conscious but completely immobile.

There N'Kantu remained until recent years when the paralysis effect wore off and he could at last move. Unfortunately, the three millenia he spent confined beneath the desert rendered him totally insane. Digging free of his tomb, N'Kantu went on a rampage which finally ended in the streets of Cairo. N'Kantu grabbed a telephone pole to use as a weapon and was electrocuted by a dangling power line. This left him in a comalike state for several weeks; upon awakening, his sanity had returned. Immortal, N'Kantu now wanders across Egypt and North Africa, seeking some purpose to his life.

WEREWOLF™

Jack Russell
Altered human

F	RM(30)	Health: 120
A	EX(20)	
S	RM(30)	Karma: 91
E	IN(40)	
R	TY(6)	Resources: EX
I	MN(75)	
P	GD(10)	Popularity: 20

KNOWN POWERS:

Claws: Werewolf has razor-sharp claws and teeth and can inflict up to Remarkable edged-attack damage with them.

Infravision: Werewolf's sight extends into the infrared, allowing him to see in the dark by detecting heat emissions.

Extraordinary Senses: Werewolf's senses of sight, hearing, and smell are all Amazing. He can detect sensations far beyond the normal human range by making an Intuition FEAT roll. He can track by smell and remember scents previously encountered. He can hear a heartbeat at a one-area range and smell an approaching being within a three-area range.

Running: Werewolf can move at a rate of two areas per round for up to half an hour a day.

Invulnerability: As a supernatural creature, Werewolf has Amazing resistance to all forms of physical damage except that caused by silver weapons. Werewolf, if injured, cannot have his Endurance reduced below Feeble except by silver weapons.

LIMITATIONS: As mentioned above, silver weapons are the only ones unaffected by Werewolf's invulnerability and are one of the few things that can kill him. Each hit by a silver weapon causes all of Werewolf's physical abilities to make a -1CS. A Red or Yellow result from a silver edged or missile weapon is treated as a "kill."

Additionally, although Russell has gained the ability to change into Werewolf at will while still retaining his full intellect, the original curse over him is still in effect. On the three nights of the full moon, Russell automatically changes but has his Reason reduced to Feeble; his nature also becomes that of a savage beast.

Except for the curse, all the powers listed above are only for Russell's Werewolf form. When human, his stats are as given below:

F	A	S	E
TY	TY	TY	GD
R	I	P	
TY	GD	GD	

Health: 28 Karma: 26
Resources: EX Popularity: 6

WEREWOLF'S STORY: Jack Russell was born Jacob Russoff, son of Transylvanian nobleman Gregory Russoff and his American wife, Laura. A scholar interested in the occult, Gregory was unaware of a dormant family curse from an ancestor who had been bitten by a werewolf. This would have mattered little had he not acquired a copy of the *Darkhold*, an arcane tome of evil magics created by the demon Chthon. Among the various fragments of occult lore contained within the book's covers was a detailed account of the origin of lycanthropy. Reading this section triggered Russoff's latent curse, and with the next full moon he was transformed into a werewolf. For several months afterward he terrorized the local countryside during the three nights of the full moon until he was killed by an angry mob of townsfolk.

Shortly before his death, Russoff sent his wife and their two young children to her native America for their own safety. When she learned of Gregory's death, Laura Russoff moved to Los Angeles and later married Philip Russell to give her children a father. Jacob (now Jack) Russell and his sister, Lissa, did well until Jack reached his eighteenth birthday and inherited his family's now-active curse. For the next two

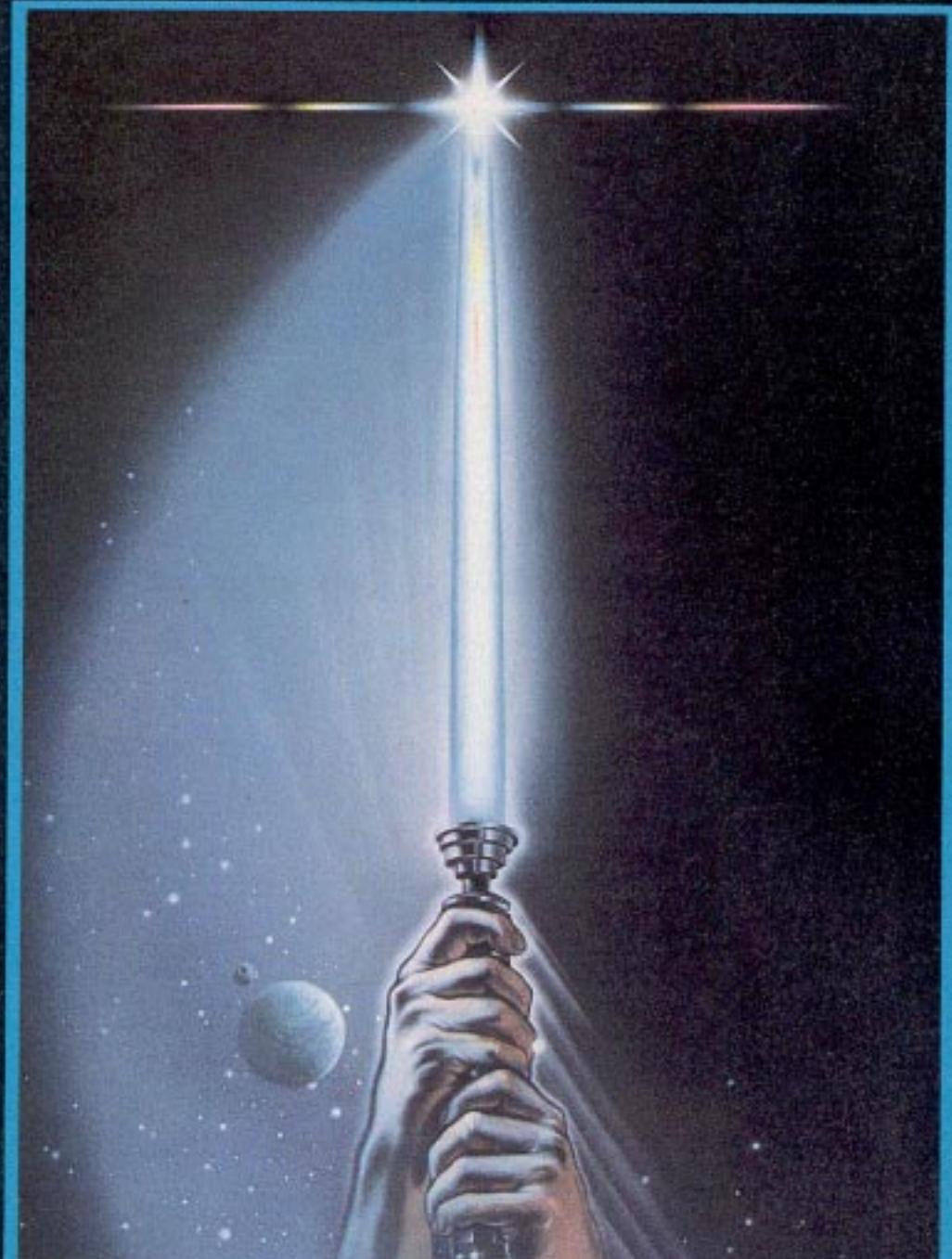
years, Russell rampaged throughout the Los Angeles area on the nights of the full moon whenever his efforts to confine himself failed. Then the mystical extradimensional beings known only as "The Three Who Are All" gave him the power to control his changes while keeping his human intelligence. However, he still regressed when the full moon shone. Russell has since built a virtually escape-proof cell to isolate himself during such times.

Russell recently sought scientific help for his problem. Unfortunately, he turned to an unscrupulous scientist (Doctor Karl Malus) who tried to make him a mindless slave instead. Although Russell was able to thwart these plans, the treatments he received caused him to lose control of his changes once more, and his wereform became even more lupine in appearance. He has since recovered and is now an occasional crimefighter, sometimes even meeting and working with heroes like Iron Man and the original Spider-Woman. At present, Werewolf is a member of Night Shift, a team of super-powered villains and outcasts led by Shroud (see DRAGON® issue #93 for his statistics). Ω

Guidelines

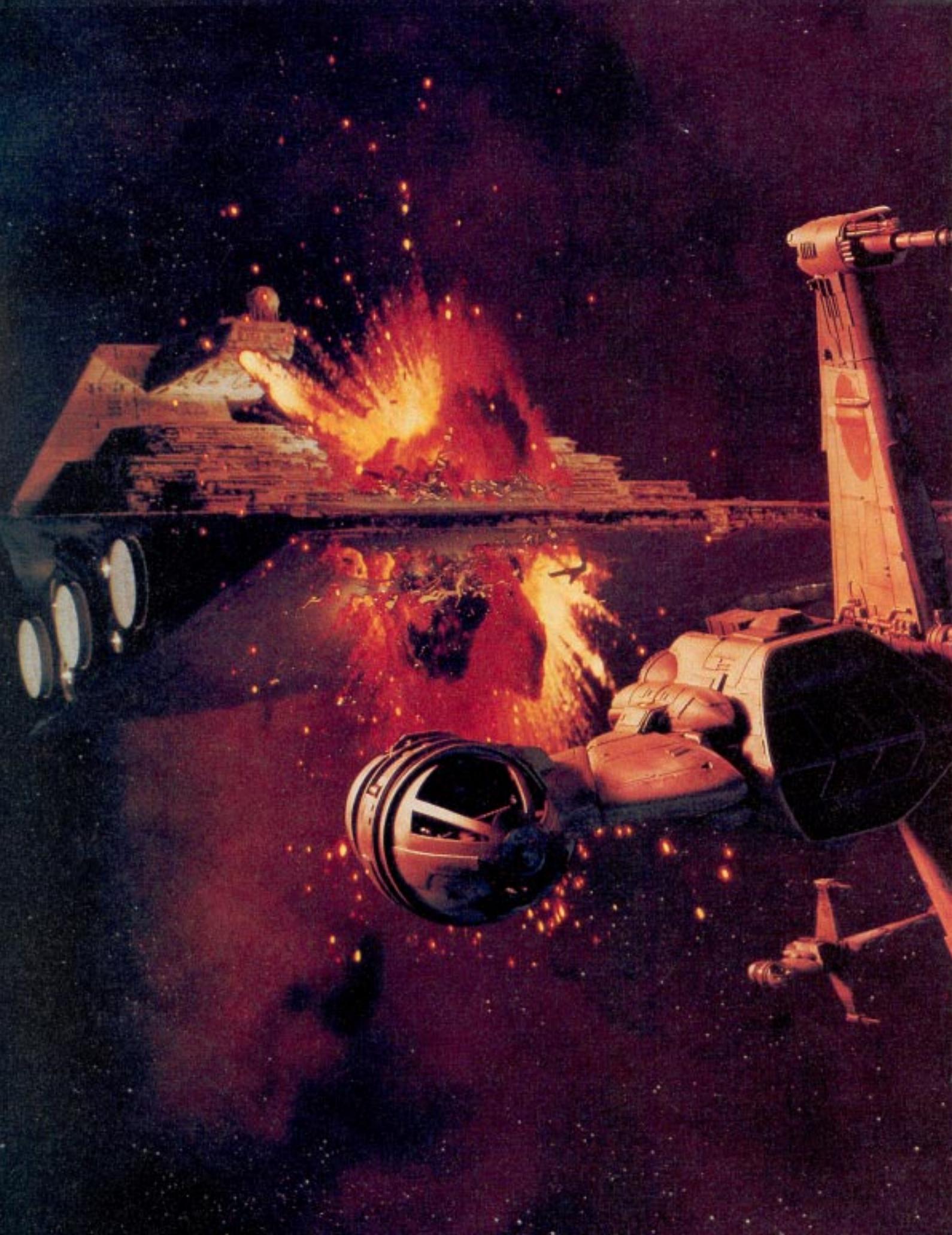
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COMING THIS FALL



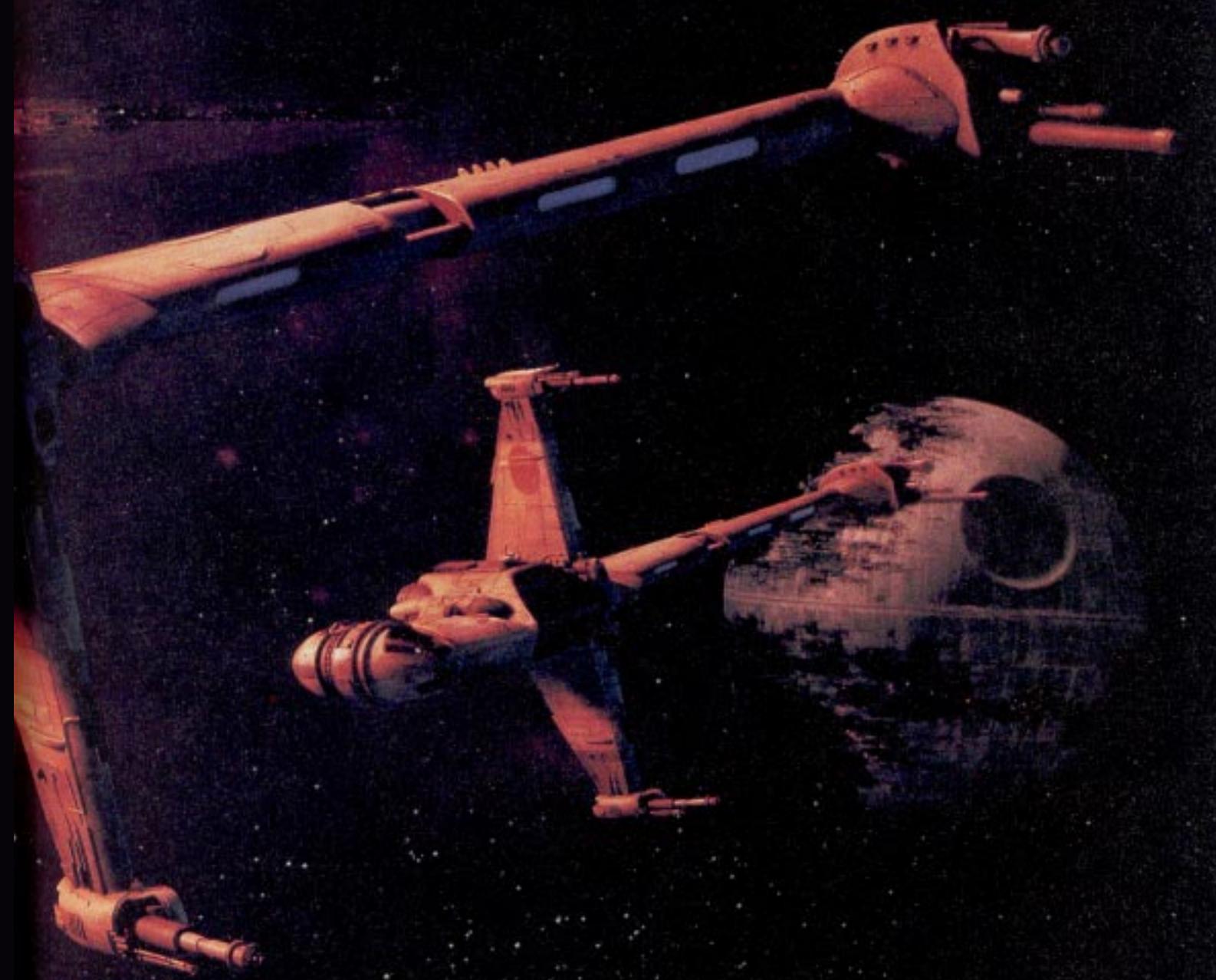
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Star Wars Products For Fall Release

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144-page hardcover book. 16 full-color pages. \$14.95. Players enter the *Star Wars* fantasy with this roleplaying masterpiece. Includes an introduction to roleplaying, a solitaire adventure, easy-to-read rules, and a complete action-packed adventure.

The Star Wars Sourcebook

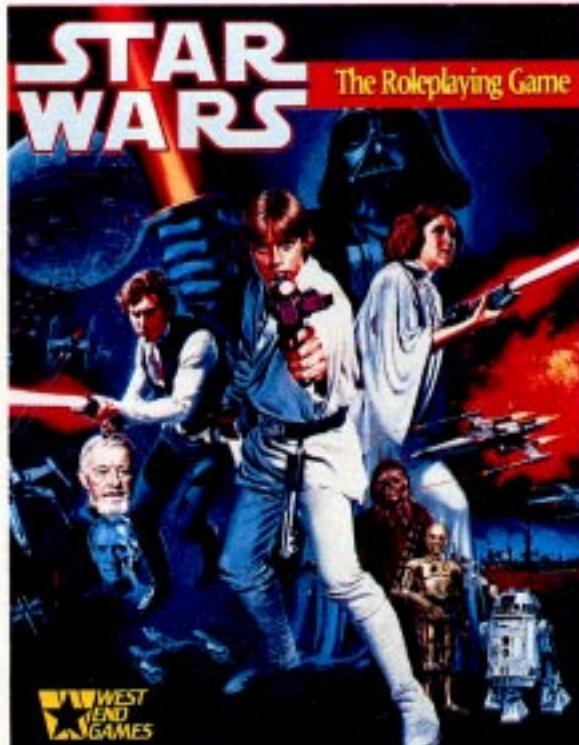
144-page hardcover book. 2-colors throughout. \$14.95. Contains detailed illustrations, descriptions and statistics of starships, vehicles, weapons, droids, and aliens drawn from the *Star Wars* movies, and with instructions on how to use these in the roleplaying game. A must for any *Star Wars* fan's collection.

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Fast-paced starship combat boardgame. \$19.95. Starship-to-starship combat in the *Star Wars* universe! Players battle each other piloting Rebel attack spacecraft and deadly Imperial TIE fighters. Includes full-color map, rules book, 180 full-color playing pieces, ship stat sheets, combat action chart, meteor/Star Destroyer cut-outs, and six 6-sided dice. Can be used with *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*, or played alone.

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Complete package of roleplaying campaign materials. \$9.95. Features an adventure booklet filled with Rebel missions for players to tackle, campaign instructions for gamemasters, a full-color cardstock stand-up screen printed with all the important charts and tables in the game rules (a useful play aid for players and gamemasters), and a large full-color spaceship map.



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(continued from 14)

DMs should not be players in their own campaigns; they are supposed to be neutral and disinterested people who control the action, resolve conflicts fairly, and try to make sure that everyone has a good time. The DM may control NPCs who join a party and act like PCs, but this is not the same as playing. When playing in someone else's campaign, a DM is just another player; he has no special rights or privileges.

Why wasn't the STAR FRONTIERS game included in the game-to-game conversion section of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*?

The STAR FRONTIERS game was published after the *DMG*. Conversions between the two systems are difficult, since they are so dissimilar. Your best bet is to assign AD&D game statistics to STAR FRONTIERS' characters and weapons (or vice versa) on a case-by-case basis. Your own judgment must suffice; just be as consistent as possible.

How many points of strength or constitution will a PC gain if he spends nonadventuring time exercising?

Officially, none. All character classes are assumed to exercise to a degree appropriate to their professions. The less-physical classes fill in their nonadventuring time with study and mental exercises. Note that the cavalier class, as given in *Unearthed Arcana*, can improve some of its characteristics over time.

How thick and strong is a 50' rope?

The average adventurer's rope is probably 9/16" hemp (judging from the encumbrance rules). Such a rope has a "parting strength" of 3,450 lbs., if it is in good condition. Doug Niles, author of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, notes that when used to abruptly halt a free fall, a rope's effective strength can be as little as 10% of its maximum.

What do I do when a PC is tortured? No player is willing to give information no matter what happens to his character.

Torture is not part of the game for two reasons. First, it gives nonparticipating onlookers the wrong idea. Second, spells like *charm person*, *suggestion*, and *ESP* are more effective for extracting accurate information. In the early Renaissance, it was found that victims of torture were prone to say what they thought their tormentors wanted to hear rather than the truth. If you must include torture in your game, have the victim make a save vs. petrification, adjusted for wisdom once per turn, hour, or day depending on the intensity of the torture. Failure indicates that the victim has broken down and will talk. Do not play out the gory details. Veracity should be no higher than 80% (and should probably be much lower).

How old is the D&D game? Who were its first players?

The D&D game was first published in 1974. The earliest group of players came from a gaming club called the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association. It evolved out of a set of fantasy supplement rules for tabletop miniature wargaming, published as the CHAINMAIL game in the early 1970s.

I've been trying to locate information on the swords *Durandal* and *Excalibur* so that I can include them in my campaign. I haven't had much luck. Will you help?

Assigning game statistics to legendary weapons is mostly guesswork. A Lake Geneva campaign gives *Durandal* the abilities of a *long sword +4, defender* which cannot be broken. The DM's reasoning is that *Durandal* means "inflexible," and these abilities seem to fit the name.

As for *Excalibur*, this sword is listed in *Legends & Lore*, page 18, as a lawful-good sword of sharpness, +5. A brief explanation of this sword follows under the heading of King Arthur. For more details on either weapon, refer to the descriptions of each provided in *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory (for *Excalibur*) or *Le Chanson de Roland* (for *Durandal*).

How about some guidelines on character wills?

Wills, of course, have to be written before death; furthermore, the beneficiary of the will gets only the wealth and magic that the dead character has actually left behind at his residence, or that which is recovered. If the character died in the remote lair of a huge dragon, for example, either the dragon or the character's companions will have the character's money and equipment. The dragon certainly won't be willing to give them up and the characters might not either.

You can put other limits on wills. One common limitation is that the beneficiary be a 1st-level character that is rolled up at the time the will is made. The new character starts with only his inheritance; he has no other money or magic. The character might be higher than 1st level, but he still has no money of his own. He might even have to pay an inheritance tax (10-40% is the common range).

When a map has a hex grid (hexagons instead of squares), and the scale is 24 miles per hex, what does this really mean? Is the distance measured from the centers of opposite sides or from opposite corners?

In most games, the distance across a hex is measured from the center of one side to the center of the opposite side. This is the case in the D&D and AD&D games.



LABEL YOUR LETTER!

If you have a letter, Forum comment, article, short story, cartoon, art samples, or other item to mail to us at DRAGON® Magazine, please label your letter. All you need to do is write a brief note at the top of the address (like "Cartoon Submission," "Article Submission," "Fiction Submission," "Artwork Submission," etc.). This ensures that the letter or package will get to the person who's supposed to receive it. Our address is: DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

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LOOKING FOR MORE GAMERS?

You may think you'd have to travel to another planet to find a game convention. Finding friends who are also gamers can be a problem, too. Put your scoutsuit away and turn to the Convention Calendar in this magazine. There may be a game convention closer to your home than you'd think — and conventions are a great place to find friends who share your interests. Whether you like board-games, role-playing games, miniature wargames, or just browsing around, a game convention can be all you've hoped for. Plan to attend one soon.

The Role of Computers



A warning flashes over your controls as you battle through the world of Firebird's Starglider.

Photos courtesy of Firebird Licensees, Inc., and Strategic Simulations, Inc.



Your party of six encounters a group of powerful gnomes in the fantastic land of SSI's Phantasia III.

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Welcome to yet another adventure with software, your doorway to the excitement and strategy of computer-based role-playing games. Our good news is that "The Role of Computers" is now a monthly column within DRAGON® Magazine. The information we have imparted to you in this column has been of some use, and the magazine's editorial staff has seen fit to expand our coverage of this gaming genre. As Bartles and James, the cooler folk, so aptly state: "Thank you for your support!"

We have received several letters requesting advice on which computer systems to purchase — systems that best enhance computer gaming. Over the next several columns, we'll look at specific systems and delineate what we feel you should look for before laying out hard-earned cash for a system.

You should consider your computer as a valuable tool for more than just gaming. Many of you are still engaged in your studies, and the computer is extremely helpful as you forge a career for yourself. With a computer at hand, you'll be able to write your term papers or theses, manage your finances, program in any of a number of flexible computer languages, create impressive graphics, and communicate with millions of other users through your machine. Computer acumen is a necessity in almost any professional endeavor. Games are but a small part of a computer's capabilities, albeit an entertaining attribute for most of us.

Before we present our game reviews and gaming news, let's understand the computer-game software business. You want to buy a computer for which a wide variety of products, both hardware and software, are available. In order for a computer to be a successful computer, there must be a strong, installed base of users.

Most software entertainments are not written by the companies that package the software and the manuals — those are the publishers. Software games are produced by game designers, such as Digital Illusions, whose programmers have produced such blockbuster simulations as *GATO*, *Orbiter*, *NFL Challenge*, and the recently released *Submarine Battle Simulator*. Other well-known producers include the folks at MacroMind and Gorlin Productions, to name just two. Game designers are contracted by software publishers, such as Electronic Arts, Activision, Epyx, Mindscape, and Strategic Simulations, to design and produce games which they market. Everyone gets a piece of the action.

Marketing a product involves a myriad of activities, from designing the software box to advertising, press tours, PR releases, and the establishment of dealer networks. Then come the retailers who stock the game on their store shelves.

And now — the news!

A game offers a designer a high return for his efforts. An entertainment program that sells between 15,000 and 20,000 single-unit copies usually secures that break-even monetary point designers and publishers demand that the product attain. Unit sales above the break-even point result in profits, which are shared between the retailer, the designer, and the publisher, according to a specific percentage ratio as established in the program's contracts.

As you can see, if a computer system has a broad, installed base, such a system is a good candidate for program development. Game designers, whether actual employees of the publisher (in-house) or contract designers, only consider writing software for computer systems that have a proven record of returning profit. Currently, the leaders in this area include: Apple Macintosh (Mac), Apple II family, Commodore Amiga (Amiga), and — a real surprise entry last year with massive unit sales — IBM microcomputers and compatible units (PC/MSDOS). This means that developers and publishers are more apt to release versions of a game for these computer brands than for other systems.

Why aren't the Atari 8-bit machines (800, 1200, 1200XL) series, Atari ST (ST) or Commodore 64/128 (C64/128) computers in this list? There is not a very strong dealer base for these machines. Take Atari, for example: When one "authorized" Atari dealer in your town carries an ST for a certain price, then a second "authorized" Atari dealer in the same town undercuts the first dealer by \$99, how can any dealer feel confident in carrying that line of machines? There's very little profit to be made in a price war. Where's the Atari company support for a dealer base? Plus, have you ever tried to get one-day service for an Atari computer or disk drive that has decided to become operationally recalcitrant? We live in a major metropolitan area and still had to drive nearly 45 miles to find a dealer that could handle Atari 1200XL repairs, and even then the repairs required seven days before the computer was returned to us. Granted, the ST is a splendid machine graphically, but without a strong dealer base, the computer is an also-ran in our opinion.

Some will argue with us over the C64/128. After all, there is an established dealer base for the Commodore machines, especially the Amiga 500, 1000, and 2000 systems. There are five to seven million installed C64/128 users, we are told "officially." But when you sent your computer to Commodore to be repaired, did you know that the company tossed that broken machine onto a pile of other rejects and sent you a new machine in return? And how many C64s are sitting on shelves, gathering dust? No, the actual user base for the C64 is probably two to three million, and with the piracy issue in effect for both the Atari and C64 systems, it's no wonder developers avoid these machines

like the plague. Commodore Business Machines is the most unresponsive company we've ever dealt with in trying to obtain information regarding their products, and we've been involved with the computer industry in an editorial capacity for over eight years. Commodore has no understanding of the term "public relations." To be honest, however, the next computer we are going to purchase is an Amiga 1000, despite our negative contacts with the home company. There is a local dealer, and we can obtain support when needed for that machine.

Another problem, as mentioned, is piracy. C64 and Atari 8-bit systems users have the worst record of illegal software duplication of any computer systems. If you don't believe us, log onto any Commodore or Atari bulletin board and note how many commercial programs are offered for "public domain" access. No developer in their right mind is going to produce games for such users who tend to copy the games, then upload them for other users at no cost. This is no better than someone plagiarizing an author's novel and selling the writings as his own work, or stealing the work of a composer and claiming it as his own composition. Theft is theft, plain and simple. When one erases the cloying and affectionate terms, such as "hacker," from such activities, the end result remains theft.

Our conclusion is that any of the following machines are well-suited for purchase: Apple II family, Mac, Amiga 500, 1000, or 2000, and IBM microcomputers and their compatibles. We haven't yet had the opportunity to use the new IBM Personal System/2 (PS/2) machines. As an installed base of users in the millions is needed to prompt game development, we'll take a wait-and-see attitude in regard to the PS/2 offerings. Remember that your computer should be useful in other operations other than entertainment, and the above listed machines have literally hundreds of thousands of programs available for everything from educational instruction to business productivity.

We recently had the opportunity to talk with Gordon Walton, the president of Design Illusions. Not only is this gentleman a prime mover of game software for a variety of publishers, but he is most outspoken regarding role-playing software in general. First of all, he doesn't believe there has been any technological movement in role-playing games for at least four years. "What's lacking is conflict resolution," he said. He refers to a group of gamers who gather around a table to participate in an adventure. There is constant chatter as each member of the game attempts to resolve a conflict through discourse with other players.

With current computer-based role-playing games, such conflict resolution is impossible, he claims. The only way to currently manage a computer-based role-playing game is through the destruction of

life or property. Even in games that offer you the "opportunity to run away," "greet the party," and so forth, such choices aren't flexible enough for true conflict resolution. Gordon would like to see role-playing games utilize artificial intelligence to duplicate that personal sense of conflict resolution through actual caucus with other players, not simply "slay-and-play" scenarios. "But publishers aren't willing to pay for this kind of game yet," he added. And without a publisher willing to back the developer, it may be a while before Gordon sees such an opportunity for game development within his company.

Role-playing itself is a far broader environment than what most believe to be fact. For example, most of the material we review falls into the fantasy or adventure role-playing genre. We also see many other games as members of the role-playing family. There's flight simulation, in which you "play" the role of a pilot and command any of several types of aircraft. Or, you could become a submarine commander and take on the enemy in various scenarios. There are several science-fiction role-playing games in which you must either solve specific problems (such as in *Space Quest*) or pilot faster-than-light spacecraft in confrontations with a variety of alien beings. Then, there are the text-adventure games, made famous by Infocom, that place you in a variety of different scenarios, from horror to fantasy and space, all requiring you to play the main character and solve a variety of mysteries. We shall inform you as to new entrants into the role-playing software arena when we are made aware of such offerings.

As to our feature review, many hours have been spent in battle and puzzle study with *Phantasie III* from Strategic Simulations (Mountain View, CA). We are just not ready at this time to submit to our readers an incomplete review of the game, which has taken far longer to "research" than we initially thought was required for the adventure. Subtitled *The Wrath of Nikademus*, this is the third offering in SSI's Phantasie role-playing adventure series, and is the most complex of the Phantasie scenarios. The geographical locations include Scandor, Gelnor, Ferronrah, and the Pookny Islands. All are extremely dangerous if one role-player plays his six Phantasie III characters with little care or thought. We'll complete this review in time for an upcoming column, so stay tuned in.

As we have more news and information regarding new products, this column presents an excellent time to clear the desk. We continue to be amazed at how many new product offerings continue to tumble into the market. We'll list the programs under their respective, alphabetically listed companies. We also have several reviewers who write for our other publications who, from time to time, review a software program that would be of interest to DRAGON Magazine readers. When

these are available, we'll include them in this column for your information. We are also personally reviewing as many of the new programs as we can, and have instituted a mini-review policy for many programs. These are presented with a rating system so that you can readily see how a game stacks up in our opinion. The highest rating any software program can receive is five stars (* * * * *), and the ratings incorporate playability, user-interface, graphics, animation, documentation, originality, and sound.

New Software Adventures

Activision, Inc.

2350 Bayshore Parkway
Mountain View CA 94043
(415) 960-0410

We reviewed *Might and Magic, Book One: Secret of the Inner Sanctum*, in DRAGON issue #122. Now, Activision has signed an exclusive agreement with New World Computing to exclusively sell and distribute that company's line of fantasy role-playing games. As you may recall, in this offering you assemble six adventurers to wander through the Land of Varn searching for the Inner Sanctum. This is a five-star game!

As we received a great many letters and phone calls regarding *Might and Magic*, now is as good a time as any to impart the queried information to our readers. We spoke to Jon Van Caneghen, the president of the company, who indicates that the game will be released in formats for IBM microcomputer and compatible users, Mac; and C64/128 computers this year. Also under consideration are versions for the Amiga and ST computers for release in the first or second quarter of next year. The price for *Might and Magic* is \$49.95. *Might and Magic* remains, as far as we're concerned, one of the premium adventure games available for the listed systems. Be sure you contact Activision for information on locations where the game may be purchased, as they now are the distributors for this fine offering.

Also from Activision is the Mac version of *Portal*, a true science-fiction book with which you interact through your computer. Set in the year 2016, you return to Earth to discover all of the people have vanished! You must solve the mystery of the lifeless world with Homer, a biological computer. This game is priced at \$49.95. The game is also available for The Apple II family, Amiga, and IBM micros.

The Avalon Hill Game Company
4517 Harford Road
Baltimore, MD 21214
(301) 254-9200

Originally one of the "biggies" in board gaming, The Avalon Hill Game Company entered the software entertainment field

only a few years ago. Their latest debut is *Darkhorn*, a fantasy strategy game that runs on either an Apple II or C64/128 computer. Priced at \$30, as many as four players can each control an army striving for conquest over the fertile lands that rest under the shadow of the mountain Darkhorn. There's a quick scenario that runs approximately 30 minutes, or you can play an entire campaign which has you battling across nine different maps of Darkhorn. The maps can also be randomly generated, meaning that each time you play the game, the challenges are different. Armies are composed of men, elves, and dwarves, with each race having specific capabilities. Each race must also be recruited from differing geographical locales. With the Darklord watching from his hidden fortress atop Darkhorn, the player who wins the battle on the fields below isn't finished yet; he goes on to challenge the supremacy of the Darklord himself. There's also an arcade option which has a representative fighter from your army dueling with an opposing fighter, managed via keyboard, joystick, or paddles. The graphics are somewhat "blocky" on an Apple II computer, and the instructions are confusing when you first start play. However, the former problem is a condition of the Apple II's technology; if you are used to playing on an Apple II computer, this shouldn't detract from your enjoyment of the game. We found the arcade dueling to be futile and in no way a game enhancement. The Avalon Hill Game Company would do well to delete that portion from the game and, instead, focus on the strategic aspects of the armies.

Broderbund Software

17 Paul Drive
San Rafael CA 94903-2101
(415)492-3200

One leader in the entertainment software industry is Broderbund Software. The company has decided that the Nintendo Entertainment System has now sold enough units to make the introduction of five new titles for that system worthwhile. In August, *Lode Runner*, *Spelunker*, *Raid On Bungeling Bay*, *Deadly Towers*, and *Spoon* will be released for the Nintendo system. For those interested in role-playing as naval warriors, try your hand at *The Ancient Art of War at Sea*, which follows hot on the heels of Broderbund's original *Ancient Art of War* tactical strategy game. With this latest offering, there are 11 built-in campaigns, based upon some of the most famous naval battles in the annals of sailing warfare. For IBM micros and compatibles, this program is priced at \$44.95. For martial arts aficionados, *Karateka* is being released for ST owners. This game has a great plot, animation that'll dazzle your eyes, and player-controlled martial arts action. The price is \$34.95.

Data Pacific, Inc.

609 East Speer Boulevard
Denver CO 80203
(303) 733-8158

If you're an ST user and have looked rather fondly at some of the software available for the Mac, now you can run that Mac software on your ST, thanks to *Magic Sac*. This upgraded program adds support for double-sided disk drives as well as limited color support. Version 4.0 adds GEM-based formatters and copiers, and is fully compatible with Apple's Finder 5.3/System 3.2 operating system.

Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

The role-playing game *Alternate Reality: The City* is one of several IntelliCreations programs that have joined Electronic Arts as an affiliated label. This means that Electronic Arts will now distribute and market IntelliCreations programs. Coming soon is *Alternate Reality: The Dungeon*, which continues the player's journey into an underground world located beneath the city. There are four levels of dungeons, and consultations with wizards should help the player solve the mystery of the Alternate Reality. This game will be released for Apple II, C64/128, and Atari 8-bit systems for \$39.95. If you happen to be an Apple IIGS user, *The Bard's Tale* release for this system compares exceedingly well with the Amiga version for animation, graphics, and sound capabilities. This game could well be one reason for buying a IIGS computer! The pricing is \$49.95, with other versions available for Apple II and C64/128 computers. Also for Commodore gamers is *Legacy of the Ancients*, a new fantasy adventure that transports players to the world of Tarmalon, in which you must retrieve the lost "Wizards Compendium," a leather scroll with evil powers. There's strategy and puzzle-solving aspects, as well as five action games as part of the scenario. The cost for this program is \$29.95. Apple II versions will be coming soon.

As an aside, if you enjoy baseball, keep your eyes open for the release of *Earl Weaver Baseball* from Electronic Arts. Soon to be available for the Amiga, with versions for IBM micros, C64/128 and Apple II systems later in the year, this is the finest computer simulation for baseball we've ever seen. We were fortunate in getting a sneak-peek at a preproduction version of the game: it is impressive beyond belief. There is arcade play, team management, digitized sound, and realistic animation. The price will be \$49.95.

We both enjoy reviewing role-playing games that step outside the fantasy or science-fiction environment every once in a while. For us, the finest flight simulation we've experienced to date is *Chuck*

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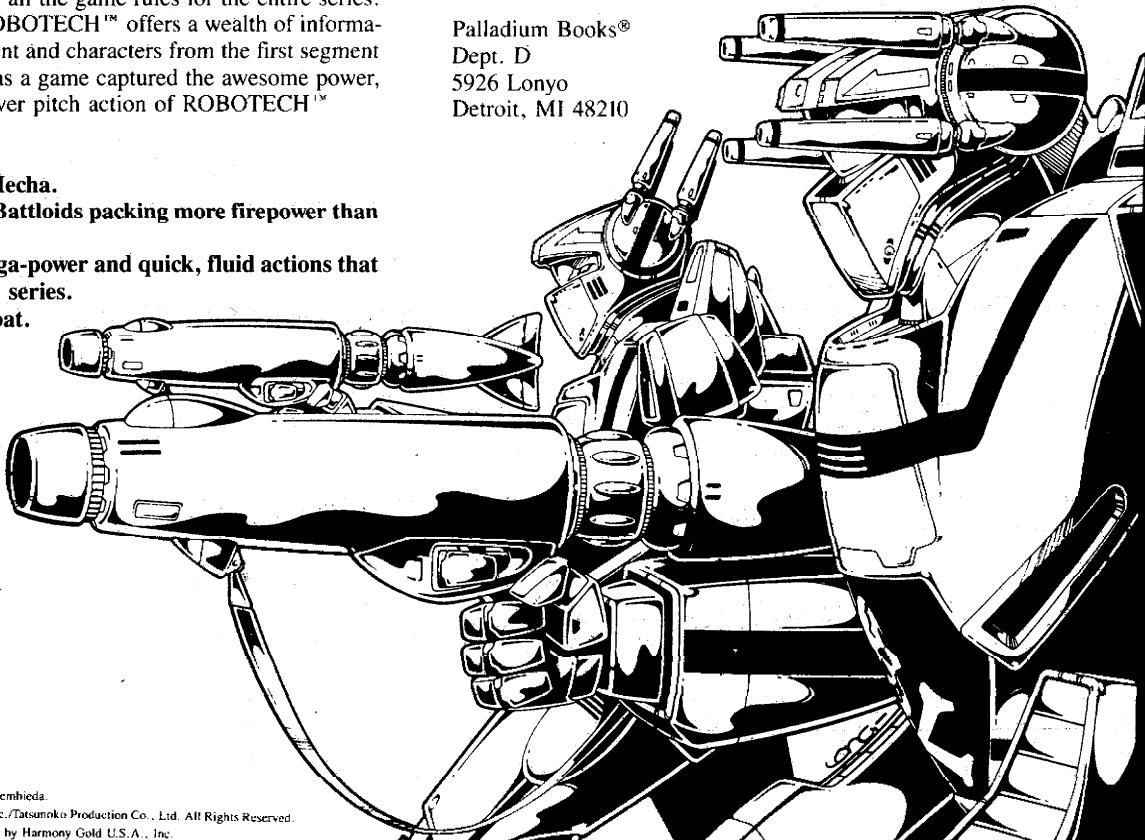
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Yeager's Advanced Flight Simulator from Electronic Arts. Running on IBM micros and compatibles, this software not only allows you to fly any one of 14 different planes (some of them experimental), but it also has a built-in flight instructor. You'll soon be graduating from basic flight maneuvers to aerobatic skills, and pushing your plane to its limits in both speed and altitude. You can use the keyboard, a mouse, or a joystick to control your plane (with the latter device being the one of choice). All that's lacking is actual ground detail that is representative of real-world flight, such as is found in the *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. With this simulation, the ground elements consist of a variety of shapes, such as triangles and cubes, that one must fly around. Included in this offering is airplane racing, a "Heads Up Display" that lets you monitor the aircraft's controls as you are flying, a variety of other out-of-plane and associated views — even a flight recorder. There is so much in this game that it's going to be quite some time before another flight simulator can offer so much performance for your buck. And behind your every move, Chuck Yeager stands ready to offer flight advice. (\$39.95)

Other "goodies" coming from Electronic Arts include: *Sanxion*, a spaceflight simulator for C64/128; *Delta Patrol*, in which you must race through 200 alien attack waves in over 50 environments, also for the C64/128; *Dragon's Lair I* and *II*, adaptations of the hit videodisc arcade game for the C64/128; *Lords of Conquest* tactical strategy game for IBM micros and compatibles; *Age of Adventure* for C64/128; *Adventure Construction Set* for IBM users; and, *The Bard's Tale* for both IBM and ST owners.

Epyx, Inc.
600 Galveston Drive
Redwood City CA 94063
(415) 366-0606

As we consider role-playing games to encompass a broad variety of entertainments, Epyx's latest releases offer wide appeal to both players who enjoy submarine combat and sandlot baseball. *Sub Battle Simulator* allows the player to command a World War II sub in either the Atlantic or Pacific theaters, in which the submarine must complete an assigned mission and return to home base in one piece. The graphics are extremely well-done, and five levels of maps assist you in locating appropriate targets. A heads-up display constantly monitors all of the sub's gauges, and digitized sound (current release: Mac version) alerts you to changing conditions. Go for the carriers, but watch out for the escort ships and low-level bombers! Versions for the C64/128, IBMs and compatibles, Apple II and ST are scheduled for release this summer. An Apple IIGS version is expected next year. *Street Sports Baseball* is a baseball simulation in which the characters you pick to

make up the teams actually play as their skills dictate. And with all manner of obstacles (tree stumps, puddles, etc.), taking the game to the streets sometimes makes it even more difficult than the major leagues. This program is available for C64/128, Apple II, and IBMs and compatibles.

Also brand new is Epyx's *Omnicrom Conspiracy*, a sophisticated real-time action graphics adventure game in which you role-play Captain Ace Powers of the Star Police, who is out to investigate the disappearance of a starship which was lost during a routine mission. For C64/128, Apple II and IBM micros, this game will be available this fall. Also watch for *RAD Warrior*, in which you become a warrior of the future having a "falling-out" with radioactive mutants.

Firebird Licensees, Inc.
P.O. Box 49
Ramsey NJ 07446

Amiga and IBM micro users will be glad to know that *Starglider* has finally been released in Amiga format. You become the commander of an airborne ground-attack vehicle that must ultimately do battle with the almost invincible starship, the Starglider. Superb 3-D animation comes with this entertainment program.

For adventure gamers, an illustrated trilogy is appearing. The first of the offerings is *Knight Orc*, in which you are cast as an oppressed orc in a magical world filled with illusions. High-level commands are accepted and understood, and the trilogy combines illustration, text, and humor in this software product. This program is available for C64/128 (\$39.95), Amiga, ST, Apple IIs, Mac, and IBMs and compatibles (\$44.95). Also coming from Firebird is the *Universal Military Simulator*, a game which has the player set up his own battle scenarios in terms of locale, geographical features, armaments, troops, opposition, and other variables to provide the ultimate war-game simulation. For the ST, this offering is priced at \$44.95.

Infocom, Inc.
125 Cambridge Park Drive
Cambridge MA 02140
(617) 492-6000

Many of us enjoy text-adventure games, wherein you read a situation and its surrounding elements onscreen, and then type into the computer a response to the situation. One of the best we've currently run across is the horror tale *Lurking Horror* from Infocom. You start out at the George Underwood Edwards Institute of Technology and work your way down to a labyrinth of underground tunnels that run beneath the campus. This is Infocom's first interactive horror story, and is now available for a wide range of computer systems: Apple II, Mac, Atari 8-bits, ST, C64/128, Amiga, IBM micros and compatibles. The

8-bit versions are \$34.95; all others are \$39.95. We are currently reviewing this game, and all we can state is that what you consider normal, everyday occurrences suddenly aren't so normal in their presentation. Also from Infocom is *Stationfall*, the sequel to the successful *Planetfall* interactive space-fiction game. Floyd, the great robot from *Planetfall*, has returned to become your companion in a far-from-routine mission. This program is available for the same systems as *Lurking Horror*, with like pricing.

MichTron
576 South Telegraph
Pontiac MI 48053
(313) 334-5700

Famous for its great ST offerings, MichTron has introduced a spaceflight simulator entitled *Shuttle II*, which is a dynamic simulation of a mission in space at the controls of a new generation of shuttles in the 1990s. From landing to reentry, your job is to keep the shuttle flying. With a heads-up control display and superb 3-D presentation, this is a winner at \$39.95.

Mandscape, Inc.
3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook IL 60062
(312) 480-7667

Another fantastic MacVenture has arrived for Mac owners. We are currently reviewing *Shadowgate*, and can honestly state this is one adventure game that Mac users can't miss! With digitized sounds, sophisticated animation, and features galore, you must survive the perils of the Castle Shadowgate as you search for a cunningly evil wizard known as the Warlock Lord. We are most impressed with the user-interface used with this game, which allows you to click on objects to "open" or "retrieve" them. There is more to come in an upcoming column on this five-star game!

Of some importance is the news that Mandscape has also signed a publishing agreement with Atari Games Corporation. This gives Mandscape an exclusive agreement to publish home computer versions of such games as *Paperboy*, *Gauntlet*, *Road Runner*, *Road Blasters*, *Gauntlet II* and *720*. The retail versions of these coin-op games should provide many an hour of entertainment at home.

Sir-Tech Software, Inc.
P.O. Box 245
Charlestown Ogdensburg Mall
Ogdensburg NY 13669
(315) 393-6633

Sir-Tech seems to be back in the spirit of gaming once again. This originator of microcomputer gaming programs has finally released the second sequel in their classic *Wizardry* series for IBM micros and compatibles: *Knight of Diamonds*. The



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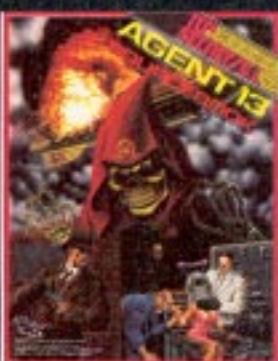
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Computer Game Ratings Table

Program Name	Company	Version	Rating
<i>Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Simulator</i>	Electronic Arts	PC/MSDOS version	****
<i>Dark Castle</i>	Silicon Beach Software	Mac version	****
<i>Darkhorn</i>	The Avalon Hill Game Co.	Apple II version	** 1/2
<i>Might and Magic</i>	Activision, Inc.	Apple II version	*****
<i>OrbQuest</i>	QWare, Inc.	Mac version	***
<i>Phantasie III</i>	Strategic Simulations, Inc.	Apple II, ST version	****
<i>Roadwar 2000</i>	Strategic Simulations, Inc.	Apple II version	*****
<i>Rogue</i>	Epyx, Inc.	IBM and Mac versions	*** 1/2
<i>The Bard's Tale</i>	Electronic Arts	Apple IIGS, Commodore C64/128 and Amiga versions	*****
<i>Wizardry — Scenario #1</i>	Sir Tech Software, Inc.	Mac version	****
<i>Wizard's Crown</i>	Strategic Simulations, Inc.	Apple II version	****
<i>World Builder</i>	Silicon Beach Software	Mac version	** 1/2

* - 1 full point.

1/2 - 1/2 point.

X - Relegated to orc consumption.

company has added new graphics, enhanced those nasty and hostile creatures, and has incorporated some technical changes that make the program run faster. In order to play *Knight of Diamonds*, your Wizardry characters must have reached the 13th level of experience in the first scenario, *Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord*. This is a most enjoyable sequel, which is priced at \$49.95.

Strategic Simulations, Inc.
1046 North Rengstorff Avenue
Mountain View CA 94043-1716
(415) 964-1353

Some of the best news yet received concerns the strategic alliance announced between TSR, Inc. (yep, the folks who bring us the D&D® and AD&D® games, along with a myriad of other role-playing

products) and Strategic Simulations (SSI). This five-year agreement gives the folks at SSI exclusive worldwide rights to produce and market a product line of games based on TSR's ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® fantasy role-playing game. The company plans, at a minimum, to produce 10 role-playing and several action game versions for most micros, including: C64/128, Apple II series, IBMs and compatibles, ST, and the Amiga. The Nintendo game system is also being considered as a target machine. We plan on bringing you a feature column regarding this licensing agreement within the next issue or two, outlining what you will see with the combination TSR, Inc., and SSI logos. Computer gamers have been waiting many years for such an agreement to occur, and we look forward to the end result: fantasy role-playing as it has never been offered before.

Other news from SSI includes the conversion of the following fantasy games to ST format: *Wizard's Crown*, *Rings of Zilfin*, and *Colonial Conquest*. For those who enjoy role-playing in an aerial mode, the company is about to release *B-24*, a simulation of 19 World War II missions flown by the 406th Bombardment Group against the Ploesti oil fields of Rumania. This program is available for the C64/128, Apple II series, and IBM micros and compatibles.

Okay, gamers, don't forget to mail in your hints and tips for the games you are currently involved with. Our mailing address is: 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon CA 94583. (No phone calls, please!) We look forward to writing about the best of the tips we receive, and will credit the best tipsters in this column.

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A game convention is the perfect
place to make new friends who
enjoy the same hobbies you do —
whether you like boardgames,
role-playing games, miniature
wargames, or just shopping
around. If you've never attended
a game convention before, please
check out the Convention Calen-
dar feature in this issue for the
game convention nearest you.
Take some of your own gaming
friends along, too — and make it
an experience to remember.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is offered as a service to our readers around the world. 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 8½" x 11" paper. The contents of each listing should be short, succinct, and under 150 words in length.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following information, in the following order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,

6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements run the risk of not being considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. **No** call-in listings are accepted. Domestic and foreign conventions are welcome.

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 see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility!

Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example, the copy deadline for the January 1988 issue is the last Monday of November 1987. Plan ahead; early listings pay off!

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!** For any questions or changes related to this column, please call either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at (414) 248-3625.

* indicates Canadian convention.
● indicates European convention.

action tournaments, a dealers' room, numerous seminars, and other events are also sponsored. Registration fees are \$18. For hotel reservations, call: (813) 873-7900. Write to: SKIRMISHES, 1803 Third Court SE #A, Winterhaven FL 33880; or call: (813) 294-9166.

AUTUMN CAMPAIGNS '87, October 3-4

Historical miniatures, board, fantasy, science-fiction, and role-playing games are featured at this gaming convention. AUTUMN CAMPAIGNS '87 will be held at the Hilton Inn (same as last year) in Lexington, Ky. Registration is \$10 for both days or \$6 per day. There are no individual gaming fees. Write to: Convention Info, The Rusty Scabbard Hobby Shop, 188 Woodland Avenue, Lexington KY 40502.

FALL CON IV, October 3

This one-day gaming convention will be held at the McNaughton Park Pavilion in Elkhart, Ind., across from Elkhart General Hospital. Events include an RPGATM Network AD&D® tournament, along with WWI Naval, American Civil War, BATTLETECH®, TWILIGHT: 2000TM, and TRAVELLER® game miniatures competitions. Registration for this event is \$5 at the door. Write to: The Brigade Gaming Group, P.O. Box 252, Elkhart IN 46515.

MILWAUKEE'S NINTH HISTORICAL WARGAME WEEKEND, October 3-4

This ninth annual, nonprofit wargaming convention will take place at the Bucyrus-Erie Hall, 1120 Monroe Avenue, South Milwaukee, Wis. The convention opens at 10 A.M. on both Saturday and Sunday, and runs until 8 P.M. on Saturday and until 5 P.M. on Sunday. Featured events include a variety of military miniatures wargames and game vendors. Admission is \$5 per day or \$7 for both days; a \$1 fee will also be assessed for each game played. Send an SASE to: Joe Gepfert, 3440 S. Monterey Drive, New Berlin WI 53151; or, Mark Van Groll, 4502 N. 56th Street, Milwaukee WI 53218.

TOLEDO GAMING CONVENTION V October 3-4

This gaming convention will be held at the Toledo University Scott Park Campus in Toledo, Ohio. Featured events will include miniatures events, D&D® games, board gaming, a miniatures painting contest, computer-related events, movies, an auction, and a dealers' room. Send an SASE to: Mind Games, 3001 N. Reynolds Road, Toledo OH 43615.

VALLEYCON '87, October 3

Sponsored by Big Mike's Video, this one-day gaming convention will be held at the Tulare Veteran's Memorial Building in Tulare, Calif. Convention events include exhibits, guest speakers, rare movies, trivia contests, a costume contest, gaming demonstrations, AD&D® games, a dealers' room, and open gaming. Registration to this event is not required, since admission is FREE. Write to: VALLEYCON '87, 1766 East Tulare Avenue, Tulare CA 93274.

CON * STELLATION 6, October 9-11

This science-fiction and gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Research Park in Huntsville, Ala. Julius Schwartz is the guest of honor. Registration is \$15. Write to: CON*STELLATION 6, PO. Box 4857, Huntsville AL 35815.

CONTACT-5, October 16-18

Sponsored by the River City Science Fiction Association, this convention will be held at the Ramada Inn Spa in Evansville, Ind. The theme of

CONTRADICTION SEVEN, October 2-4

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, 401 Buffalo Avenue, Niagara Falls, N.Y. Anne McCaffrey is the pro guest of honor, with Mike Glicksohn as fan guest of honor. Other guests include Joan Vinge, Nancy Kress, Jim Frenkel, and T.S. Huff. Events offered include a costume contest (\$25 for best costume), an art auction, videos, parties, a people and thing auction, panels, wargaming, filksinging, and other fannish activities. Registration is \$20. Write to: CONTRADICTION, P.O. Box 2043, Newmarket Station, Niagara Falls NY 14301. Please send an SASE if you require confirmation.

COUNCIL OF THE FIVE NATIONS

October 2-4

Sponsored by the Schenectady Wargamer's Association, this gaming convention will be held at the Center City Auditorium in Schenectady, N.Y. Write to: Schenectady Wargamer's Association, 1639 Eastern Piturp, Schenectady NY 12309; or call: (518) 346-3773 or Reynolds C. Jones at (518) 658-2007.

DRAGON CON '87, October 2-4

The Southeast Fantasy and Gaming Convention will be held at the Pierremont Plaza Hotel and Convention Center in Atlanta, Ga. Fantasy role-playing, strategic, and computer gaming are featured in over 125 tournaments. Panels, video rooms, a dealers' room, a masquerade party, a game auction, and much more are offered. Guests include E. Gary Gygax, Michael Moorcock, Richard "Lord British" Garriott, Robert Asprin, Lynn Abbey, Brian Herbert, Steve Jackson, and more. The registration fee for gamers (\$30) includes four tournament entries; the "fan fee" is \$25. Send an SASE to: DRAGON CON '87, Box 148, Clarkston GA 30021. Registrants can use Visa or Mastercard to charge advance memberships; call: (800) 554-1162 (toll-free), or (404) 934-5059 in Georgia.

SAN ANTONIO FANTASY FAIR

October 2-4

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Sheraton San Antonio, 1400 Austin Highway, Austin, Tex. Guests include Wendy and Richard Pini, Kerry Gammill, Tom Stazer, Mike Mignola, and many others. Other features include a huge dealers' room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this three-day event are \$20. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '87, October 2-4

SKIRMISHES presents the seventh annual production of this gaming extravaganza at the Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel in Tampa, Fla. Events include historical miniatures, role-playing, and board gaming competitions. Live-

the convention is "The War of the Worlds." Patrick Price, editor of AMAZING® Stories, is the guest of honor. Other guests include Rickey Sheppard, Arlan Andrews, Timothy Zahn, Roger "RZ" Reynolds, Mark Schulzinger, Gary M. Williams, Dr. Bill Breuer, Guy McLimore, Greg Poehlein, and David Tepool. Special events include an art show and auction, a masquerade, panel discussions, RPGA™ Network games, a 24-hour convention suite, a video room, and a huckster's room. Registration fees are \$16. Room rates at the Ramada Inn are \$45 for a single, \$50 for a double, and \$56 for a suite. Write to: CONTACT-5, PO. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737.

FALL-COP '87, October 16-18

This gaming convention, which is sponsored by the Cincinnati Area Gamers, will be held at the Cincinnati Technical College in Cincinnati, Ohio. Role-playing games, board games, card games, and miniatures games are played at this event. Other features include a costume contest, a painting contest, a games auction, a dealers' room, and a TITAN tournament. Write to: FALL-CON '87, PO. Box 462, Cincinnati OH 45201-0462; or call: (513) 542-3449.

ICON XII, October 16-18

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Rodeway Inn, Hwy 965 and I-80, in Coralville, Iowa (call: (800) 228-2000 for reservations). Scheduled events include science-fiction readings and panels, an art show, a large dealers' room, and open gaming. Memberships are \$17; special one-day registration is available at the door for \$10. Guests include Glen Cook, Dick Spelman, Rusty Hevelin, Rob Chilson, Joe & Gay Haldeman, Margaret Weis, and Roger Moore. Write to: ICON XII, Dept. M, PO. Box 525, Iowa City IA 52244-0525.

NECRONOMICON '87, October 16-18

The Stone Hill Science Fiction Association will hold its sixth annual science-fiction convention at the Holiday Inn-Sabal Park in Tampa, Fla. This year's guests of honor are Orson Scott Card, Frederik Pohl, and Elizabeth Anne Hull. In addition to panel discussions with these authors, there will be a vampire pageant, a costume contest, trivia games, a general auction, and a host of other events. Registration rates are \$15 for all three days, or \$6 per day. Write to: NECRONOMICON, c/o Stone Hill SF Association, PO. Box 2076, Riverview FL 33569; or call: (813) 677-6347.

RUDICON 3, October 16-18

This wargaming and role-playing convention takes place at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y. Events include tournaments, a dealers' room, movies, and much more. Write to: Steve Ritzau, RUDICON/Rochester Wargamer's Association and Guild (RWAG), c/o Student Directorate, One Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester NY 14623.

TITANCON I, October 16-18

The second annual TITAN National Tournament (TNT) will be held at the Days Inn in Charlottesville, Va. Teams of four or more players vie for the 1987 Team National Championship and trophy. Ranking is by Game Point Average (GPA); players will play four or more games of regular TITAN games over this two-day event. For those who complete four or more games, GPA is used to determine both Individual and Team National Champions. TITANCON I will arrange teams for individuals. Registration is \$10 per person for all gaming

fees. Write to: TITANCON, PO. Box 485, Ivy VA 24060.

OCTOBERFEST GAMING 1987

October 23-25

This role-playing game convention, which is sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Department, will be held at the Lighthouse Recreation Center in Detroit, Mich. Kevin Siembieda (creator of the ROBOTECH®, PALLADIUM®, MECHANOID®, and HEROES UNLIMITED® games), Erick Wujcik (designer of the TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES® and Revised RECON® games), and Pete Rogan (editor of *Stardate Magazine*) will be guests of honor. Tournaments include AD&D®, TRAVELLER®, PARANOIA™, and ROBOTECH® game events, with a variety of role-playing games and seminars, and a role-playing game costume contest. Admission for this convention is FREE. Write to: Erick Wujcik, PO. Box 1623, Detroit MI 48231; or call: (313) 833-3016.

NOVAG III, October 24-25

The Northern Virginia Adventure Gamers (NOVAG) will host their third annual Adventure Gaming Convention. This event will be held at the Leesburg Westpark Hotel in Leesburg, Va. All types of adventure games, from historical board and miniatures games to science-fiction and fantasy role-playing games, are featured. Games vendors and game presentations will also be available. Write to: NOVAG, 101 E. Holly Avenue, Suite 16, Sterling VA 22170; or call: (703)450-6738.

RIVERBEND GAMING CONVENTION '87

October 31-November 1

Sponsored by the Riverbend Gamers, this two-day gaming event will be held at the Ramada Inn on Brady Street in Davenport, Iowa. Sponsored events will include a wide selection of games, an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, a miniatures painting contest, the Riverbend AD&D® Game Open, dealers' tables, seminars, game demonstrations, and more. Rick Reid of "Fluffy Quest" fame will be the guest of honor. Preregistration is \$8 for both days; this includes one free event ticket. Write to: Riverbend Gamers Convention, 423 Brady Street, Davenport IA 52801; or call: (309) 323-2670.

CHICAGO MODEL & HOBBY SHOW

November 5-8

Sponsored by the Radio Control Hobby Trade Association (RCHTA), this third annual trade and hobby show will be held at the O'Hare Expo Center in Rosemont, Ill. A car track, boat pond, retail store, and static model area are featured again this year, with product displays by model railroad manufacturers. Over 2,000 retailers and distributors will attend this event, as will thousands of experienced modelers. Write to: CHICAGO MODEL & HOBBY SHOW, 2400 East Devon Ave., Suite 205, Des Plaines IL 60018; or call: Susan P. Lind at (312) 299-3131, or toll-free at (800) 323-5155.

SAN DIEGO GAMING CONVENTION

November 6-8

This three-day gaming convention will be held at the exquisite Hotel San Diego, 339 West Broadway Street in San Diego, Calif. Events will include a wide variety of role-playing, board, and miniatures game tournaments, along with a large dealers' room and a host of open games. Registration is \$15 until October 30, or \$20 at the door. Special two-day and one-day registrations will also be available at the door. Write to: THE SAN DIEGO GAMING CONVENTION, P.O.

Box 881424, San Diego CA 92108; or call: (619) 569-1685 between 8 A.M. and 5 P.M.

SCI CON 9, November 6-8

Sponsored by the Hampton Roads Science Fiction Association, this science-fiction convention will be held at the Sheraton Beach Inn in Virginia Beach, Va. Larry Niven is the guest of honor, with I? Craig Russell as artist guest of honor and Bernadette Bosky as fan guest of honor. Featured events include panels, readings, videos, a costume contest, an art show, and much more. Registration costs are \$15 until October 1, and \$18 at the door. Huckster's tables (limit of 2, and including one membership per table) are \$50 each. Room rates at the Sheraton Beach Inn are \$45 for a single and \$51 for a double. Write to: SCI CON 9, PO. Box 9434, Hampton VA 23670.

FIRST VERCINGETORIX TOURNAMENT

November 7-8

This Ancient-period miniatures tournament will take place at the Carrefour Europe room in Chamalières, France. Starting at 10 A.M. Saturday morning, this tournament will run until 11 P.M. Sunday evening. The 1st Vercingetorix Tournament is sponsored by the Association de Jeux Chamalierois. Write to: Donnat Jean Marc, La Tuilerie, 63230 Pontgibaud, France. Food and lodging will be made available at the convention site for an additional fee.

ROCK-CON XIV, November 7-8

This year's ROCK-CON gaming convention will be held at the Wagon Wheel Resort in Rockton, Ill. Special guests include Gary Gygax, Jim Ward, Tom Wham, and Lou Zocchi. Special features will include over 60 different gaming events, along with a dealers' room with over 40 exhibitors. Other events include a miniatures-painting contest (prizes awarded) and various miniatures competitions. Admission for both days is \$5, with no additional gaming fees. Convention hours are 10 A.M. to midnight Saturday and 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. on Sunday. Write to: ROCK-CON XIV Information or Game Scheduling, 14225 Hansberry Road, Rockton IL 61072. Please make all checks payable to Black Hawk Distributors.

EARTHCON VII, November 13-15

This science-fiction convention, sponsored by NEOPSA, Inc., will be held at the Holiday Inn Westlake, 1100 Crocker Road, in Cleveland, Ohio. Guests of honor include R.M. Meluch, Jay Sullivan, Kenneth Shulze, Alan Tuskes, Sheldon Jaffrey, and Jim Young. Sponsored events include videos, dealers, a masquerade, panels, filksinging, an art show and auction, a media display room, and much more. Registration fees are \$22. Write to: EARTHCON, PO. Box 5641, Cleveland OH 44101.

XANADU IV, November 13-15

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Ramada Inn on Music Valley Drive in Nashville, Tenn. Poul Anderson will be guest of honor. A small number of RPGA™ Network tournaments will be featured, along with a few events sponsored by D.A.G.R. Memberships are \$15 until October 1; \$20 thereafter. Write to: William Tracy, c/o XANADU SF Con, PO. Box 23281, Nashville TN 37202-3281.

PENTACON III, November 14

This one-day gaming convention will be held at the Whistler Ballroom and Grand Wayne Gallery in the Grand Wayne Center located at 120 W. Jefferson in Fort Wayne, Ind. An RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournament is featured, along

with other AD&D® tournaments, miniatures battles, fantasy and science-fiction role-playing games, a flea market, a miniatures-painting contest, and the awarding of door prizes. A dealers' and manufacturers' room are also available. This convention runs from 9 A.M. to midnight. Write to: NIGA/PENTACON, PO. Box 11133, Fort Wayne IN 46856; or call: Michael Durant at (219) 422-9964.

NOVOCON 3-D, November 21

This one-day gaming event, which is sponsored by the Ohio Gaming Association, will be held from 10 A.M. to midnight at the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio. Numerous role-playing games and miniatures competitions will be sponsored, along with an auction, a dealers' room, and various other activities. Membership fees are \$5 for the day, with no additional event fees. Write to: NEO-GS, Box 412, Cuyahoga Falls OH 44222.

CONTEX V, November 27-29

This science-fiction convention will be held in Houston, Tex., at the Hobby Airport Holiday Inn over Thanksgiving weekend. Guests include Elizabeth Scarborough, Real Musgrave, Roland Schmidt, and Fran Booth. Among the many activities and events scheduled are open and tournament gaming, a painted miniatures contest, a video songtape contest, an art show & auction, a masquerade, film & video rooms, writer's workshops, panels, talks, demos, a 24-hour con suite, flea-market tables, and a dealers' room. Three-day memberships will be \$20 at the door. Write to: Friends of Fandom, PO. Box 266996 Houston TX 77207-6996, or call: (713) 475-8228.

DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, November 27-29

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Marriott Park Central, 7750 I-635 at Hwy 45, in Dallas, Tex. Guests include Carole Nelson Douglas, Steve Erwin, Kerry Gammill, and many others. Other features include a huge dealers' room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this event are \$20 through November 1 and \$25 thereafter. Write to: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

DRAGONMEET BALTIMORE

November 27-29

Sponsored by Games Workshop U.S., this science-fiction and fantasy gaming convention will be held at the Marriot Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Md. Events include all types of games, with an extensive miniatures gaming schedule taking place over the length of this three-day affair. Gaming events are sponsored around the clock, with a program of films and videos showing concurrently. A miniatures-painting workshop is also held at no additional expense to registrants. This workshop features artists spotlighted in the "Tabletop Heroes" section of *White Dwarf* magazine. Registration for this event is \$20. One-day registrations are \$7.50 at the door. Write to: Timothy D. Olsen, Games Workshop, 231 Park Avenue, Baltimore MD 21201; or call: (301) 752-1493.

PELI-CON '87, November 27-29

This convention will be the first comics and gaming convention sponsored in the New Orleans area. Held at the Clarion Hotel on

historic Canal Street in Downtown New Orleans, PELI-CON '87 will take place just blocks away from the ever-popular French Quarter. Guest artists from several comic-book publishers will be present for panel discussions and autograph sessions. Other guests will include Ned Dameron, George Alec Effinger, Pat Adkins, David "Zeb" Cook, Mike Curtis, and Kirk Alyn. Game events featured include an AD&D® game tournament, an AD&D game trivia contest, Pente, BATTLESYSTEM™, and BATTLETECH® game competitions, and a variety of miniatures, board, and role-playing games. Prizes will be awarded for most events. Other features include a film and video room, a dealers' room, and a 24-hour gaming room. Registration fees for the weekend are \$12 until October 1. Write to: PELI-CON '87 Convention Committee, 5200 Conti Street, New Orleans LA 70124.

TROPICON VI, December 4-6

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Oceanside in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Guests of honor include George R.R. Martin and Gail Bennett. Panels, movies, trivia, videos, filksinging, and gaming are featured. Registration is \$12 until Oct. 31, and \$15 thereafter. Tickets for the banquet are \$19 if purchased before Nov. 30. Write to: SFSFS Secretary, P.O. Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33307.

UNIVERSE 88, January 1-3, 1988

This game convention will be held at the Airport Hilton and Towers in Los Angeles, Calif. Featured events will include over 150 game tournaments (fantasy role-playing games, board games, war games, and family games), an exhibition room, films, seminars, and more. There will also be a full program of science-fiction and fantasy events. Admission is \$19.50 until December 5, and \$25 at the door. Write to: UNIVERSE

88, Dept. D, PO. Box 2577, Anaheim CA 92804; or call: (213) 867-4140.

CONFUSION, January 15-17, 1988

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Southfield Hilton in Southfield, Mich. Room prices are \$55 per night. Guests of honor include Joe Haldeman, Larry Tucker, Marta Randall, and David Cherry. Membership fees are \$11 until October 11, \$15 until November 25, and \$20 at the door. Write to: AASFA/CONFUSION, PO. Box 8284, Ann Arbor MI 48107.

NEW ORLEANS SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FESTIVAL, January 22-24, 1988

This science-fiction and fantasy event will take place at the Landmark Hotel, which is located at 2601 Severn Avenue in Metairie, La. George R.R. Martin, George Alec Effinger, and others are guests of honor. Registration costs are \$15 at the door. Write to: NEW ORLEANS SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FESTIVAL, PO. Box 79109, New Orleans LA 70179-1089.

CHIMERACON V, January 29-31, 1988

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the University of North Carolina campus in Chapel Hill, N.C. Guests of honor will include Nancy Springer, Hugo and Nebula Awards winner Orson Scott Card, Colleen Doran, Allen Wold, Lisa Cantrell, and Mark van Name. Events will include a costume workshop and contest (costumed guests receive \$1 off admission for Saturday registrations), an Outer Limits Cantina Variety Show, filksinging, gaming, panels, and much more. Admission prices are \$6 per day, \$11 for two days, and \$15 for all three days. Preregistration for all three days is \$12.50. Write to: 15-A University Gardens, Chapel Hill NC 27514; or call: (919) 933-3003.

GAMERS' CHOICE AWARDS 1987

The RPGA™ Network conducted its annual poll of the most popular games enjoyed by the people at the GEN CON® Games Fair. The winners from the GEN CON 20 Games Fair (August 20-23) are:

Best family game: CHASE" game (TSR, Inc.).

Best fantasy role-playing game: GURPS® Fantasy game (Steve Jackson Games).

Best science-fiction role-playing game: GAMMA WORLD® game, third edition (TSR, Inc.).

Best "other category" role-playing game: TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE" game (R. Talsorian Games, Inc.).

Best role-playing adventure (tie): Azathoth, for the CALL OF CTHULHU® game (Chaosium Inc.), and Sword of the Daimyo, for the AD&D® game's Oriental Adventures system (TSR, Inc.).

Best role-playing accessory: Cthulhu by Gaslight, * for the CALL OF CTHULHU game (Chaosium Inc.).

Best historical strategy game: SNIPER" game (TSR, Inc.).

Best science-fiction strategy game: BATTLETECH® game (FASA Corporation).

Best miniatures line: Doctor Who figure line (FASA Corporation, Citadel Miniatures, and RAFM).

Best computer game: The Bard's Tale II* game (Electronic Arts).

Best play-by-mail game: Starweb game (Flying Buffalo, Inc.).

Best professional gaming magazine: DRAGON® Magazine* (TSR, Inc.)

* Also won H.G. Wells Award at Origins; see DRAGON issue #124.

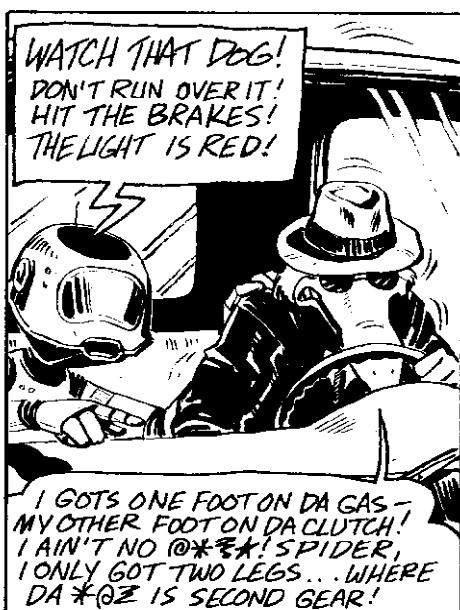
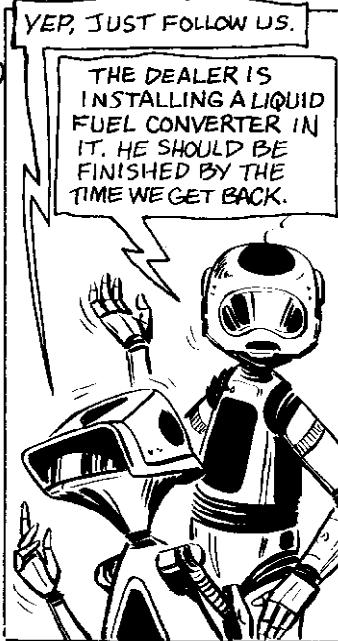
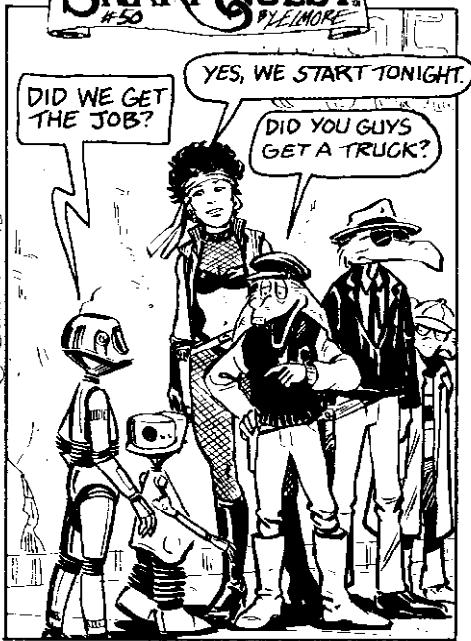
The staff of DRAGON Magazine congratulates all the winners.

SNARF QUEST.

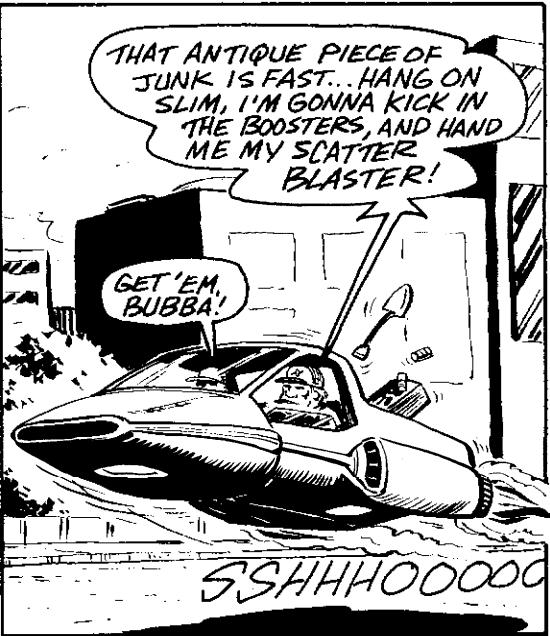
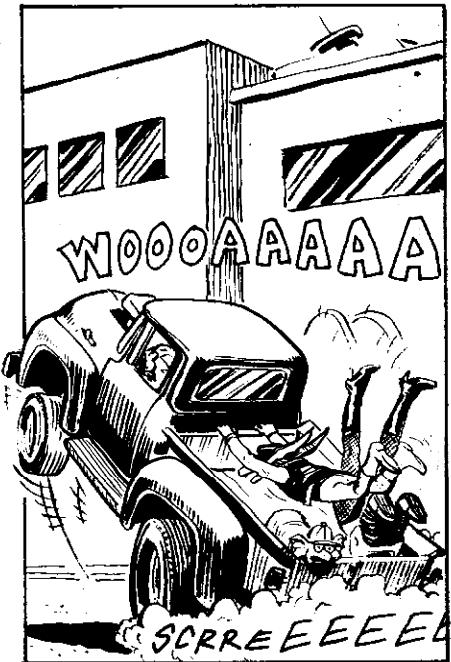
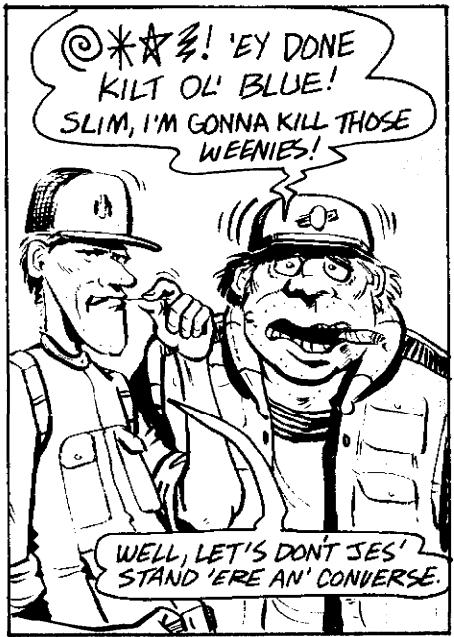
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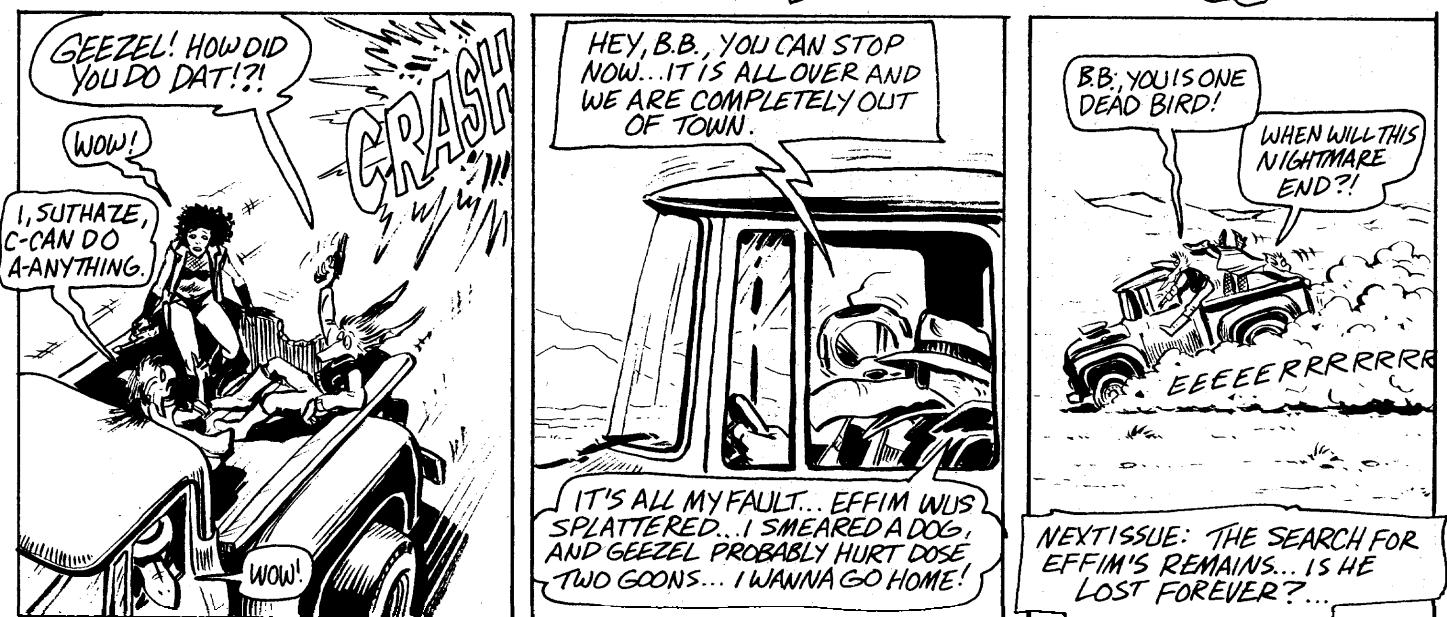
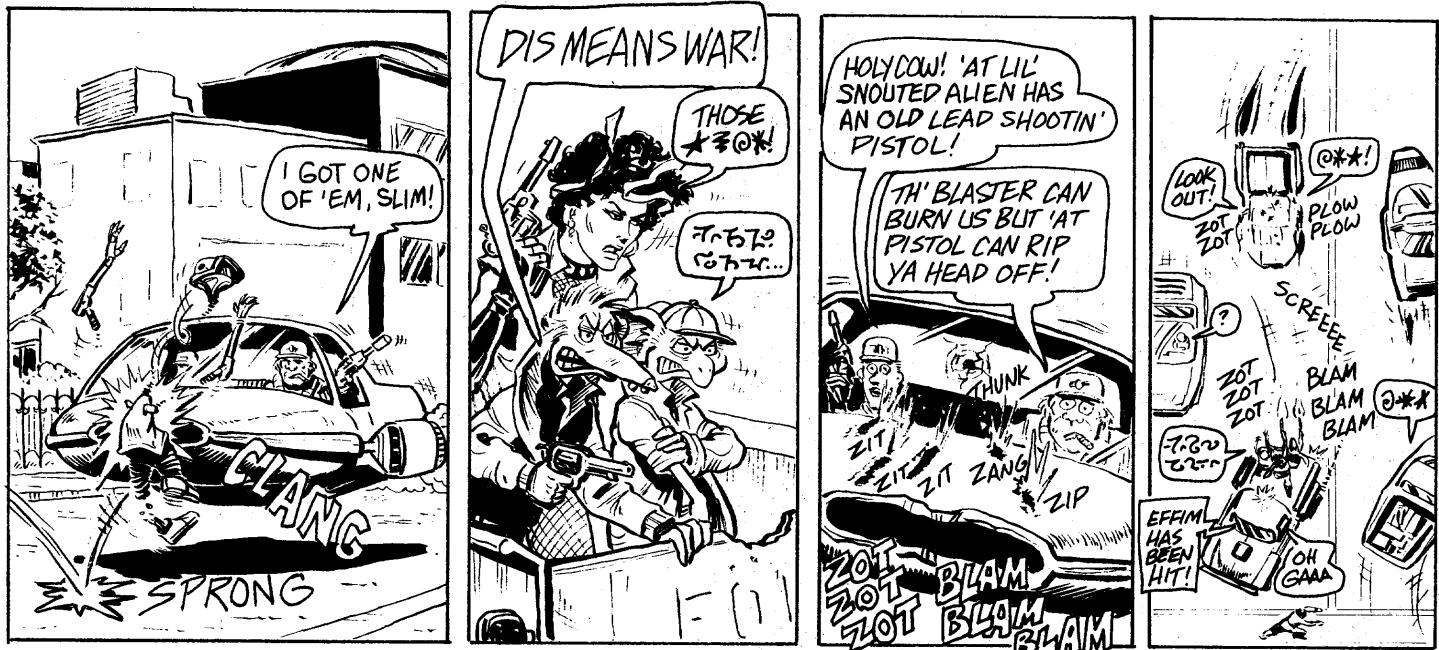
BY ELMORE

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I GOT ONE FOOT ON DA GAS—
MY OTHER FOOT ON DA CLUTCH!
I AIN'T NO @*#K! SPIDER,
I ONLY GOT TWO LEGS... WHERE
DA @#QZ IS SECOND GEAR!

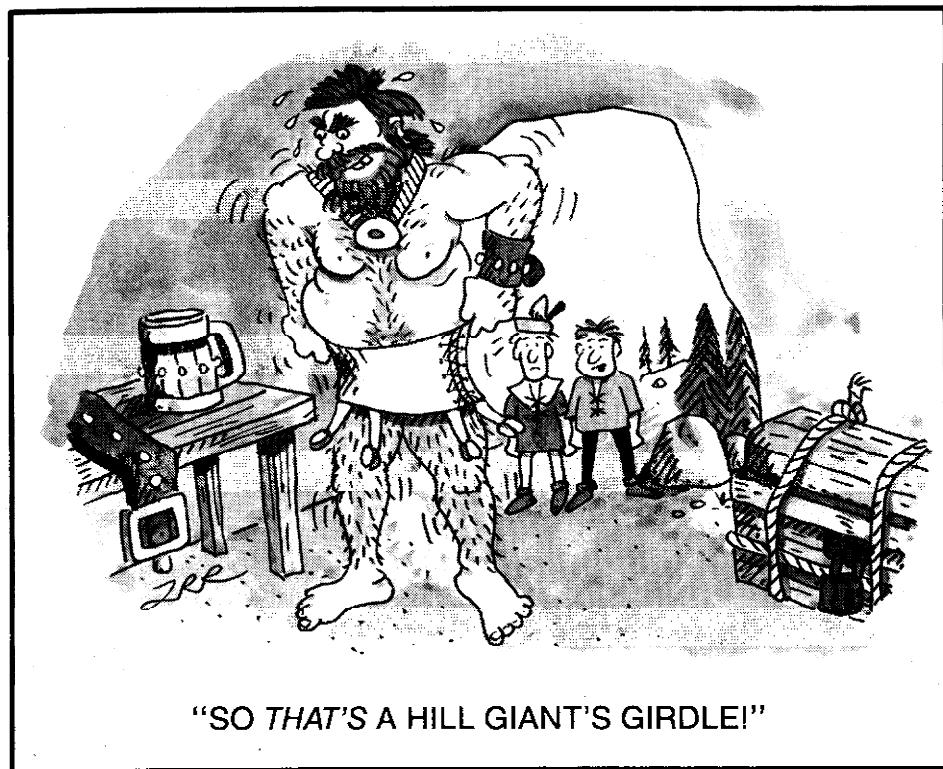




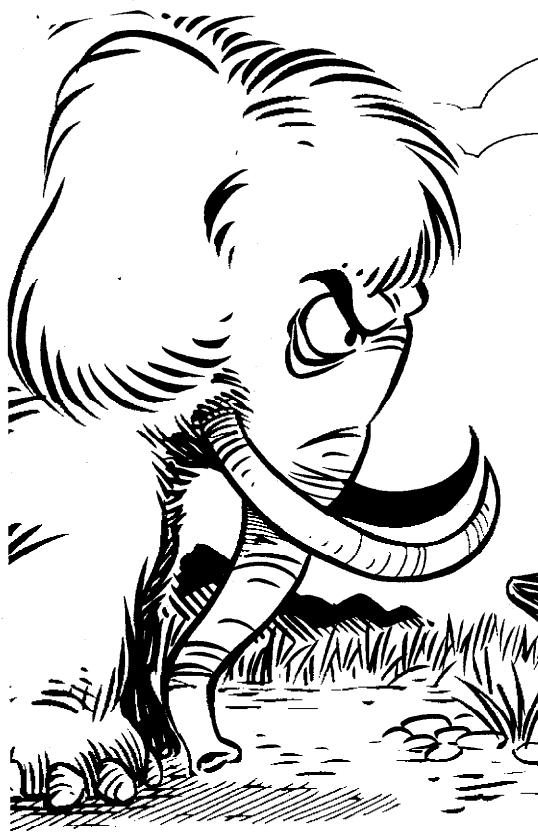
DRAGONMIRTH



"OFF HAND, I'D SAY IT WAS THE CAFFEINE."



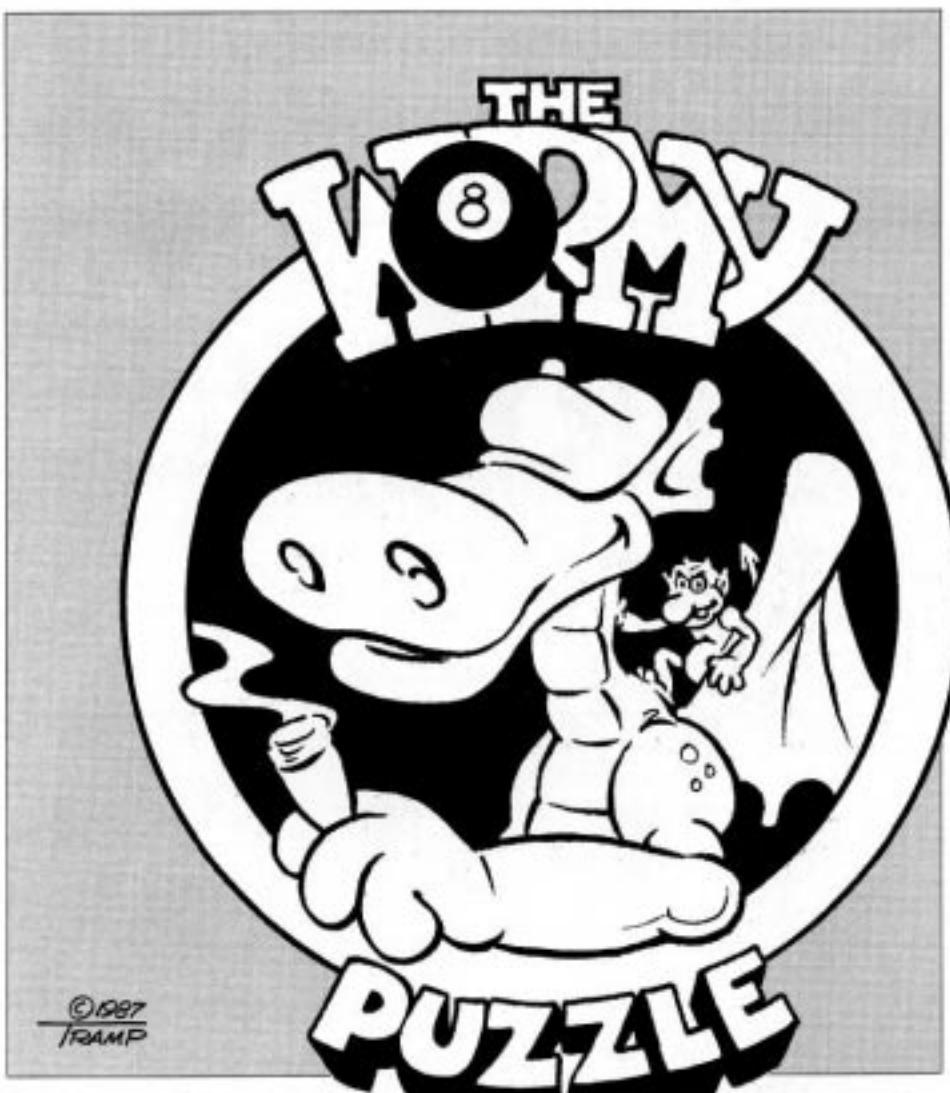
"SO THAT'S A HILL GIANT'S GIRDLE!"





"I THINK HE'S SUGGESTING WE EVOLVE INTO VEGETARIANS!"





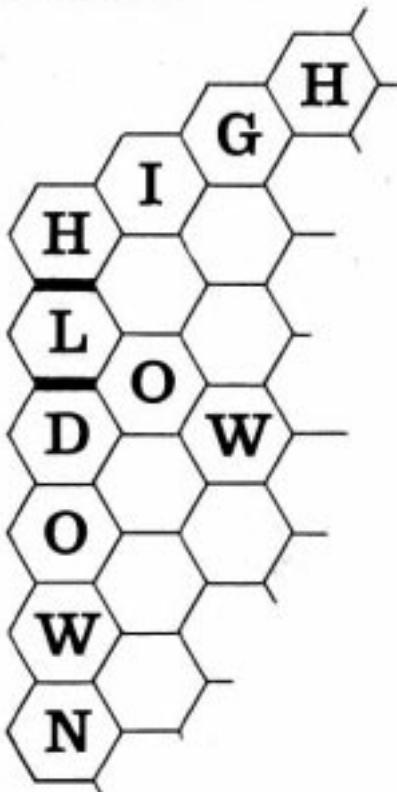
Editor's introduction

It came out of the blue, just before the deadline on DRAGON® issue #125. Tramp called and said he had an idea for a special type of crossword puzzle, and we looked it over and liked it. We wanted to use it in that issue, since it was the 100th DRAGON Magazine to have "Wormy" in it — and the last time we had a special feature involving Wormy appeared in issue #15 (it was Wormy's backgammon board). We figured it was time for something new.

Unfortunately, a few ad changes and the closeness of the deadline forced us to bump the puzzle to the next issue — this one. Thus, we start our next 100 issues of "Wormy" with a puzzle that requires some knowledge of the first 100 issues in which Wormy and all of his friends (and foes) appeared. Interested? Read on.

Puzzle instructions

The Wormy Puzzle is a hexagonal-grid crossword puzzle in which the word entries are read in three directions: high across, low across, and down (see the diagram). The thick lines on the hexagons mark the beginnings and ends of word entries.



Most of the entries concern the bizarre and wonderful denizens of Wormy's world, as shown over the last 100 issues in which he has appeared (since issue #9, in September 1977 — 10 years ago!). Of course, some readers will not have all the relevant issues. But most of you should have access to the recent ones, and some good guesses can be made about the answers found in earlier issues.

Many of the clues include issue numbers for DRAGON Magazines in which some answers may be found. Tramp recommends that before you dig out all of your old DRAGON issues, you see how much of the puzzle you can solve from memory. Solving the puzzle aloud makes an interesting sideline to an evening's adventuring.

A tough one? Of course — and we think Wormy wouldn't want it any other way. Dragons love riddles and puzzles, and this one does our favorite dragon justice. The answers are on page 58. Good luck!

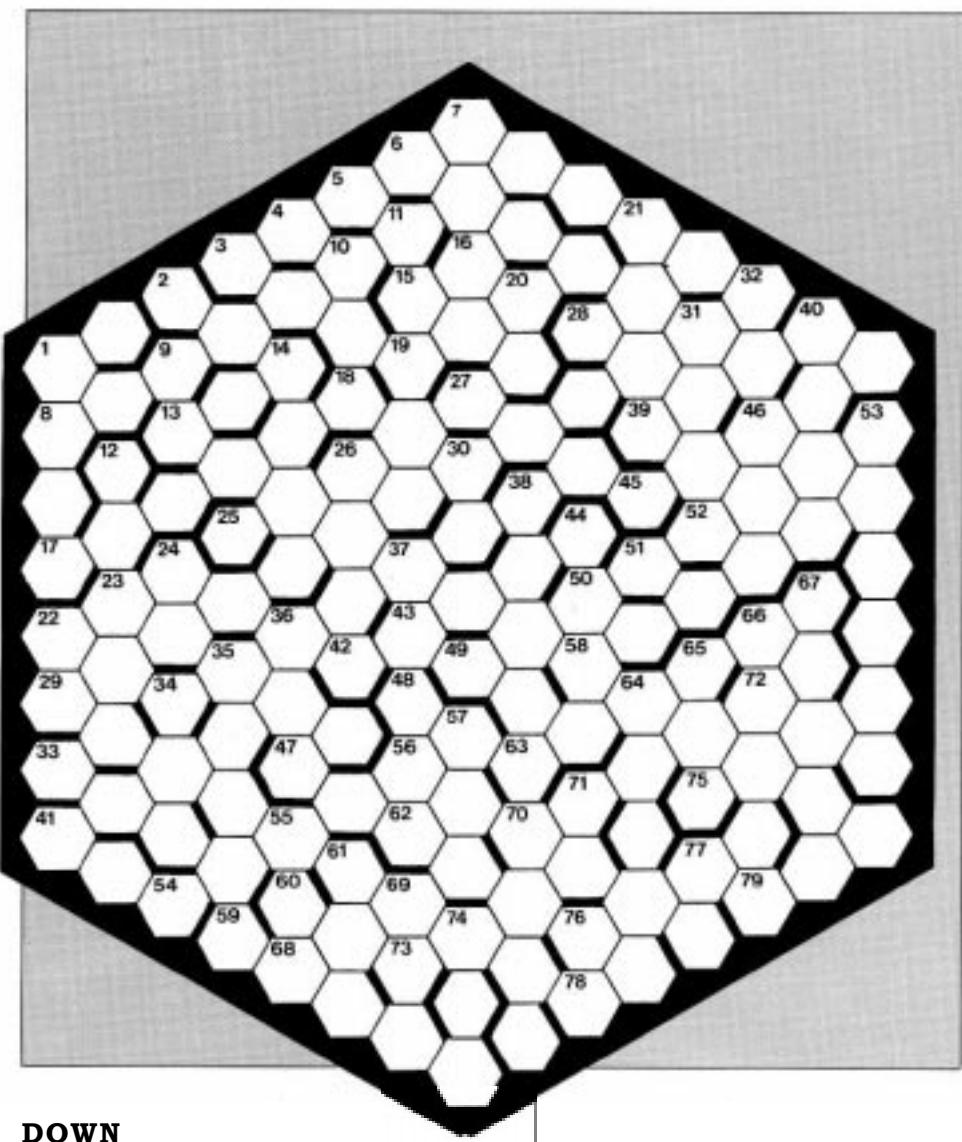
High Across

1. Weapon carried by Butch the minotaur. (issue #34)
3. What do mudtrolls take in the swamp?
8. Who did Gremorly summon from Stygothia? (issue #49)
13. _____ who?
15. Where did Ace bite Saro? (issue #121)
17. Bender was swallowed by a long-jawed mud _____. tissue #90)
19. Sepulcher.
22. An essential element in comic strips.
25. According to Ace, Barbadicus looked like a Dagger Street _____. (issue #94)
28. What do the trolls that the ogres catch experience? (issues #111, 112, 118)
29. What's inside Wormy's snooker balls? (issues #19, 76, 77)
33. Tree troll (initials).
34. Underground town of minikins. (issue #96)
39. What the dwarves chanted. (issues #10, 11, 76)
41. Catfish and Bender's escorts into Toadtown, (issue #96)
42. Irving is able to fly in his _____. (issue #47)
45. In what does Gremorly the wizard live? tissue #51)
47. Hill troll (initials).
49. Siege of the _____ _____. (issues #84, 93)
54. Otis thought Rudy was — for not having washed out the stew pot. (issue #118)
58. What Wormy does when someone tells him that he should be more neighborly and devote more time to community service.
62. _____ and fro.
63. According to Butch, the dwarves were wearing "_____ surplus." (issue #31)

68. One of Irving's appendages.
 70. Reflecting apparatus.
 73. One of the things a Storm Giant can summon.
 75. Wesley's favorite topic. (issue #98)
 76. What Fred the stonedrake can do under the right wind conditions.
 78. Toadtown (abbrev.).
 79. Observe.

Low Across

1. Expression of surprise or satisfaction.
 2. Primitive picklike tool.
 3. The mudsucker ate Catfish's _____. (issue #89)
 4. Expression of disappointment.
 5. Trolls Choice (initials).
 6. Ace's cyclopic hound dog.
 7. To lure Wormy out of his cave, Achorrath _____. a set-up involving the ogres. (issue #119)
 13. Town in the tops of the Yggdazziles. tissues #93, 103)
 15. Really all right.
 16. Head tyrant at DRAGON Magazine (initials).
 18. Irving's color.
 22. Picnic nuisance.
 23. Where does a rooster roost?
 24. Three-eyed critter that Bender ran into. (issue #85)
 26. Junior (abbr.).
 27. A dwarfburger costs 75 _____. s. (issue #13)
 28. What did Irving hope to do to the centrigriph? (issue #47)
 29. What did Gorgonstar send after Wormy? (issues #94, 117)
 33. Woodtrolls are also called _____. trolls. (issue #103)
 39. Bard.
 40. Mister (abbr.).
 41. What do woodtrolls have on their arms and backs?
 43. To provide defenses, Wormy _____. traps in his cave. (issues #108, 109, 116)
 46. Name of the bear who is Butch's friend. (issues #30, 34, 98)
 47. The game that Blackbolt, Mad Dog, and Deadeye Dudly were playing. (issues #102, 103)
 48. Fictitious country in which Pittsburgh is located.
 50. Opposite of "off."
 51. Hand-canceling a letter is _____. problem at the Toadtown Post Office. (issue #97)
 52. Kraken's Ring (initials).
 56. Wormy suffers from _____. bulism. (issue #116)
 59. Part of a barrel.
 60. "The Stump" is a _____. (issues #103, 104, 105)
 66. Rest & Regeneration (initials).
 72. Sound a banshee makes. (issue #100)
 77. Present tense, third-person singular of "be."

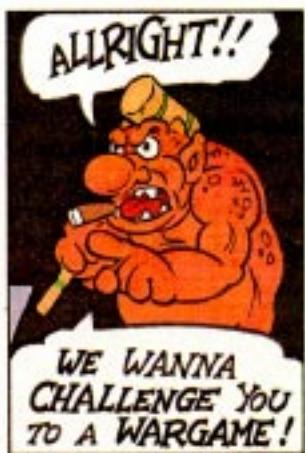
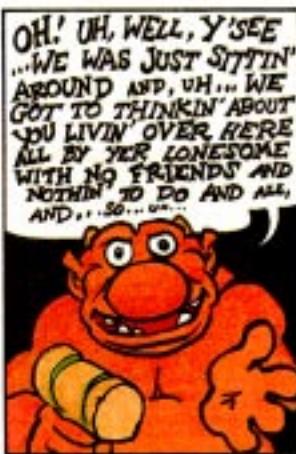


DOWN

1. Wormy _____. riddles.
 7. Which giant wielded a double-string long bow?
 9. Preposition.
 10. Irving posted a want-ad for "Game-_____. riors!" (issue #104)
 11. What Irving did with the dwarves that Wormy squashed. (issues #13, 32)
 12. What Dudly was after the encounter with the boar and wolf in the swamp. (issue #33)
 14. Name of the goblin who slew the hobgoblin on Wormy's kitchen table. (issue #61)
 20. Mountain King (initials).
 21. Slime.
 22. _____. good as new.
 24. Preposition.
 26. The bounty-hunting troll who's after Wormy's head. (issues #115, 123)
 30. Enact.
 31. The giant mousetrap that Jedd almost sprung was located in a _____. (issue #109)
 32. Where does the cacodemon live? (issue #124)
 34. A troll has six of these.
 35. Otis, Jack, Floyd, and Rudy are all _____.
 36. What's on the end of Wormy's cigar?
 37. What do Wormy's employees exhibit towards him? (issue #115)
 38. What crime is Wormy wanted for? tissues #50, 81, 82, 100)
 40. Achorrath and Wormy are destined to _____.
 44. Barny is a _____.-troll. tissue #103)
 53. "Blackbolt" is Franks _____.-nym. (issues #102, 103)
 55. Mysterious Brotherhood of 'Rolls (initials).
 57. _____.-omoriah the Shadowcat. (issues #49, 58, 66)
 61. Expression of exasperation.
 64. "_____. Harold!" (one of Gremorly's oaths). (issues #72, 73)
 65. One of Dudly's expressions.
 66. What Irving neveh loined about snookah. (issue #9)
 67. Wormy _____. the dwarf into the ogres' cave. tissue #14)
 69. Name of the imp.
 71. Opposite of "out."
 74. Who has been stocking the lagoon with mudsuckers? (issue #94)
 76. Street (abbr.).
 77. I am (contraction).







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