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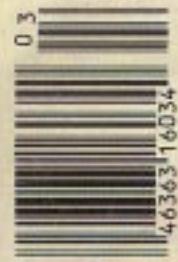
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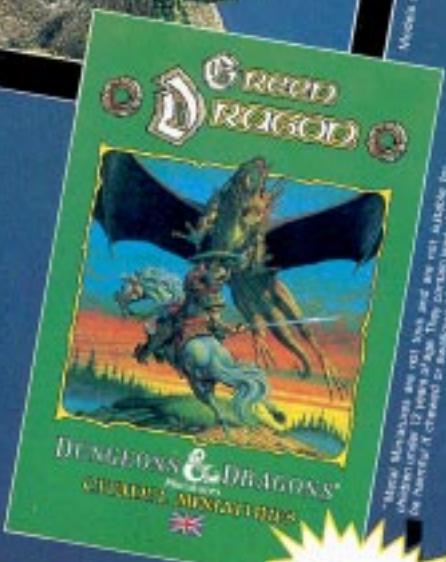
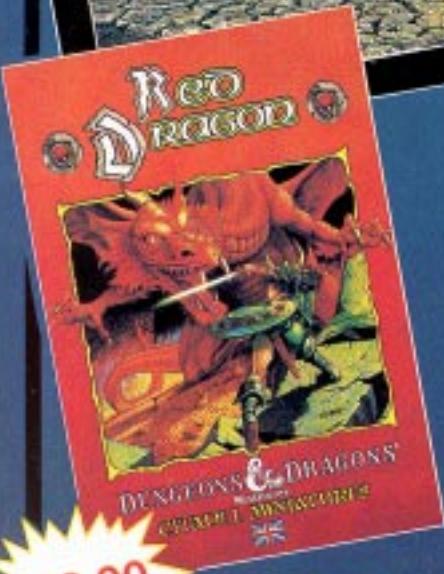


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Dragon®

Magazine

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COVER

Daniel Horne, our cover artist this month, was in the mood to do a historical subject. His painting, entitled "The Real Reason the Romans left Britain," depicts a little-known episode in British history, in which two Roman foot soldiers have bumped into Kostchtchie, the surly fellow from page 40 of the *Monster Manual II*. Of the unsquashed legionnaire, Daniel writes, "Boy, is he going to get it!"

LETTERS

Finding Chainmail

Dear Dragon:

I have been playing the D&D® and AD&D® games for about five years and have rarely been disappointed. I'm proud to say that I've only played about three "prepared" dungeons in my life and found them to be very boring and limiting. I enjoy using the three original books (*Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, and *Monster Manual*), although I have all the books and sometimes use *Unearthed Arcana* and *Legends & Lore*. What I want to know is, what ever happened to the *Chainmail* rule book? I've only heard that it was the "original" game. What was it like and how does it differ from today's game? I'm asking because the idea of a more basic system appeals to me. I find plenty of adventure in fighting with NPCs, and I treat monsters as rarities, preferring to use basic monster types (i.e., trolls, giants, and dragons). Let me know what's what.

Richard Roughgarden
Juiz de Fora, MG, Brazil

The Chainmail rules are a set of wargaming rules for medieval miniatures, written by Gary Gygax and Jeff Perren in the mid-1970s. The booklet is only 44 pages long, and the majority of it is devoted to historical medieval military units (such as Swiss pikemen, Turkish archers, arquebusiers, and feudal knights). A special 14-page section covers fantasy combat rules; when compared to the current state of the AD&D and D&D games, these rules look very "basic" indeed!

The silver-covered Chainmail rules may be purchased from the TSR® Mail Order Hobby Shop. For a catalog, write to: The TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. From the sound of your letter, I would guess that you might also want to see the original D&D game rules if you want a less-complicated game system than the AD&D game, though the current edition of the D&D game (particularly using the Basic, Expert, and Companion rules alone) serves very well. The original D&D game rules (those three little tan booklets that you hear so much about) are not well polished and make use of the Chainmail rules in some places, but they are extremely interesting.

Running a fantasy campaign using the Chainmail rules would be a challenge — on the other hand, we did receive a letter from an Australian gamer who had run exactly such a campaign for several years. Anything's possible.
— RM

An SF anthology?

Dear Dragon:

Glancing through some recent issues, I thought of an idea I would like to propose. How about a Best of DRAGON® Magazine anthology

devoted entirely to science-fiction articles? I am a player of the D&D game but prefer science-fiction games more. In fact, there seem to be quite a few good science-fiction game articles when you glance through the index published in issue #112. A lot of SF role-players might like the magazine's SF material published under one cover. How about it?

There is another idea I have been thinking about for a few years. With all the good articles DRAGON Magazine has been running on the background and mechanics of a fantasy world, why not put them together in one volume called *Fantasy Source Book*? Articles such as those on running a castle, currency, sailing ships, and weather could be included. Such a book should be a generic type, not orientated strictly toward the D&D or AD&D game. It should be something that a person with a different fantasy role-playing system would want to buy just as an information source. Also included in this book, at the end of the articles or as a separate article, should be a critical bibliography. Something that would say, "If you can buy only one or two books on the subject, buy these," or "If you want a complete collection and have the money, buy it — otherwise, pass it by." I think DRAGON Magazine did one or two articles on bibliographies in the past already. A well-done *Fantasy Source Book* could be a hot-selling item in TSR's line of products.

George F. Cooper III
Parma, OH

We, too, have considered a "Best of" science-fiction collection, and other readers have suggested the same idea. What we need most now is feedback from our readers: Would you be interested in such a collection? What games and articles would you most like to see in such a collection? What about super-powered hero articles?

As for the Fantasy Source Book, our current series of "Best of" Anthologies seem to fill the bill already. Anything we could produce would greatly overlap the material in all of the previous anthologies. However, we are always taking new ideas for articles that should be collected for future anthologies; see the following letter. — RM

A module anthology?

Dear Dragon:

Can you put adventures in your Best of DRAGON Magazine anthologies? I would like to see "The Dancing Hut," "Fedifensor," and "Into the Forgotten Realms."

I have used many articles from DRAGON Magazine. I like all of Ed Greenwood's articles on the Realms. I especially liked the article in issue #110 about the dracolich.

(continued on page 60)

One for Michael

It happens now and then that role-playing gamers feel called upon to explain why they like gaming and what they enjoy about it. A lot of interesting excuses are trotted out, most of them perfectly valid — but perhaps missing the main point of it all in the attempt to "prove" that gaming has some redeeming social value.

It is certainly true that you can learn a lot from role-playing games. The amount of incidental learning can be outstanding; I know more about medieval pole arms now than I did before I first played in a D&D® game, for example. In a more serious vein, we've received a number of letters from teachers and parents who give glowing reports on students who formerly had academic problems or lacked interest in reading — until they discovered role-playing. Then, there was no way to stop the students from exploring the local libraries to research ancient, modern, and speculative books and papers — usually for use in gaming, of course, though the teachers and parents pointed out that this behavior generalized. Students in role-playing seem to develop stronger interests in reading than they did before their gaming habits started.

Other people point out that role-playing games are mind-expanding. The games present unusual thought problems to gamers which they must then solve, using only their imaginations and a set of rule books. It is conceivable that one could not only learn new ways to solve problems in general, but could also gain the spark of creativity itself from gaming. Gamers reward the unique idea, the bizarre plan that works, the solution no one else thought of.

There are lots of other good things about gaming, but the one that has meant the most to me is rarely mentioned. When I remember the best times that I had while gaming, I think about the people I met and the friendships that gaming forged.

There's Bill, for example, who was with the very first gaming group I ever joined. He's now stationed in Turkey with the U.S. Army (I haven't met his wife Melissa, but she's like an old friend, too). Once a month or so, we exchange strange postcards or long letters. Then, there was the big Army group I hung around with (continued on page 60)

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, plus your gaming preferences, to World Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

Abbreviations in parentheses after a name indicate games in which that person is especially interested: AD = AD&D® game; DD = D&D® game; CC = CALL OF CTHULHU® game; GW = GAMMA WORLD® game;

SF = STAR FRONTIERS® game; ST = STAR TREK®. The Role-Playing Game; MSH = MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game; TS = TOP SECRET® game; T = TRAVELLER® game; RQ = RUNEQUEST® game; VV = VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ game.

The World Gamers Guide is intended for the benefit of gamers who live outside the continental United States and Canada, in areas where nearby gamers are small in number or nonexistent, as a way for them to contact

other game-players who would be interested in corresponding about the activities that they enjoy. Unfortunately, we cannot extend this service to persons who live in remote areas of the U.S. or Canada, or to U.S. military personnel with APO or FPO addresses. Each eligible name and address that we receive will be published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON® Magazine, to be listed for more than three issues, you must send in another postcard or letter.

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Michael Moorcock's HAWKMOON



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Science & Sorcery in Earth's Far Future

FORUM

When considering the addition of new rules to a campaign, such as those in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* and DRAGON® Magazine, a DM should always consider one thing which both rule books and the magazine have neglected to mention: the scope of that individual's campaign.

For example, if a character never has a use for anything other than his trusty long sword/mace/dagger, what is the use of having weapon proficiencies at all? While weapon proficiencies are, in general, beneficial to the game, the weapon specialization rules can seriously unbalance it. The weapon specialization rules given in *Unearthed Arcana* are meant to restrict a fighter in his choice of weapons — to apply disadvantages as well as advantages. What use are these rules if a fighter uses only one weapon anyway (as most fighters do)? As the rules stand, all they do is give fighters and rangers a considerable amount of undeserved power, especially in a campaign where level progression is rapid and first level consists of but two or three adventures. The mid-level fighter, with a +3 "to hit" and damage on his nonmagical bastard sword, becomes a formidable killing machine, capable of devastating any opponents who come along, no matter how low an armor class they have. Clerics, magic-users, and thieves are pushed aside, and the AD&D® game becomes a fighter-dominated game, unless variation in weapon proficiency is highly advantageous, which is not the case in most campaigns (how many times have you seen a *vorpal bardiche* or a *military pick + 1, flame tongue?*).

Another example of "scope-dependent rules" is the rules for nonweapon proficiencies in the *DSG*. Unless there is a distinct disadvantage to not being proficient as a potter or a boatwright, every first-level character will choose blind-fighting and healing proficiencies (the two abilities most players select first), which results in nothing but strengthening the opposition. Monsters and NPCs never seem to need the ability to throw a pot, wright a boat, or heal themselves; and if they did, a DM could always think up a reason for them to have that ability.

These rules were intended to diversify the characters — not to become mere additions to their power. Running a good campaign is a full-time job as is; creating a campaign which accommodates these rules is next to impossible. Even rules as simple as the alignment system become twisted and perverted if the scope of the campaign is not large enough. Unless there is a great advantage to being lawful and/or good, or some disadvantage to being chaotic and/or neutral, most players only see the disadvantages to law and goodness (i.e., you have to keep your promises and you can't kill neutrals just to steal their treasure). One of my power-hungry players has remarked, "chaotic neutral is the ultimate alignment"

Unless a DM is either incredibly creative or has an infinite amount of time, these new rules, which were meant to expand the game, only detract from it.

Brock Sides
Moscow, TN

I am writing in defense of what I believe to be the most maligned, mistreated, and disrespected creature in the D&D® game world — the orc. This ugly, small, foul-mouthed, and immoral being seems to be a standard source of ridicule in an age where heroes carry out mighty deeds, where dread magicians plot intrigue and subterfuge, where entire nations seek to enlarge their borders, and so on and so forth. So how does the orc fit into this situation? Where would the *Lord of the Rings* have been without the orc? Undoubtedly, Frodo would have reached Mount Doom six months early. In a few of the campaigns I have been involved in, things got so out of hand that if our party of well-seasoned adventurers came across a band of orcs marauding the local talent, the encounter would be resolved amidst general laughter and joking. For example: "I cut down three orcs ruthlessly while giving my trusty steed a pedicure." There would be minimal dice throwing, probably no damage sustained, and a heap of ex-orcs scattered around the general area. This is hardly fair and often proves to be a waste of valuable game time. But orcs most certainly are not wastes of time. Let's face it: an orc's prime ability is to make life very difficult for people. They terrorize regions by acts of pillage and willful destruction. They ruin farms, raze villages, and make off with the women and children. Their only joy is had by causing unhappiness to anyone they can. Thus, orcs should be treated with the respect they deserve and dealt with accordingly. I personally don't like orcs because my very first character, a paladin, ended up being served as canapes at an orc cocktail party. Since then, they have served subsequent characters of mine as useful (if untrustworthy) allies, and have even formed the major part of an army I gathered to (unsuccessfully) besiege a walled town. But matters don't just end there. Have you ever been to an orc town? Decorum really prevents me from repeating the acts of profanity and perversion committed therein — suffice it to say that you definitely need strong guts and strong arms to survive the experience, and to stay in full possession of your faculties. So, let's give these creatures a break. Your magazine has only twice mentioned or given an article devoted to them (once for the orc gods, and that's a bit too astral for earth campaigning). Let's create higher orc awareness so that when we do slaughter them, we can honestly believe that we've done something fairly worthwhile, rather than just practice our backhand reserve butterfly thrusts with our faithful blood-caked long swords.

Patrick Sieff
New York, NY

I have been an avid player of the AD&D game for about five years, and recently became a subscriber to DRAGON Magazine. In the issues I have read, I've noticed nobody has suggested videotaping a convention game session, or a session run by a well-known DM.

The reason I'm writing to you is that I think a tape of a game session would be greatly appreci-

ated by both the novice and experienced player.

For example, I live in a small community on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. The population is 2,500, of which there may be about 50 avid adventurers, and of that, only two or three experienced DMs. My own experience as a DM has shown me that most players know very little about alignments, races, or classes. They don't know enough about casting spells, and have a tendency to get caught up in the hack-and-slash aspect of the game, not wanting to approach a situation in any other manner. Consequently, when a life-and-death situation arises, the characters often die.

I think if players could actually see how the game is to be played and prospective DMs could see how a game is run, players would be encouraged to use their abilities to the fullest.

The parts of the game that could possibly be of help to the players are: character generation, in-town adventuring (showing there is more to a town than the pub), interaction with NPCs, how DMs can make the trail to the dungeon a more exciting part of an adventure, how players can use their given abilities in an adventure, encumbrance, what to do between adventures, and how to go about identifying weapons, treasure, and magic.

Larry Paisley
Tahsis, British Columbia

Has anybody out there noticed that there are no female strength limits in *Oriental Adventures*? I thought not.

Unfortunately, we must understand that the whole purpose of the aforementioned book is to make adventuring possible in a specific culture, and that culture did not happen to be very egalitarian. Women were most definitely *not* encouraged to become great warriors in feudal Japan. Any full-blooded medieval Oriental male would feel a great loss of honor serving a woman! Female Oriental characters should not really be samurai or the like. Who would have trained them?

If you happen to be running a serious campaign, female warriors just don't fit into most cultures, especially an Oriental culture (in fantasy novels, yes, but not medieval China).

Jeff Klein
Spring Lake, MI

I am currently putting together my own DRAGONCHESS™ game in accordance with the article by Gary Gygax in DRAGON Magazine issue #100 (August, 1985). I noticed in the section of the article labeled, "Putting together a game," that you could not find 25mm elephants for Olibphants and had to resort to using centaurs. While it was difficult, I managed to find 25mm elephants that would not be too large for a game. Ral Partha Enterprises produces a 25mm elephant for their Personalities series, "Armored Giant on War Elephant" (catalog #012-099-099). For my set, I simply do not put the giant on the elephant and the figure looks great for the game. Sylphs can be found in Ral Partha's "Winged Folk" Blister pack, and other hard-to-find figures can be found in Grenadier Models kits (Fantasy Lords #6004 for griffons, and the Monster Manuscript series for such exotic creatures as basilisks, elementals, and unicorns). I hope this letter helps you improve your DRAGONCHESS game set at TSR, Inc., and benefits any other readers of the magazine trying to put a set together.

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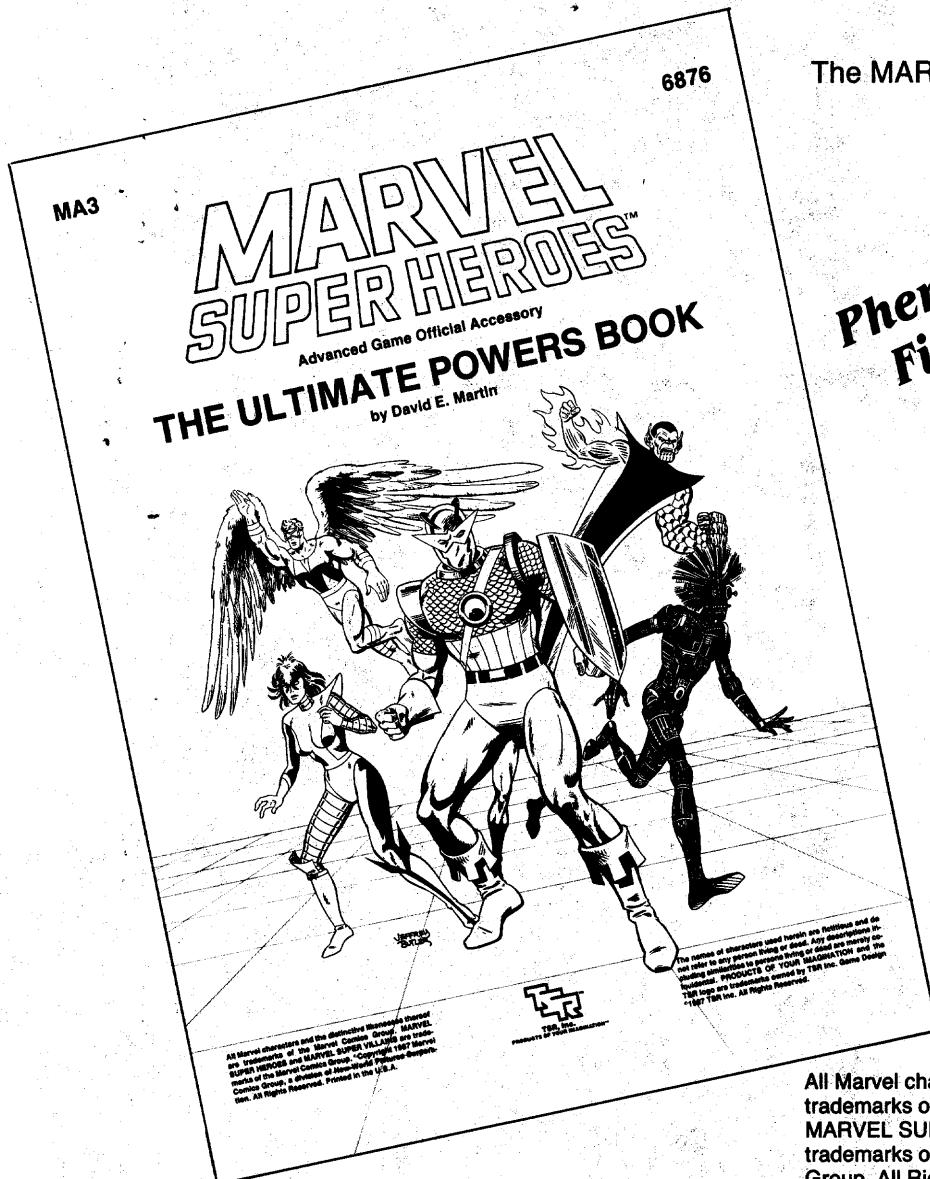
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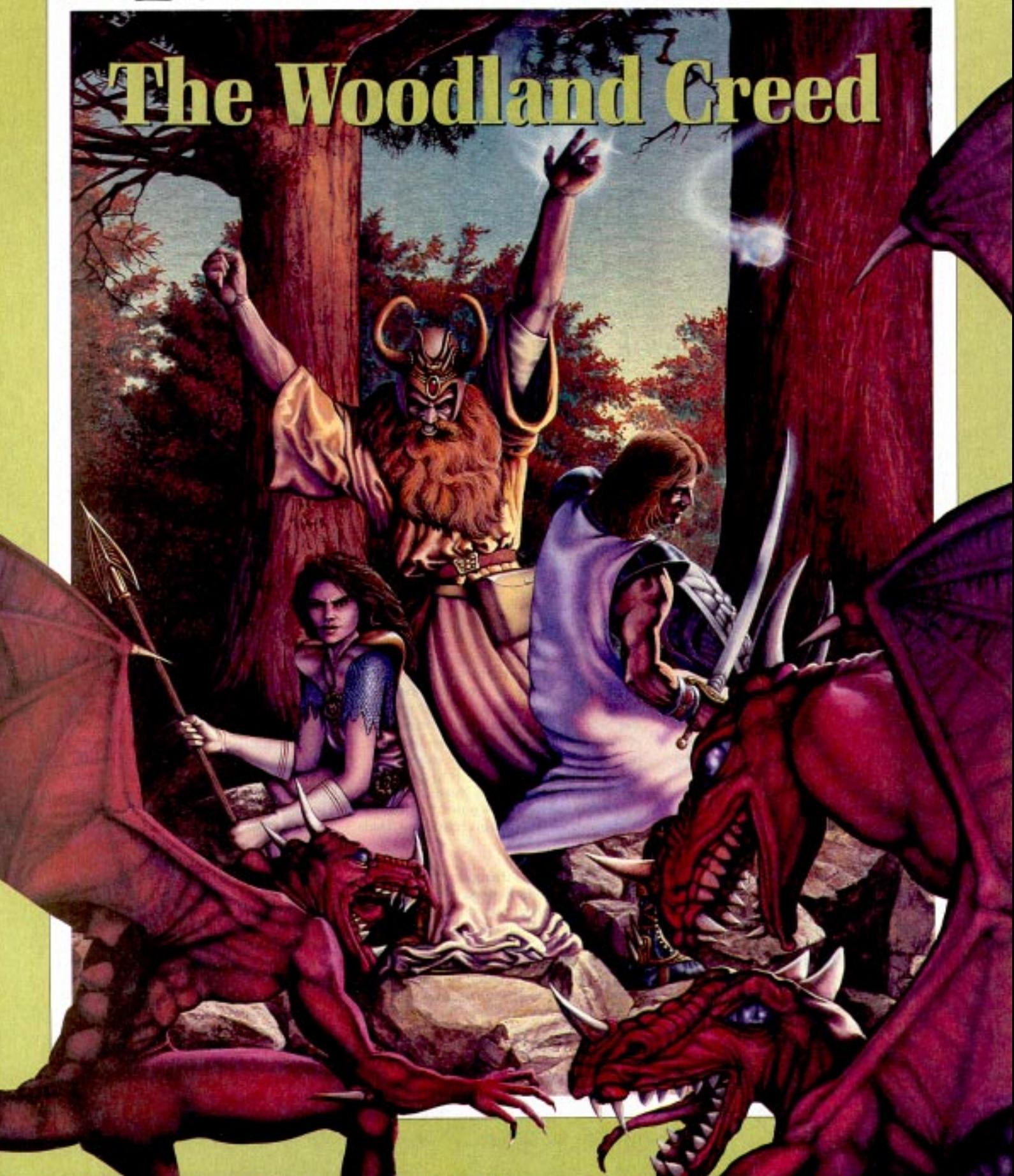
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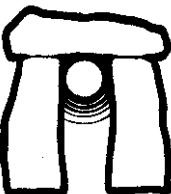
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DRUIDS

The Woodland Creed





Underestimating Druids

(is a bad practice)

A new look at the nature-lovers' class

by Carl Sargent

Every party of AD&D® game adventurers has its fighters, clerics, magic-users, and thieves — and probably a sprinkling of dual-classed demi-human characters of more diverse talents, too. Adventurous players may role-play monks or illusionists, and with the publication of *Unearthed Arcana*, plenty of gamers will be rolling up cavaliers or barbarians. This leaves only one strong character class which is rarely played: the druid. Few AD&D game players favor the druid in their play. Why is this?

The first problem (or set of problems) causing a scarcity of druids in AD&D game adventures comes from a misrepresentation of the practicality of the class. Druids do not appear as effective in combat as clerics because they cannot wear metal armor. And, while they have a wider choice of weapons than do clerics, their weapon choices are somewhat weaker. Another problem is that druids gain new weapon proficiencies more slowly than clerics, and the weapons with which they can become proficient are rather ineffectual (if the DM plays weapon type versus variable AC adjustments in determining hit rolls). Druidic healing powers likewise do not appear as strong as those of clerics, and (unlike clerics) druids cannot turn undead. All these points assume, of course, that the druid is an "alternative" to the cleric — an assumption which gamers tend to make because the druid is defined as a sub-class of the cleric in the AD&D game. These practical problems, as most gamers see them, are summed up in the

classic cliche: "They're no good in dungeons."

The second problem is more sophisticated; it involves the alignment of the druid and the question of whether or not druids are disruptive to party unity. Most AD&D game campaigns revolve around conflicts between good and evil. The druid, of course, is an absolute neutral character, seeing all things (whether good or evil) as balanced factors in the wholeness of nature. How can such a character be integrated into a party of PCs fighting evil, or even into a PC party involved in a law-versus-chaos adventure?

Let us address these problems one at a time. First, we can examine the druid in the "worst-case analysis" — in the dungeon setting. Next, we'll examine the alignment problem. Finally, we will look at some of the advantages the druid has in town adventures. (Presumably, players will agree that the druid is a powerful class in wilderness settings, so his role there needs no justification.)

The druid in the dungeon

Let us begin our analysis by establishing the premise that a dungeon is very much a part of nature. Although druids are particularly attuned to verdant woodlands, their abilities are also useful in the dungeon setting (after all — the dungeon lies below the ground on which things grow). This premise is particularly true if the dungeon setting is that of a natural cavern, an overgrown mine structure, or a similar underground complex.

There are two general points to keep in mind when analyzing the druids effectiveness in a dungeon; these are illustrated in

the tables at the end of this article. First, druids progress in experience levels more rapidly than magic-users and illusionists at all levels, and more rapidly than clerics after the 5th level. Also, at any given experience-point total, druids possess more spells and higher-level spells than any other character class.

Most AD&D game players are of the belief that druids are weak fighters; this belief is more pronounced when players compare druids to clerics. Certainly, even a druid with a good dexterity will never acquire an AC as low as that of a cleric — a problem which is exacerbated as experience levels are gained. Likewise, magical items acquired through adventuring, such as protective devices affecting AC, often go to other types of characters first (for example, *rings of protection* go mostly to fighters who need the saving-throw bonuses, magic shields go to the clerics, and so on). As experience levels are gained, however, the druid outgains the cleric in hit points (since he gains levels faster), and so has a better defensive ability in this respect. In any event, clerics often serve as back-up fighters; in that role, the druid may be superior to the cleric. For instance, the druids spell combination of *animal friendship* and *speak with animals* can be used to train an animal pet — an auxiliary "fighter" considerably more powerful than a cleric and possibly even more powerful than a fighter. While the druid himself is not going to lead a PC party into combat, he can bring substantial fighting muscle to that group.

Likewise, the apparently weaker healing powers of the druid as compared with the cleric are not the problem they seem. The

druid only has weaker healing powers at the first experience level (*cure light wounds* is a first-level clerical spell and a second-level druidic spell) and at very high levels (the point at which heal becomes available to the cleric). Otherwise, *cure serious wounds* is a fourth-level spell for both clerics and druids, but the druid needs only to be 6th level (20,001 experience points) to have the potential for memorizing this spell while the cleric needs to be 7th level (55,001 experience points). Similar logic holds for other healing effects — notably for *cure disease*, which is available to a 5th-level druid (4,001 experience points).

Let's now deal with the crux of matters — the effectiveness of the druid in a dungeon. There are many spells at each druidic spell level which are very useful in dungeons. When comparing the druid with the cleric, let's assume we're analyzing PCs with wisdom scores of at least 16 in both cases.

At the first experience level, the druid has four first-level spells compared to the cleric's three (and one for the magic-user). Two of these spells are essential to the druid: *speak with animals* and *animal friendship*. With these two spells, the druid may have an animal pet which has a moderate repertoire of tricks. Furthermore, this pet may have up to 2 HD (or possibly up to 2 + 3 HD, since 2 + HD animals are treated as 2 HD animals for combat purposes). Let's consider such a trained animal in combat: a war dog, for example. A war dog will hit an enemy of AC 5 in melee on a 1d20 roll of 11 or better, whereas a 1st-level fighter with 17 strength needs a minimum 1d20 roll of 14. (This comparison doesn't include the effects of "to hit" adjustments for weapon types versus variable AC, but since no normal weapon has a + 3 bonus against AC 5, the point made still holds. Weapons specializations haven't been considered either, due to the complexity of such a calculation and the limited space allotted to this article.) The war dog has a much poorer AC than a fighter, of course, and does less damage in many cases, but with an average of 11 hp, it is more resilient than the average 1st-level fighter with an 18 constitution.

A druid character should not need to memorize these spells for an adventure at 1st level. It can be argued that during his early training, the druid used the spells to train his pet (although *speak with animals* is useful in adventures anyway). Moreover, commands such as "attack the creature I point to with *this* hand signal," or "paw my leg when you smell the orcs/goblins/gnolls whose scent you have been taught to recognize" have obvious uses in combat. One could also train an animal to sniff out

thieves *hiding in shadows*. . . .

Another first-level spell of great utility in dungeons is *detect poison* (poison is, after all, the bane of any character class at any experience level, save for high-level monks). This spell can be a life-saver when it is cast to examine chests for poison traps or upon potions found in treasure hoards. Likewise, *detect snares and pits* is valuable even in dungeons; although only simple pits can be detected with this spell in such settings, a simple 10' pit can mean death for a 1st-level character. In comparison to the clerical spell equivalent, *find traps*, the increasing duration of *detect snares and pits* (which is a function of increasing experience level) guarantees its continuing value to a party, leaving the clerical spell available for checking chests, possible *glyphs* set on portals, and the like.

Faerie fire is also a splendid spell; the range is fairly extensive (80') and the area of effect is also a plus (affecting one or more creatures within an 80' diameter circle). To add to this, the number of creatures affected escalates with increasing experience level (12 linear feet per level gets to be a lot when the druid reaches 4th or 5th level). The spell is virtually made for the dungeon due to its effectiveness in poor lighting conditions; it also confers a +2 hit bonus to fighting PCs in combat. Above all, there is *no* saving throw against its effects.

A 1st-level druid with *detect poison*, *detect snares and pits*, *faerie fire* and *speak with animals* is a tremendous asset to any dungeon party. The druid will be highly popular with fighters ("The *fire* was great, and the dog certainly helped in combat, and thanks for telling me about the pit.") and thieves ("A *poison* trap on the chest?? Thanks for the warning."). But at 2nd level, things get even better. Apart from all other character classes, the druid receives a second-level spell (*three*, in fact, if he has a 16 or better wisdom score). Now he has seven spells, compared to four for the cleric and two for the magic-user.

Of the second-level spells, one can be a real killer: *heat metal*. Any creature in non-magical metal armor is in serious trouble when the druid hits it with this spell; the automatic damage (there is no saving throw) can be enough to kill, depending on how long it takes to get the armor off. Even if the creature succeeds, it will be AC 10 out of its armor, with the druid's fighter friends quickly closing for combat. Also, if the target creature's head is affected by the heat (which depends on whether or not it is wearing a helm), unconsciousness sets in (for 1-4 rounds) on the third round after the spell is cast, totally disabling the creature. Furthermore, the spell can set normal clothing aflame, and if the creature is carrying oil

on its person, the effects can be spectacular. To complete the picture, no normal metal weapon can be held by a creature affected by *heat metal* after two rounds. This spell can be great fun, offering added strength from relatively simple magic.

Of the other second-level spells, *barkskin* is useful defensively. Likewise, *trip* can come into its own when cast against one or two tough monsters in pursuit of retreating PCs. (For larger groups of enemies, this spell is not so useful; after one creature has tripped, the others gain a +4 bonus to saving throws against the spell.) *Warp wood* has some surprisingly useful applications — when cast on door frames, it can provide a simple equivalent to *wizard lock* (most magic-users at a similar level of experience do not have *knock* yet). *Fire trap* adds another defensive possibility to the druids repertoire. *Reflecting pool* is just about the only scrying spell available to spell-casters at this level (ESP is not yet available to magic-users). The description for *reflecting pool*, however, is slightly ambiguous; to cast this spell, the druid needs a "pool of normal water in a natural setting." Many DMs might assume that this implies an outdoor setting, although pools of normal water in natural caverns should be suitable for casting the spell. There are plenty of possibilities available at the 2nd level, and there are still two exceptionally useful spells left to consider.

Slow poison can be acquired by the druid ahead of the cleric, and with an extra bonus: The druid has a 5% chance per level of experience of knowing an antidote if the poison is derived from a plant. Lastly, *charm person or mammal* requires no commendation to anyone who has ever played a magic-user with the *charm person* spell — especially when one realizes that the druidic version is more powerful. The range of creatures affected is greater, the druid will surely have *speak with animals* so that a *charmed* animal can be conversed with — and, of course the druid has high charisma, which will also be to his advantage.

The 2nd-level druid is a strong character indeed, but at the 3rd level, his combat strength (relative to other character classes) becomes quite remarkable. As the cleric and magic-user rejoice in gaining second-level spells, the druid gains a third-level spell and a bonus first-level spell to boot. A druid with a 17 or better wisdom has 11 spells as a 3rd-level character, compared to seven for the cleric and a miserable three for the magic-user.

Just as *detect poison* was so valuable at 1st level and *slow poison* at 2nd level, the druid now gains a highly valued spell: *neutralize poison*. He needs a mere 4,001 experience points to gain the use of this

spell, whereas the cleric needs 55,001! Given the value of this spell, this fact alone should convince any party to include a druid in their next adventure. *Cure disease* is likewise gained well ahead of the cleric.

Of the other third-level spells, *pyrotechnics* may be of value to a PC party, although it may be better for a magic-user to memorize this as a second-level spell if the party thinks it's worth having. *Snare* is also helpful; the spell has a long duration, there is no saving throw, the *snare* is virtually undetectable without magical aid, and anything much weaker than a storm giant will be completely disabled by the trap. For a party under pressure and in need of a place to hide, only the *wizard lock* spell is as useful. *Hold animal* has obvious value in "wild" dungeon settings, and *protection from fire* shouldn't be forgotten; only a grossly sadistic DM would throw a *fireball* or a red dragon at a 3rd-level party, but natural fires are another matter. Finally, like *warp wood*, *stone shape* is an underrated spell, especially when it is used to create portals and escape routes.

The 3rd level is the perfect time to train

a pet with the combination of *animal friendship* and *speak with animals*. Up to 6 HD of pets are now trainable, including two species of animal of particular use in a fantasy setting: bears and great cats. Both have the advantages of multiple attacks and extra damage from additional attacks (hugs and hind-claw rakes) if certain initial hits are successful. Thus, their fighting prowess can be considerable. A 3rd-level fighter with 17 strength (ignoring weapon specialization and weapon-versus-variable AC adjustments) hits an opponent of AC 5 in melee on a 1d20 roll of 12 or better; a lion needs 10 or better. Considering hit chances and average damage per round, the fighter will inflict an average of 3 hp damage per round on such an opponent, whereas the lion will average 8.2 hp damage. (In this case, I have made a +1 "to hit" adjustment for weapon type because I'm taking a specific weapon for this example: the bastard sword. The example also assumes a S/M-size opponent.) Again, although the lion has a worse AC than the fighter, it averages more hit points than the average 3rd-level fighter with a constitution score of 16 or less, and it is strong enough to hold its own as the party in-

creases in experience levels. Similar logic holds for bears (some DMs may even rule that bears can be trained to carry packs of moderate weight).

Although no druid will knowingly risk the life of an animal charge at the first hint of danger, there are two uses for such a creature which are fully compatible with the druids beliefs. First, as the druids personal bodyguard, the animal can be trained with *animal friendship* to protect the druid from any personal attack. This takes pressure off the party, as party leaders do not have to detail a fighting PC to keep an eye on the relatively vulnerable druid. Second, the role the animal plays best is that of *auxiliary*. Though not directly involved in melee, the lion can be dispatched to help finish the job the fighter has begun. This allows the fighter to use his combat skills elsewhere, without exposing the animal to unnecessary risk.

Readers may discover through play just how powerful the bears and great cats can be in melee. For example, in one campaign I play in, a druid PC was attacked by a hill giant. The cleric of the party had time to get in a *prayer* spell and the lion killed the 33-hp giant in a single melee round! (All three hits were successful: 2d4 + 1d10 + (2d6 +2) + 5 (for the *prayer*) is a lot of damage.) The party's ranger had been licking his lips at the prospect of the giant, but had to pull back during combat. To reinforce other points made, this PC is now 8th level (as compared to an average of 7th for the rest of the party), illustrating how quickly druids progress in experience levels. The lion — still a valued party member — has never yet been in serious danger as a result of melee. Of course, the druid now has an *animal growth* spell as part of his repertoire. What a great cat can do when *this* spell is going for him, I promise you will not believe. (A lion affected by this spell inflicts an average of 28.32 hp damage to an AC 5 opponent per melee round, and hits on a 1d20 roll of only 5 or better.)

It is at the 6th level of experience that druids gain a fourth-level spell, at about one-third the experience point total clerics or magic-users need for a fourth-level spell. *Dispel magic* (although this is available to clerics and magic-users as a third-level spell) will surely have a place in any adventure at this experience level where magic-using opponents are frequently encountered. *Protection from lightning* is highly specialized, but nevertheless useful with lightning-using magic-users or blue dragons about. *Produce fire* is an often-neglected spell because it does little damage in itself; but, in conjunction with oil as a missile weapon, it is highly effective and can set fire to bedding, straw, and clothing. *Control temperature, 10' radius* can

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be useful in specialized campaigns (as in alleviating problems with ice toads). By and large, however, the fourth-level druidic spells are mostly specialized for outdoors settings and are not as valuable in dungeons. Then again, they are gained much more rapidly than other character classes gain fourth-level spells.

When the clerics do get around to getting fourth-level spells (at the 7th level of experience), the druid (a 9th-level character by now) has gained fifth-level spell use. Some of these spells are amazingly powerful. *Wall of fire* is significantly more powerful than the magic-user's equivalent, providing more damage, greater area of effect, and more versatility. *Sticks to snakes* has similarly good offensive potential. As for *transmute rock to mud*, is anything as much fun as using this spell to bring down entire dungeon ceilings or even castle walls? (The area affected by this spell is quite vast.) *Insect plague* is a strong offensive spell, too; anything caught within the cloud is in great peril if there are no intelligent friends on hand to help.

When the druid reaches the 11th level of experience, he can use sixth-level spells. Keep in mind that with equal experience points, clerics are only 8th level and magic-users are only 9th. While the cleric is still fondly dreaming of having *flame strike*, the druid can maintain concentration on a summoned elemental without fear that it may turn upon him. And if a 16 HD elemental isn't enough, there is a 15% chance that something *really* vicious (for example, a bunch of salamanders, an efreet, or a 21-24 HD elemental) will appear to serve the druid. The spell *fire seeds* gives the druid further offensive potential. Although *feeblemind* may be very specialized, vulnerable encounters are still surely involved in play at this level (and, if affected, are completely disabled). *Wall of thorns* has both offensive and major defensive capabilities.

At the very next experience level (12th) the druid may use seventh-level spells. For this, he needs only 300,001 experience points as compared to 2,000,001 for the cleric and 1,500,001 for the magic-user! Indeed, both magic-users and clerics need well over twice as many experience points to gain sixth-level spells as the druid needs for seventh-level spells! However, the druid does not gain the 12th level of experience automatically — he must find and combat an established 12th-level druid to gain his place as a full Druid. At this time, it may be right to retire what is by now a very powerful character — one who has outdistanced the PCs he began adventuring with at 1st level.

Looking through the druidic spell armory, the power and effectiveness of the

druid, and his value as a healer, curer, and detector of traps, poisons, and the like, are fully illustrated. How can any PC party afford to be without one? (A side note to DMs: Never, Never, *Never* allow two druids in a PC party. A DM I know once made this mistake, and now the senior (9th-level) druid and his young (5th-level) sidekick, along with their retinue — more like an army — of ferocious pets, decimate everything in sight. How can a DM possibly handle a party with five *heat metal* spells a day?)

The druid's alignment

Now that you've been convinced of the druids potential, you're ready to roll up such a character for your next adventure. Still, there is a nagging question in the back of your mind: Why are you joining that group of good and neutral PCs who have pledged themselves to fighting evil?

The *Players Handbook* states that druids view "good and evil, law and chaos, as balancing forces of nature which are necessary for the continuation of all things." Thus, if druids really do believe this, some serious problems are bound to

arise. Still, it is possible to look at the druids beliefs in a different manner. Surely, what may be of supreme importance to the druid is the balance he sees in the natural world (as exemplified by the progression of the seasons). While this is in some ways a balance of law and chaos (as exemplified by growth and stagnation, birth and death), this cycling is itself the supreme and natural law to which all living things are eventually subjected. Likewise, nature is neither good nor evil: it simply is. Rather than believing in a balance of law and chaos, the druid may instead believe in a supreme law which underlies everything, making values of good and evil irrelevant. Nature is: there are no moral issues involved. Thus, the druid would not necessarily strive to balance good and evil; rather, he would simply be indifferent to them. And since the balance will ultimately be maintained by nature, the druid may decide to adventure with the good against evil. It is possible that the druid may come to see good-aligned people acting against his beloved forests out of necessity (wood for heat in cold weather, the need for farmland, etc.), realizing that they act out of ignorance

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and not out of malice (since only evil creatures burn and destroy out of a desire for wanton destruction). Thus, the druid may come to understand that the good can be educated and persuaded, and that the evil must be fought and vanquished. Consequently, the druid could join a party of good characters with the hope of persuading them to understand and at least respect the integrity of the natural world (he would certainly have the charisma to affect this), while knowing that such appeals would fall upon deaf ears with evil creatures. For these creatures, only death will stop their depredations of nature.

These views are, of course, personal views of what the druids alignment and philosophy are. Even so, this view makes the integration of the druid into a good-aligned PC party both feasible and workable. Under special adventure conditions (with evil creatures destroying woodlands), the druid will certainly work with good PCs, but if the druid is desired as part of a full campaign, then his beliefs must be compatible with the overall beliefs and affiliations such a PC group has. As noted, this compatibility is not impossible.

Outside the dungeon

The druid is highly effective in any wilderness setting — players surely realize this already. But, in town adventures, the druid has major advantage: his charisma. Players often do not make the most of this attribute — they are too busy knocking off AC points for that good dexterity score or adding up strength-related hit and damage bonuses. But charisma should be the lifeblood of any campaign, save for the most abject hack-and-slay enterprises. Charisma effects a character's ability to hire mercenaries, employ sages, trade magic items with the owner of a magic shop, and bribe difficult local officials. On this premise alone, a character with high charisma is a great asset. Surely most players know that preparation is the key to the successful completion of adventures.

Likewise, most good players know that when dealing with "irritant" encounters of an incidental nature, negotiation is far better than pointless combat, which merely slows the party down and uses spells needlessly. The druids charisma is once again called upon, and, of course, the druid has considerably linguistic abilities to boot. Consequently, players should make the most of what so many gamers feel is a peripheral attribute.

As if this isn't enough, the druid has further benefits, including bonuses against fire and lightning attacks, the ability to *polymorph* gained at 7th level (at this level, the druid virtually heals himself of

all damage taken by changing shape; furthermore, the spying opportunities are most useful: Who would have thought that placid cow munching on grass was eavesdropping on the evil cleric hiring an assassin?), powers of identification (which allow him to tell which plants are edible, where traps are in a dungeon, and so forth), and several other useful abilities. If this doesn't

persuade you to role-play a druid, then I'm afraid you're destined to run a fighter. Just be grateful when the druid in your party uses *faerie fire* on that potentially dangerous orc (the one that could have killed your fighter with one blow) or identifies the pit into which your character nearly fell. Be glad there are druids about — and people who are willing to play them. Ω

Table 1
Spell-Caster Comparisons (Levels and Experience Points)

Experience level	Cleric	Druid	Magic-User	Illusionist
1	0	0	0	0
2	1,501	2,001	2,501	2,251
3	3,001	4,001	5,001	4,501
4	6,001	7,501	10,001	9,001
5	13,001	12,501	22,501	18,001
6	27,501	20,001	40,001	35,001
7	55,001	35,001	60,001	60,001
8	110,001	60,001	90,001	95,001
9	225,001	90,001	135,001	145,001
10	450,001	125,001	250,001	220,001
11	675,001	200,001	375,001	440,001
12	900,001	300,001	750,001	660,001

Table 2
Spell-Caster Comparisons (Levels and Spell Power)

Experience level	Cleric	Druid	Magic-User	Illusionist
1	3	4	1	1
2	4	10	2	2
3	10	16/19*	4	4
4	13	20/23*	7	7
5	18/21*	22/25*	11	11
6	21/24*	26/29/33**	14	13
7	25/28/32**	31/34/38**	20	15
8	32/35/39**	35/38/42**	27	19
9	40/43/47**	40/43/47**	32	27
10	49/52/56**	49/52/56**	39	34
11	59/62/66**	58/61/65**	51	43
12	71/74/78**	83/86/90**	66	54

Spell power is the number of spells a character can memorize expressed as the sum of spells per level multiplied by that level. Thus, a 3rd-level magic-user, who can memorize two first-level spells and one second-level spell, has a spell power of 4 ((1x 2) + 2). For clerics and druids, a wisdom score exceeding 15 has been assumed.

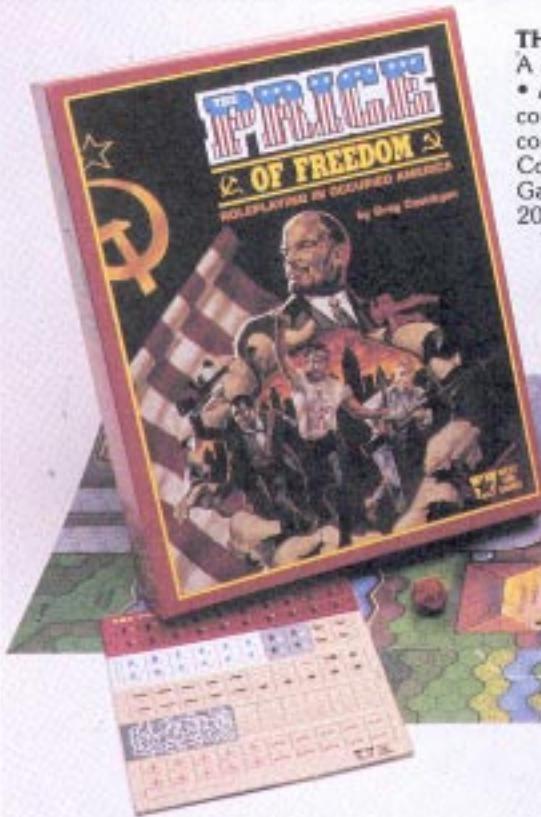
* The value given after the slash is correct for characters of 17 or 18 wisdom only.

** The value given after the first slash is correct for characters of 17 wisdom; the value given after the second slash is correct for characters of 18 wisdom.

Table 3
Spell-Caster Comparisons (Experience Points for Spell Levels)

XP needed	Cleric	Druid	Magic-User	Illusionist
Second-level spell	3,001	2,001	5,001	4,501
Third-level spell	13,001	4,001	22,501	18,001
Fourth-level spell	55,001	20,001	60,001	95,001
Fifth-level spell	225,001	90,001	135,001	220,001
Sixth-level spell	675,001	200,001	750,001	660,001
Seventh-level spell	2,000,001	300,001	1,500,001	1,100,001

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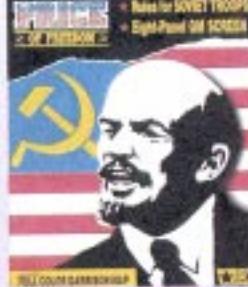
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"Is There a Doctor In the Forest?"

The druid as healer and protector

by John Warren

[This article explores an unofficial campaign variant that gives druidic characters certain nonmagical medical abilities. While some of the information is at odds with the "official" AD&D® game rules, the article is an interesting and thought-provoking variation, and is presented in that light. Referees might allow PC druids to use these medical talents in their campaigns. — Editor]

A long-neglected aspect of the AD&D game's druid character class is the ability of its members to function as nonmagical healers for the party. Because of their special affinity for living things, druids could have developed a simple technology — a holistic approach to medicine — to augment their magical powers.

Although Tacitus and other Roman writers claimed that there were both male and female druids, recent research tends to indicate that the druids had male priests, while the priestesses were members of an older religion which had built Stonehenge and Carnac in times past. The AD&D game tends to follow the Roman approach; for all practical purposes, there is little difference between the older religion's priests and the druids. As a result, this article follows the AD&D game's style.

Before venturing out into the world, 1st-level druids undergo a period of training in the groves and forests of the druidic priesthood. Unlike magic-users, they need not be extensively trained in spells and incantations, since their spells come from a divine source and are given as a result of

inherent devotion rather than acquired through learning and memorization.

Beyond the basic combat instruction required of all adventurers, novice druids learn the secret druid language and how to use the tools given by nature to heal. Most of the techniques are fairly simple and therefore unaffected by advancement through levels, but some skills improve with practice.

Note that in gathering the requisite roots and herbs, druids take extreme care that the cutting does not do permanent damage to plants from which the materials are taken, and rarely will druids uproot an entire plant. Another point to keep in mind is that any compound stored in a glass vial is vulnerable to breaking during melee. The DM should consult the saving-throw matrix for nonmagical items where appropriate. If the vial is broken, the results can range from loss of the substance to the unintentional activation of its side effects.

Medicinal compounds

Balm for burns

This unguent for treating minor burns is made from cream and honey. It restores 1 hp when up to 3 hp damage have been taken from either natural or magical fire. If a character takes more than 3 hp damage from fire or heat, it is treated as a surgical problem (see below), with the exception that a druid can restore only 20% of the hit points lost through burns through surgery. This balm takes one hour to make.

Banisher of fear

This compound of mushrooms and plant sap takes one day to make and has the

power to neutralize fear-based attacks resulting from spells like *cause fear* or from seeing a fearsome sight (such as a lich). A single dose lasts 3-18 turns. However, the user does not attack as a berserker, since the absence of fear removes the competitive edge (intelligence is not affected, however). A character under the influence of this compound will not initiate hostilities, but will fight normally when attacked or when directed to do so by other members of the party.

There is one chance in ten that a normal dose will cause the user to immediately go to sleep and stay that way until the effects wear off. Stimulants like an *odor of wakefulness* (see below) work temporarily to awaken a character under these effects, but the character returns to sleep during the next turn.

Table 1
Probability of an Antidote Working or Being Harmful

Druid's Compounded level	Compounded in town	Compounded in dungeon
1	70%/30%	50%/50%
2	85%/15%	65%/30%
3	90%/10%	75%/25%
4	95%/10%	80%/20%
5	99%/5%	85%/15%
6	99%/0%	90%/10%
7	99%/0%	95%/10%

The first figure gives the probability that an antidote will work. The second gives the probability if it fails to work that it will be harmful (requiring a save vs. poison at +2 to avoid death). After the druid reaches 7th level, no further improvement is possible.

Defense against poisons and venoms

Druids use the principle of countervailing similarity to deal with monster and animal venoms. This holds that a properly treated poison makes the best antidote. Of course, the druid must have a sample of the poison to create the antidote. There are two ways to do this – one of which is dangerous and expensive, the other being dangerous and cheap. The first way is for the druid to purchase a sample of poison in town (there are always a bunch of heroes around who would sell their wyvern-tail trophies for the price of a night's carousing). The local apothecary might have a supply of poisons around for his customers as well. However, assassins' guilds often hold sway over poison dispensation, and purchasing poison often attracts the attention of the guild (not to mention the attention of common folk and paladins).

The prices of animal venoms increase with the rarity of such animals and the hazards of the venom collection. A group of hirelings could be convinced to scour the town for centipedes for a few gold pieces. However, an adventurer who had obtained the head of a medusa would need considerably more inducement before he or she would allow a woodsy type to go mucking about with the trophy.

The other method of obtaining poison is to go out and get the poison firsthand. This has a serious drawback: A careless druid could have the opportunity to study the effects of the poison close up — *much* too close up.

A poison antidote produced in town or out in the druids grove is likely to be more effective than one whipped up in a drafty dungeon. Table 1 gives the probability of success in either locale for a druid of a given level. It also gives the chance that rather than working as expected, the antidote makes things worse.

An antidote can be used in two ways. A character can down a shot of the stuff up to one day prior to the anticipated poisoning, or it can be taken just after the poisoning. The first method has a major drawback in that different antidotes are often mutually incompatible. If one has taken an antivenom for giant scorpion poison, it would be extremely dangerous to simultaneously take another for the poison of wasps. To determine if there is a negative effect in mixing antidotes, the player throws a 1d6. If the number thrown is equal to or less than the number of antidotes taken, a 1d20 is thrown to determine the number of hit points of damage taken. If there is any damage taken, the antidotes' beneficial effects are neutralized as well.

Waiting until one has been poisoned before taking an antidote isn't such a hot

idea either, as the druid can't administer the compound until after the melee (and characters can die in the meantime). However, this is the safest way to avoid the multiple antidote problem. Once an antidote has been taken, later exposures to the same poison are automatically neutralized until the effect of the antidote wears off at the end of the day. Compounding times for antidotes and antivenoms are up to the DM and may vary widely in terms of time, cost, and effectiveness.

Itching powder

This compound, made from flower pollen, causes any creature coming in contact with it to itch violently. Creatures with better than low intelligence will be annoyed but otherwise unaffected. Creatures of low intelligence fight poorly as a result (-2 to hit on attacks and +2 on AC to a maximum of AC 10) and will attempt to leave the area whenever possible. Less intelligent creatures lose all interest in activities other than scratching. For example, a lurker above would release its prey and roll about wildly, but an orc would attempt to combine fighting and scratching until it had a chance to run. Wine removes the powder, while water only makes its effects more pronounced (-3 to hit and +3 on AC). It takes one day to make one dose of this powder, and it may be dispersed like any magical dust (see the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 143).

Mask of clear air

Druids may gather peach pits and char them to make a charcoal-like substance, which is then crushed and placed into loosely woven, flaxen bags large enough to cover the nose and mouth. The creation of a mask takes two hours.

When faced with gas or smoke, characters can cover their faces with these masks to add +4 to their saving throw against any ill effects. Like all nonmagical devices, the bag is ineffective against magical gas attacks. Straps are sometimes attached to hold the bags over a character's face for an extended period of time; however, while the bag is in place, the character attacks with a -1 to hit. The powder remains effective for 7-12 turns.

Odor of sleep

Anyone breathing the fumes of this primitive ether will become drowsy, insensitive to pain, slightly dizzy, and, for a period of three turns, will attack at -1 to hit. Both the liquid and gas are explosive; if used in a confined area where there is an open flame, there is one chance in 20 per turn of an explosion that does 3-6 hp damage to anyone within 20'. This quality should be kept in mind in the event of

accidental breakage of the vial. The danger can be avoided by relying on magical luminescence such as *continual light* or *faerie fire*; however, *produce fire*, *produce flame*, or similar spells where a real flame is created causes an immediate explosion.

Recovery from the full effects of the fumes takes three turns. During recovery, the character attacks at -3 to hit and defends with a +1 to AC (not exceeding AC 10). It takes one day to make one vial of this substance.

Odor of wakefulness

Druids use alchemical techniques to break down coal to create ammonia, which is useful when a member of the party has been rendered unconscious by a *sleep* spell. Holding an open bottle of ammonia under the victim's nose results in an immediate return to consciousness if the period of unconsciousness (determined by the DM's secret throw) would have been less than 10 rounds. If the victim would have been unconscious longer than that, then a return to consciousness is 50% likely to occur. Treatment can be repeated once a round if it is initially unsuccessful.

A broken vial renders everyone within 20' partially helpless if they fail to save against breath weapons, giving a -2 on "to hit" rolls and negating dexterity bonuses to AC. Creatures of low intelligence or less immediately flee. A *mask of clear air* (see above) is not effective against this odor. Since an overdose can be dangerous (although unlikely in any but the closest surroundings), a druid is most unlikely to permit the *odor of wakefulness* to be used as a weapon. Making a vial of *odor of wakefulness* takes one day,

Parasite repellent

Made from animal fats, herbs, and swamp gas in one day's time, this compound causes all blood-drinking parasites to avoid the wearer. If desperate enough to attack the user, these parasites do so at -5 to hit. The repellent is slightly soluble in water, so it can be used to discourage leeches and lampreys. On land, an application lasts 20 turns; in water it has to be readministered after 6 turns.

Due to its odor, this repellent is not a popular item. Anyone using it loses two points of charisma until it wears off (to a minimum score of 3). The repellent can be removed by washing with at least two skins of wine.

Wine as a medicinal tool

Druids are sometimes heavily laden with wine because of its many useful properties (beyond the obvious ones, of course). Wine can be used as a kind of rough-and-ready pain killer (see below: Chirurgery), or, while not as effective as a

banisher of fear (above), it can add +4 to a fear-caused saving roll if the subject is severely intoxicated (add +1 to the saving throw if the character in question is only mildly intoxicated).

A quick rubdown in wine defeats attacks that depend on adhesive qualities (for example, attacks initiated by the giant sundew and the mimic). This effect wears off in three turns. Wine has a 50% chance of killing plant spores that have reached the skin but have not yet penetrated it. Treatment must begin within one turn of the contamination. Spores like those of yellow mold that seek the throat and lungs cannot be so treated.

Chirurgery

Druids are also trained to act as chirurgeons (surgeons). While a dungeon or battlefield is not an ideal operating theater, this problem is counteracted to an extent by the greater inherent survivability shown by characters. Nonetheless, the best that can be expected is a sort of rough-and-ready, chop-and-sew procedure.

A druid purchases most of his or her scalpels and tools from the local weapons maker. Since these require more careful work than a simple dagger, prices are higher.

A 1st-level druid may start out with the basic kit, but, as he or she advances, a more advanced kit is expected as a matter of course. The basic kit is relatively small and would encumber the character slightly more than a dagger, whereas the advanced kit would be the size of a small box (12" x 6" x 6"). Both can be carried in a pack or pouch since speed isn't a factor in their use. Bandages are linen soaked in alcohol and wrapped in dried animal bladders.

Druids prefer to make their own surgical thread. Closely wrapped linen thread that has been carefully coated with beeswax can be used, but silk is a better material. However, obtaining it presents druids with a serious dilemma.

When a cocoon is unwound to provide

silk, the larva is killed. If the gatherer waits until the larva has completed its metamorphosis, the cocoon is destroyed. To mitigate this problem, the druid who wishes to use silk must locate five worms before they make their cocoons. The five must be carefully fed and protected until the cocoons are complete. It is then permissible to sacrifice one to obtain silk. The other cocoons must then be protected until the butterflies emerge. This time span may necessitate the player sitting out a few adventures. Since one cocoon yields 2,000-3,000' of thread, a druid needs to kill only one or two larvae in a lifetime.

Even the simplest medical treatment takes time. The more complex the procedure, the longer the process takes. Naturally, nothing can be done until the melee is concluded.

A 1st-level druid can repair damage equal to one-third the damage sustained in a given melee. This healing is at a rate of 2 hp per turn. The amount of damage that can be repaired, if an advanced kit is used, increases by 1 hp per level until the druid reaches 4th level. After this point, no further improvement is possible. Speed of treatment doubles successively at the 3rd and 5th levels; beyond that no further improvement is possible. The treatment of injuries due to burns improves at a roughly similar rate (see Table 4).

For example, a character has 30 hp, but takes 16 hp damage. A 1st-level druid can restore up to 5 hp if he works for five turns. A 4th-level druid would be able to restore 8 hp in four turns. A 10th-level druid could restore 8 hp in two turns.

If the character has been reduced below one-half of his normal hit points, some form of anesthesia must be used in the healing process. The anesthesia is usually an alcoholic spirit, although some druids may have compounded a crude ether to use instead (see *odor of sleep* above). If ether is used, there is no direct aftereffect except as noted. If spirits are used, the DM should apply the "Great" column of the Intoxication Table in the DMG (page 82) when determining the alcohol's effects.

If no anesthesia is available, the treatment can continue, but two or more members of the party (cumulative strength must equal three times the injured character's strength) must hold the patient down. No one taking part in the treatment may roll for surprise. Because of the noise, the probability of encountering a wandering monster is doubled.

If the injured character participates in combat later, there is a high probability of reopening his wounds. As a result, the character loses one additional hit point for each two hit points of damage sustained in the new combat. The use of silk thread reduces this to one additional hit point for every four new hit points of damage. Obviously, the extra damage taken cannot be greater than the amount that was repaired. Treated wounds heal at twice the normal speed of 1 hp per day, if the character rests.

This article has just skimmed the surface of druidic medicine. While druids can be valuable in repairing direct physical injury, a DM who chooses to include disease and mental illness will provide a rich field for them to practice their nonmagical skills. Druids are directed to Appendix J: Herbs, Spices and Medicinal Vegetables in the DMG (page 220) for other possible curative substances.

Table 3
Encumbrance of Antidotes

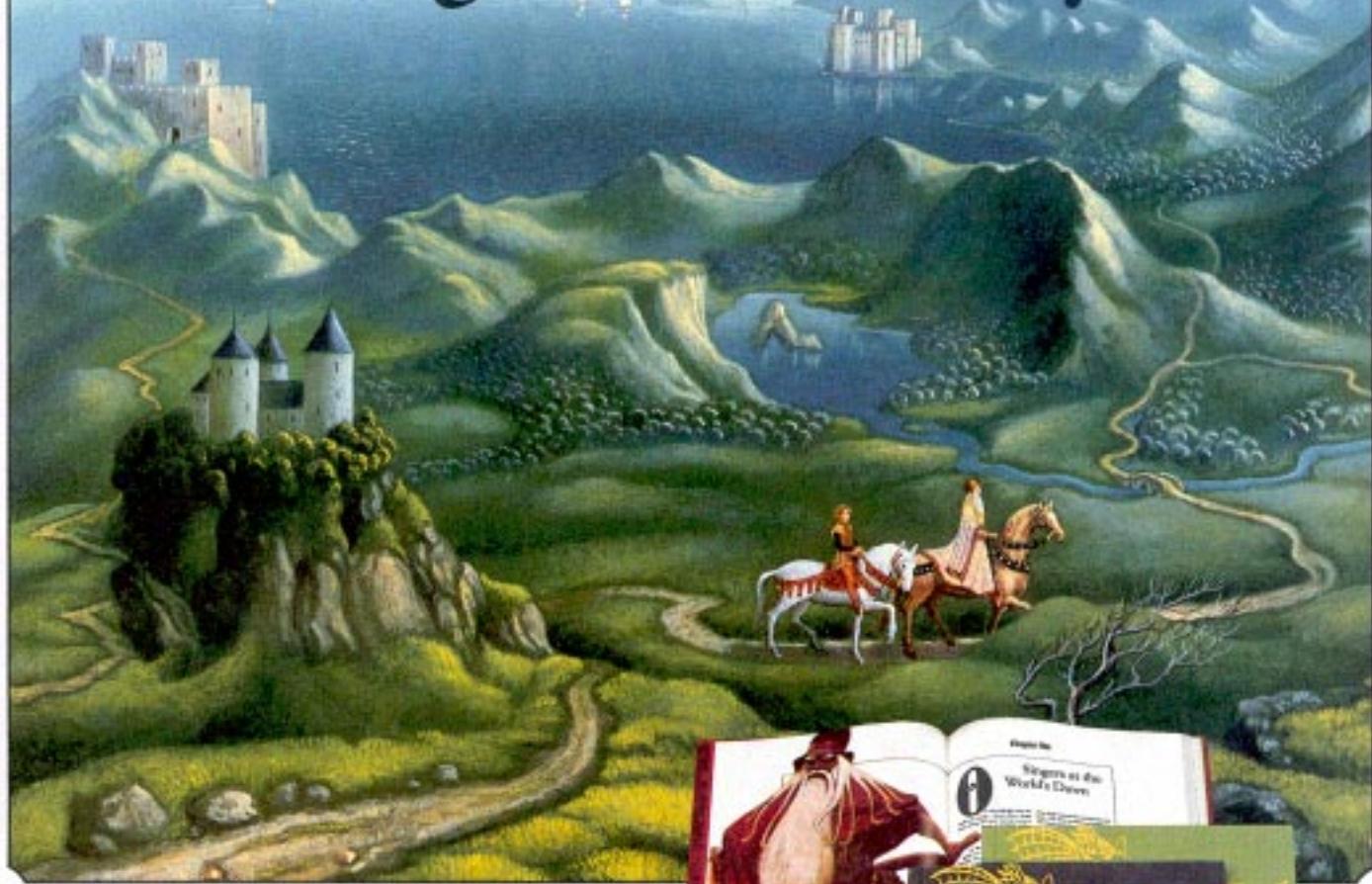
Item	Encumbrance in gp (per treatment)
Antidote (any)	20
Balm for burns	50
Banisher of fears	20
Chirurgeon's kit unused	
Basic	20
Advanced	50
Itching powder	25
Mask of clear air (each)	100
Odors of sleep/wakefulness	50
Parasite repellent	70
Wineskin	50

Table 4
Chirurgical Healing

Druid's level	Maximum amount of lost hp that can be healed	HP healed by druid per turn
1	1/3 of total lost	2
2	1/3 of total lost +1 hp	2
3	1/3 of total lost +2 hp	4
4	1/3 of total lost +3 hp	4
5	1/3 of total lost +3 hp	8
6	1/3 of total lost +3 hp	9

Note: If the injury is a burn, replace the "1/3" with a "1/4". No improvement in ability is available beyond the druids 6th level.

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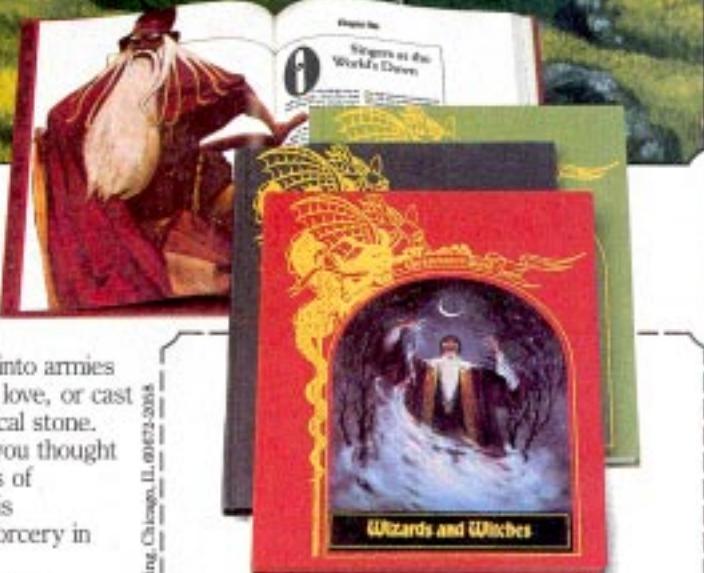
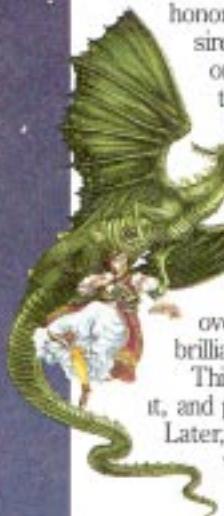
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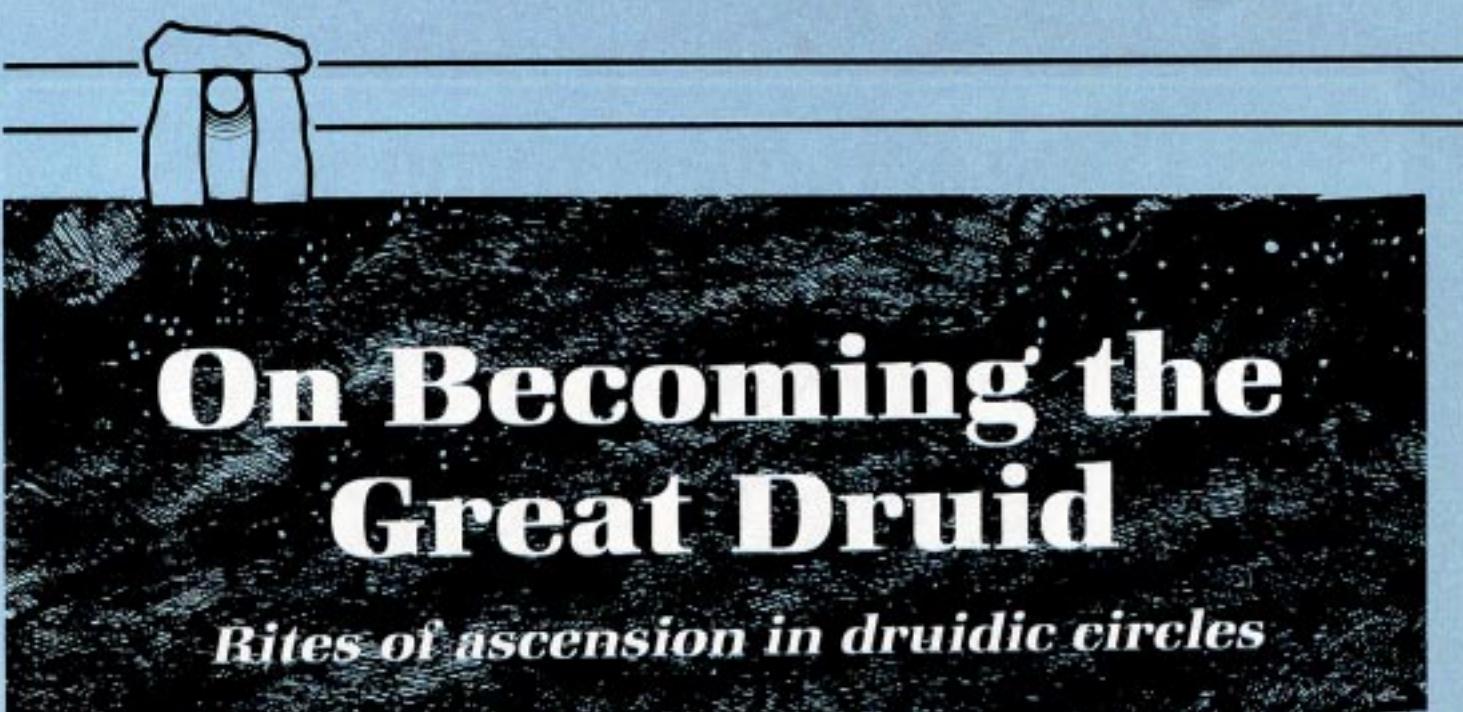
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On Becoming the Great Druid

Rites of ascension in druidic circles



by William Volkart and Robin Jenkins

From the writings of Valnomen, Grand Sage of Rithia:

... When we had at last arrived at the appointed place, twilight was fast upon us. Assembled on a small plain within an immense circle of stones was a most unusual host. Huge treants ringed the outer perimeter of stone, swaying to and fro as they murmured to one another. Elven princes clad in colorful armor wandered from stone to stone, looking for an unobstructed vantage point. Farther from the circle, the woodland creatures gathered in the shadows, their curiosity livened by the odd group collecting at the standing stones.

As darkness closed about the meadow, a handful of plainly cloaked men and women — druid Initiates, I later discovered — entered the circle of stones and began lighting braziers of oil within the arena. In the distance, the low, monotonous beat of drums could be heard. Presently, there came a colorful procession appearing from the forest at the far end of the open meadow. Carried aloft at the head of the procession was a large, golden scythe resting upon a bed of freshly cut mistletoe. The nine Initiates of the Great Druid followed closely; their bright red cloaks were heavily adorned with sprigs of mistletoe, golden leaves, and silver branches (all of which had been bestowed upon their raiments as honors from the Great Druid himself). Carried in each Initiate's hand was a small, wooden drum, which the druids beat at regular intervals. As they approached the circle slowly, their solemn expressions remained unchanged.

After the Initiates, following at a distance of some twenty paces, was the Great Druid. His wrinkled, aged face mapped his years of experience, giving the impression that he had fought this battle many times before. His large frame was wrapped in a yellow cloak, the folds of which were adorned simply with an occasional sprig of holly or an oak leaf. Upon his silver-haired head rested a shimmering crown of mistletoe. At his right and left, pacing equal to his every step, were two sleek-coated panthers. Their black fur glistened in the moonlight, and their yellow eyes glimmered as they approached the circle of stones. Behind the Great Druid, at a respectable distance, followed the rest of the entourage of witnesses: the Druids, Archdruids, and other high-level Initiates who had been invited to view the ceremonial combat of ascension.

Upon reaching the gate to the circle of

stones, the nine Initiates rounded the interior in a clockwise direction, each taking their station before one of the cold, gray monoliths. The drumbeats stopped as the Great Druid reached the circle. Turning, he surveyed the crowd that had gathered in the moonlit meadow. After a long, unbroken silence, the Great Druid spoke.

"Let he who would challenge me come forth and announce himself," he said, his powerful voice booming in the night air. Anticipation blanketed the crowd of witnesses as they looked curiously from person to person. Not a word was spoken in the breathless silence of the shadows. A twinge of impatience gnawed at my heart. Where was Maelgwn, I thought. Anxiously, I scanned the crowd, hoping to spot the familiar face among the sea of anonymity.

From the edge of the shadows stepped a young man clad in a gray cloak. "I have come for the challenge," he said, walking toward the circle of stones. "I am Maelgwn, Archdruid of Dun Dagel, my liege." A faint rustle of voices scattered over the crowd like windblown leaves. The Great Druid raised his hands in a plea for utter silence. When the stillness of the night returned, he lowered his hands directly before him, palms up. "Come, Maelgwn. Let us enter the circle together." The briefest hint of a smile flashed across the face of the elder druid; as suddenly, it was gone. Slowly, Maelgwn approached the gate and both men entered the circle of stones.

At opposite sides of the circle, the two men were prepared for the ritual. Two Initiates attended each druid, taking their robes and anointing them with a sprinkle of liquid as they stood ungarbed in the cool midsummer air. From the periphery of stone stepped a tall, forboding figure of a man. His green cloak was gathered about the shoulder with a golden sprig of mistletoe. Around his waist hung an ornate sash. The green cloak came to a hood at his neck, immersing his face in a well of shadows. From the darkened folds, the merest hint of gold glinted — an ornate mask which preserved the attendant's anonymity. Stepping to the middle of the circle, the tall figure raised his hand in an arcane gesture. "From Connemara I come, as attendant to these ceremonies. Ciaran, Grand Druid of Caerleon, sends his tidings and bestows his blessing on these most honorable ceremonies." As the attendant lowered his hand, an initiate stepped from the stones; kneeling, he presented the golden scythe, averting his eyes as the attendant drew the weapon from his hands and raised it to the sky.

"By the sun and the moon, the trees of the forest, and the stars of the heavens, I call upon the forces of Nature to act witness to these sacred rites and to bestow

upon them their blessing most holy and most sublime." The golden scythe gleamed in the moonlight as the attendant held it aloft; its golden image reflecting moonlight into the throng of witnesses. Bringing the scythe to chest-level, the attendant nodded to both combatants, who moved forward to the center of the arena at the gesture. "Bade of Mara, Maelgwn of Dun Dagel, you are both aware of the magnitude of these affairs, and of the consequences that will occur thereby?" Both druids spoke their affirmation. The attendant paused and spoke again. "You are both familiar with the rite of ascension, and understand fully the rules?" Both men again spoke their affirmation. "If either man sees impediments to these rites, let him state these obstacles now." The attendant paused. Receiving no word from either, he continued. "Within the circle of Nature, all things are as one. Within this circle, two separate souls are united as one." Grasping each druid's hand, the attendant quickly drew the golden scythe across each palm, drawing a small trickle of blood from each. Replacing the scythe on its bed of mistletoe, the attendant grasped the druids' hands and rubbed the two together, mingling the blood of both men in a clasping of palms. "By the power of Nature, let the stronger soul prove its force and claim its rightful dominion." With a sharp clap of his hands, the attendant stepped quickly from the center of the arena, and the two druids returned to their opposing stations. Slowly, the circle of Initiates began beating a low rhythm on their ceremonial drums. The attendants and Initiates cleared the circle of stones, leaving the two combatants to face each other alone.

The cool night air blew through the meadow, carrying with it the disparate odors of burning oil and freshly cut mistletoe. Above the rim of monoliths, the full moon cast its yellow gaze. Eerie, trembling shadows fell across the darkened meadow as the brazier flames flickered playfully within the circle of standing stones. Suddenly, the smothering silence was broken by the resounding clangor of a metal gong. Within an instant, the two combatants began their transformations, changing from men to swirling mists, and then again to coalescing forms. Slowly, the coalescing forms became distinct entities, Bade assuming the form of an albino panther, and Maelgwn adopting the form of a large, black bear. With a roar and a snarl, the two creatures crashed together in a whirlwind of slashing paws and biting teeth.

Gaining experience points and advancing in levels is often a long and difficult process in the AD&D® game. In some in-

stances, it may take as long as three years playing time for a player character to climb above the 10th level. For druids, advancement is sometimes impeded by factors other than the simple acquisition of hundreds of thousands of experience points. In the case of the druid, acquiring experience points necessary for reaching the 12th level is not a guarantee of achieving the 12th level. The *Players Handbook* (p. 21) states that "At the upper levels there are only a limited number of characters. At 12th level (Druid) there can be but nine of these nature priests." At such a time when a druid gains experience points sufficient to advance him to the 12th level (Druid), the powers corresponding to that level are gained only "1. If there are currently fewer than nine other characters of Druid level, or 2. The player character bests one of the nine Druid level characters in spell or hand-to-hand combat." Furthermore, the disparity between attaining 12th level (which other classes take for granted) through victory in combat and the penalty for failure therein is indeed great: "If the player character succeeds, he or she becomes a Druid, with full powers, and the former Druid (assuming case 2, above) becomes an Initiate of the 9th Circle. If the player character loses, he or she remains at lower level and actually has few experience points in the bargain." As if this isn't enough, "This process is repeated with respect to a Druid becoming an Archdruid and for an Archdruid becoming the Great Druid."

Although these high level restrictions for druids may seem a bit unfair at first, quite the opposite is true. Although most character classes attain high levels without combatting other characters of that class, they also are not provided the benefit of fun that role-playing such a scenario can offer. For most character classes, attaining levels above the 10th level means less and less action, as high level characters become political figures, land and stronghold owners, patriarchs of churches, or mentors of lower-level characters of similar class. For these characters, as levels increase, so increases responsibility, which almost inevitably calls for a decrease in frivolous adventure and irresponsible action. Unfortunately for most such character classes, the acquisition of higher levels is not met with equally high level conflict or adventure; boredom sets in as the players lose interest in their powerful characters.

For druids, however, the attainment of higher levels means more excitement, more conflict, and more adventure as characters vie against other characters in ceremonial combat for higher levels and the positions associated therewith. A unique opportunity for role-playing is

provided for such characters at these levels — one which doesn't end with the attainment of level (as other characters reach such levels, more challenges are made against the holders of such positions). The problem, however, is that the AD&D game rules provide only the briefest mention of such combat, offering little more than a suggestion for a system rather than a system upon which to base such a scenario.

In little more than one sentence (p.21, *Players Handbook*), the provision for druidic combat is made and quickly passed over. No details are provided for the nature of combat, the situations surrounding such combat, methods for conducting such combat, or cases for when such combat is necessary. For example, the *Players Handbook* states that there are only a limited number of each of the various higher druids: nine Druids, three Archdruids, and one Great Druid. Though it isn't clearly stated therein, the rules on p. 21 of *Unearthed Arcana* explain that "each area or land can have its own druid of this sort" or sorts. But this clarification is still somewhat vague: What is it that determines a distinct area or land? Are druidic levels determined by political or geographic boundaries? Is it possible for a druid of sufficient name level to leave one area or land which has a surplus of Druids to relocate to an area where there is a dearth of Druids (and thereby gain such name level without entering into combat)? What rules are defined in druidic combat? What types of weapons or spells are allowed in each variant? These are all questions raised by the AD&D game rules which as yet remain unanswered.

I'm a nature lover, not a fighter

As a subclass of cleric, it may seem odd that a druid should be required to demonstrate his skills in the arena of combat. Nevertheless, the druid is one of the most well-rounded classes in the AD&D game, having a combination of magical and clerical spells, and fighting capabilities similar to (though weaker than) those of a fighter. Furthermore, the AD&D druid is based (loosely) on the Celtic druids of old — and although little is known of the druidic religion, it is known that the Celts were partial to physical rituals and combative rites to prove their leaders' worths. Consequently, it comes as no real surprise that the AD&D druid should have to prove his worth in the competitive arena.

As stated in the rules, any druid of 11th level with sufficient experience points to attain the 12th level (Druid) can only do so if there are not enough Druids in that area to fill the quota or if he defeats a Druid in hand-to-hand or spell combat. This combat is necessary also in further level ascen-

sions, as from Druid to Archdruid, and from Archdruid to Great Druid. With the addition of *Unearthed Arcana*, higher druidic levels have been added: these include the Grand Druid and the various Hierophant druids. In regard to druidic combat, this ritual stops with the rite of passage from Archdruid to Great Druid; there is no such ritual for the ascension to Grand Druid and beyond. Instead, the ascension to the level of Grand Druid is determined by the Grand Druid himself. As stated on p. 17 of *Unearthed Arcana*, "any time after amassing at least 3,500,001 experience points, a Grand Druid can seek a successor. If such is found, the individual may then abdicate his or her position and enter the practice of the Hierophant disciplines." Thus, a character cannot attain the level of Grand Druid unless he is chosen by the Grand Druid to be his successor — no form of druidic challenge is allowed.

The reason for this reversal is simple: physical shows of power are no longer important at such levels; it is the spiritual power that is now more important. And although the Grand Druid is "the ultimate overseer of druidical activity," this is not to say that he is the ultimate druid.

As a follower of nature, the AD&D druid is a practitioner of a faith that draws equally upon physical and spiritual resources. At the point at which a druid becomes the Grand Druid, thereby becoming the most important political figure in druidic society, matters of a purely physical nature begin to lose their importance — especially when the Grand Druid becomes accustomed to his duties and begins to long for advancement into the more spiritually controlled Hierophant levels. As the Grand Druid gains more and more experience points, he begins to realize the need for spiritual rather than physical development.

Regarding regions of control, it is assumed that druidic societies and their spheres of control are determined by natural (i.e., geographical) rather than political boundaries (especially since druids rarely involve themselves in such mundane affairs). For example, a druidic area might be a coastal region separated from the rest of the continent by a mountain range (as is the case with the Northeast or the West Coast regions of the United States). Regions may be defined purely along these lines, with boundaries being oceans, large lakes or inland seas, deserts, mountains, and other geographic features. Other boundaries may be determined as being confined to one particular forest (such as the Black Forest in West Germany) or to a single island (such as Ireland or Great Britain). As a result, each of these regions would have their own hierarchy of ruling druids, consisting of

nine Druids, three Archdruids, and one Great Druid. All of the druid Initiates within these regions would be under that specific hierarchy (as described on p. 21 of the Players Handbook). The Grand Druid, then, would be in control of *all* druids throughout the world, and the Hierophants would be mostly unconcerned with the dealings of these lower levels (being instead concerned with matters taking place throughout the various planes of the AD&D multiverse).

Where the Grand Druid resides is entirely up to the DM. It is possible that such a lofty character may exist within a specific region (perhaps that region he previously controlled as the Great Druid); it is also possible that the Grand Druid may exist in an area far-removed from the rest of druidic society. In the latter case, it may also be possible that the Grand Druid's place of residence may be a well-kept secret, being known only to a handful of druids (those being his messengers and various attendants). In this manner, the Grand Druid may remove himself further from druidic society while still maintaining his control. As always, this decision is up to the DM.

Another question that may be of concern is the question of relocation: Is it possible, or even acceptable, for an 11th- or higher-level druid to move to another region in an effort to ascend in level and position? Again, the decision is up to the DM. Depending on the particular campaign, it could be possible for a druid to relocate. For instance, an 11th-level druid has just gained enough experience to advance to the 12th level. The problem, however, is that the region he lives in has more than enough Druids to fill the bill (indeed, the turnover rate may be fairly high because of a constant stream of upwardly mobile druids). Consequently, the druid in question decides to move to another region where there is a dearth of Druids. Whether or not the druid will be accepted into the new society as a Druid is determined by a number of factors, all of which vary from campaign to campaign. For instance, if the two regions border each other, there may be a problem if the two hierarchies in each region are at odds over who controls border areas. Consequently, it may be unacceptable (indeed, possibly fatal) for the druid to relocate. By the same token, however, the neighboring society may relish the thought of gaining another "convert" from the other side. Situations will differ from campaign to campaign, leaving DMs to make the ultimate decisions. The opportunity for role-playing scenarios may be stimulated by this fact, however: imagine the druids surprise when he relocates to the new region, makes his bid for level advance-

ment, then finds it necessary to combat another druid anyway merely to be accepted into the new region.

This forest ain't big enough. . .

The next consideration is how a druid goes about making his challenge. Undoubtedly, the variety of possible approaches are as innumerable as the variety of druidic cultures that exist from campaign to campaign. In one campaign, an ascending druid may be required to participate in a ceremony of challenge, calling upon the challenged druid to take part as well. This ritual could be as simple as a reading of scrolls or as elaborate as a procession of attendants leading the challenger and the challenged druid through a ceremony among the standing stones. Numerous rituals or approaches could take place, each depending on the individual campaign. There are, however, some considerations that should be taken into account.

One consideration is that their will be no anonymity in the challenge, unless the challenger comes from a different region than the one in which he is placing the challenge. Druidic hierarchy is highly structured in any region: druids of name level or who are approaching name level are known by the superiors they intend to replace. Consider the following heirarchy: At the top of the culture is the Grand Druid, who has at his command nine attendants (of no particular level) and three messengers of Archdruid status. Under his control are all the druids in the world. (Since there is no combat in ascending to this level, however, we needn't concern ourselves further with the Grand Druid.) Beneath the Grand Druid are a variety of Great Druids — one for each region. The Great Druids have at their command nine 11th-level Initiates as personal attendants. Likewise, all nine Druids and all three Archdruids are under their control, as are all other druids below them. If a druid is to challenge the Great Druid for his position, the only character that could possibly do so is an Archdruid — the Great Druids immediate subordinate. Going further down the line, each of the three Archdruids has under his control three of the nine Druids (or all nine Druids, if the Archdruids share responsibility and control), as well as all other 10th and 11th-level Initiates. If an Archdruid is challenged for his position, the challenge will have to come from one of his immediate subordinates: one of the nine Druids. Further down the line, all nine Druids have three 1st- through 9th-level druids at their command (the Druid highest in experience points having three 9th-level Initiates, the next highest having three 8th-level Initiates, and so on). This is the only point of ascension where a Druids

challenger will not be an immediate subordinate (since the only character that could challenge a Druid would be an 11th-level Initiate, who is under the control of a particular Archdruid).

As can be seen, there are a number of problems that could arise in the process of ascension — problems which will undoubtedly cause more intrigue and better role-playing within a campaign. Let's consider couple of scenarios as examples. An Archdruid is about to make his challenge for the position held by the Great Druid. The Great Druid is aware of the Archdruid's aspirations and has no intention of losing his position to that character (let's assume the Great Druid has his eye on ascending to the level of Grand Druid). If challenged, the Great Druid gains nothing from a win; he merely maintains the position he presently holds. But if he loses, he not only loses a number of experience points sufficient to drop him in level, he also loses his position. Depending on the way the individual campaign is played, the Great Druid may become an outcast of druidic society, losing any right to ascend further within that region. Hence, the former Great Druid must make a challenge in another region (having now been reduced to the level of Archdruid again), must wander the world as a "druid without a country; or must remain within the region he formerly ruled, but without the ability to further advance in levels. If the campaign merely transposes the two characters, thus making the Great Druid an Archdruid, it will probably be some time before the former Great Druid has a chance to challenge the new Great Druid. In any event, the ultimate outcome is that the former Great Druid loses in the end, is reduced in level, and is frustrated from the goal of level advancement as a result. Obviously, this is not what a Great Druid desires most. In fact, a great deal of enmity could occur as a result of such a challenge, thus making relations between the two characters (and between their immediate associates) very difficult.

To avoid this scenario, the Great Druid may decide to stop the Archdruid before he makes his challenge. This could be done in a number of ways. For one, the Great Druid may decide to place the Archdruid on a dangerous quest — one that will consume a great amount of time, thereby removing the Archdruid from the region before a challenge can be made. As another example, the Great Druid could entice a Druid (by helping him gain sufficient experience or by helping him train) to make a challenge for the position of Archdruid, challenging the particular Archdruid who is about to make his bid for the Great Druid's position. In so doing, the Great Druid places the Archdruid in the

same predicament, giving him everything to lose and nothing to gain. And even if the Archdruid wins his challenge, defending his position, it is unlikely that he will be able to enter competition again in the near future (at least until he heals or regains his will to advance).

As is evident, the possibilities for intrigue within the druidic society are great. Matters of personal ambition will always be a question, as will machinations and political intricacies. Consequently, the DM must first work on developing his druidic society (its political, cultural, and ceremonial tapestry) before he is able to develop the details of druidic rites of ascension.

You gotta fight for your right . . .

Druidic combat will vary to a degree from campaign to campaign; the details of particular ceremonies (such as the one listed at the beginning of this article), the situations leading up to and surrounding the challenge, and the atmosphere pervading the competition are matters left up to the individual DM. There are, however, only a limited number of combat styles available to the participants of druidic rites of ascension. According to the rules listed on p. 21 of the *Players Handbook*, druids ascend via two forms of combat: hand-to-hand combat and spell combat. To this list should be added a third form of combat: combat in the form of various animals. Combat is limited to one of these three forms; variations of combat (styles of fighting, spell choices, weapon choices, and animal choices), however, are not. For the most part, these forms of combat are not meant to be fatal (although some druidic societies deem them so to avoid political in-fighting and personal vendettas). Not all of these forms are open to combatants; they are limited each to a different level of ascension. For example, hand-to-hand or weapon combat is the usual method of combat for ascension to the level of Druid. Similarly, spell combat is the method chosen for ascension to the level of Archdruid. Finally, animal combat (via shape change abilities) is the method chosen for ascension to the level of Great Druid. In some druidic cultures, the choices increase with each ascension (i.e., in ascending to the level of Archdruid, hand-to-hand and spell combat are the choices, with all three being made available in ascending to the level of Great Druid).

Hand-to-hand combat. In hand-to-hand competitions, any of a variety of fighting methods may be used. Such competitions include the use of weapons, though these are most often weapons of a blunt, non-lethal nature. For example, a defending druid may decide to use staves in such a rite of ascension. By the same token, maces, hammers, flails, clubs, and so forth

may be used. On occasion, edged-weapons have been allowed in combat, though these are rarely used in all but lethal competitions. Open-handed combat is also a frequent choice. In each competition, the choice is up to the defending druid. In competitions to the death, however, both characters must agree on a weapon, though the agreement may sometimes allow the use of two different weapons. In some cases, combatants may be allowed to use more than one weapon in a competition. Armor is allowed, although its use or non-use must be determined before a competition. Missile weapons are *never* allowed due to the dangers they may impose on witnesses. Likewise, magic weapons and defenses are seldom allowed in such competitions.

In determining the winner of non-lethal competitions, the DM is advised to use the rules for Weaponless and Non-Lethal Combat listed in the appendices of *Unearthed Arcana* (pp. 106-109). These rules are self-explanatory, and their use will be determined by the type of combat agreed upon. In the event of combat "to the death," the DM should use the rules applicable to regular combat as listed in the *Players Handbook*. Winners in these competitions are determined by surrender or by death. In cases where a winner is unclear, the final decision will be made by the attendant of the rite of ascension. As with all competitions of ascension, a state of unconsciousness is equivalent to that of surrender. Likewise, any decisions for rematches are decided by the attendant of the ceremonies.

Spell combat. Like hand-to-hand combat, the choice of which spells are to be allowed in combat are decided by the defending druid. These spells can include any of the spells available to druids. In such competitions, a list of spells (usually more than five, but less than ten) are agreed upon by both combatants. The spell lists for each may be identical, or they may be decided by each druid depending upon the personal preference of each. In any event, both lists must be agreed upon by both combatants, and by the attendant of the rite of ascension. As a special note, druid combatants will rarely use spells involving the summoning or control of plants or animals to do the fighting for them, as this goes against the beliefs and practices of most druidic cultures. This is not to say, however, that such spells cannot be used in competition — they merely cannot be used to perform the actual combat for the druid combatants.

In spell competitions, DMs are advised to use the regular AD&D combat rules regarding spell combat. Characters receive their normal saving throws and magical resistances, though it is up to the attend-

ant (and sometimes the combatants) to decide whether or not magical items will be allowed within the arena. In spell combat, a winner is determined by surrender or by death. In cases where it is not clear which character has won, the attendant will resolve the decision. If the attendant so chooses, he may demand a rematch between both combatants to determine which will be the winner.

Animal combat. The highest form of combat available to druids competing for the position of Great Druid is that of animal combat, or Kirotoa, as it is sometimes called in druidic circles. This form of combat relies entirely upon the druids' ability to change shape and fight as a specific animal. In this competition, any number of changes of shape are allowed, and can be made at any point during the combat. (It is often to a combatant's advantage to change shape many times, as this allows for a partial return of hit points). Combatants may use no other combat form along with this form: spells and weapons are highly forbidden. Each combatant must rely solely on his ability to change shape and must draw upon his knowledge of each animal's fighting technique. Because it requires a knowledge of various animals' fighting methods, Kirotoa is considered the most honorable combat in the rites of ascension.

In animal competitions, the DM is advised to use the regular AD&D combat rules (using each animal's statistics along with the druid's) to determine damage amounts, numbers of attacks, and so forth. Winners in this form of competition are usually determined by surrender, although lethal competitions are not unheard of.

The days upon which these competitions may take place are also rigidly prescribed. Competition for the position of Druid takes place on the day of the spring equinox, or on the first day of May in some druidic societies. Competition for the position of Archdruid takes place on the day of the autumn equinox, or on All Hallow's Eve in some druidic societies. Lastly, competition for the position of Great Druid takes place only on midsummer's eve. (As with all guidelines, these dates can be altered depending upon the individual campaign.) A challenger can only make his challenge once a year; such challenges must be made well in advance of the date upon which the competition is to take place (usually two to four weeks prior).

The actual combat can take place at any of a number of locations, though the preferred location is a sacred meadow, mound, or monument (as in the opening of this article). Numerous druids will be called upon to witness the event; various

attendants and Initiates (as well as some "invited" guests) will be in attendance. Some of these witnesses may be called upon to perform ceremonial functions (usually those druids of name level, such as Druids and Archdruids, and their corresponding attendants and servitors). It is rare that individuals outside the druidic society (with the exception of some forest dwellers whom the druids hold in high esteem) will be allowed to witness the druidic ceremonial combat.

Once combat has begun, outside influence or aid is strictly forbidden. Any druid who receives such aid is immediately disqualified from the competition, and is often further disbarred from his station within that druidic society. Though most combats are not "to the death," such competitions have been condoned in special cases (or in special druidic societies). Often, these mortal competitions are allowed only in cases of extreme necessity, such as when a degree of enmity has grown between two druids as a result of a challenge, or when a personal vendetta has arisen between competitors due to other circumstances. Indeed, these forms of combat are sometimes agreed upon by two druids to resolve personal differences aside from the question of level ascension. In these rare cases, the combat must be approved by the Great Druid himself. Such combats are usually restricted to hand-to-hand or weapon combat, although spell combat has been allowed on occasion. Animal combat is *never* condoned in these instances, as this form of combat is reserved only for ascension to the level of Great Druid. Once combat has been approved, the competition follows the format and rules — often without the degree of ceremony, however — described in regular rites of ascension.

Both the form of combat and the weapons or spell types are decided by the defending druid. Once decided upon, no other weapons or spells can be introduced into said combat; any attempt to do so meets with the same penalties as described above. During combat, druids are not allowed to harm innocent bystanders, whether they be druids, plants, or animals of the forest. A competition is decided by surrender or death, depending on what mode of combat has been agreed upon. Once a druid has surrendered, combat is complete; if there are any infractions, a decision is made by the overseeing attendant. In competitions involving an ascension to the level of Druid or Archdruid, this attendant would be the Great Druid; in competitions involving an ascension to the level of Great Druid, the attendant would be the Grand Druid or one of his appointed representatives. As described in the AD&D rules, the winner either main-

tains his station or ascends to the higher level, essentially replacing the other combatant. The loser loses a number of experience points necessary to place him at the beginning of the next lowest level; he also loses his station along with the level and must begin building experience points again before being able to make his challenge for the position once again. A losing druid may challenge as often as desired, provided he has the appropriate number of experience points to challenge for the right.

Along with the gaining of a new position comes the right to training and the right to the benefits of that station (including all hierarchical powers, landholdings, attendants, and so forth). The loser in such an event rarely trains the new druid, since his abilities are usually diminished as a result of the loss. Consequently, training is often performed by a druid of equal or higher level (as in the case of the Great Druid). After all such training has been completed, the winner of the competition is ready to assume his position as Druid, Archdruid, or Great Druid — and hence, to begin building experience towards the next level of advancement.

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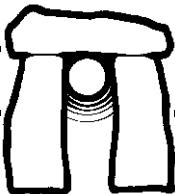
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Cantrips for Druids

— Naturally

*New zero-level spells
for the woods folk*

by Rick Reid

In DRAGON® issue #108, an article entitled "Cantrips for Clerics" dealt with the possibility of zero-level spells called "orisons" for fledgling clerics and druids. These were described as more powerful prayers and responses, mostly with a religious base. However, since the fledgling druid (or Tenderfoot) will spend most of his initial training in the forest or wilderness, it seems likely that he would be taught prayers and chants that would be

of more benefit to him in this environment, before he learned the higher-level "orisons."

With this in mind, the following list of 12 druidic cantrips or zero-level prayers are presented. These may be used in the same manner as magic-user cantrips; when the druid reaches 1st level, he may substitute four cantrips for one first-level spell. While the most common use of each spell is given in the description, crafty players will surely find other ways to employ them. As always, the final say in using these spells lies with the DM.

Bird call (Evocation)

Area of Effect: Special
Casting Time: ½ segment

By means of this cantrip, the druid is able to imitate the call of any of a number of common, feathered creatures. The druid must have already heard the sound of the bird to be imitated sometime in his career, and may only imitate one type of bird with each casting. The spell lasts only 2-5 segments, and the area of effect depends upon the caster's ability to project sound. The somatic gesture consists of clasping both hands around the mouth while the lips are puckered to create a whistling noise when breath is exhaled.

Drywood (Abjuration)

Area of Effect: 1 cubic foot of wood
Casting Time: 1/5 segment

This cantrip enables the caster to dry pieces of wood that may be either too green or too damp to be ignited. Once treated, the wood may be burned as if it had been dried for several months. The somatic gesture consists of performing a sawing motion with the material component; a small torch or flame must also be placed over the wood to be affected.

Test soil (Divination)

Area of Effect: 1 square yard of soil
Casting Time: 1/3 segment

This type of cantrip allows the druid to

determine if a particular section of ground contains the right minerals and components to support healthy plant growth. The balance of acidity to alkalinity may be divined, as well as the amount of fertilizer the soil contains. A small pinch of the dirt to be tested is placed between the caster's lip and gums, and the jaw is worked up and down in a somatic gesture.

Heal rash (Alteration)

Area of Effect: One person
Casting Time: ½ segment

By casting this cantrip, the druid may heal any rash caused by exposure to an irritating plant (such as poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac). In order for the spell to work, the rash may not be spread over more than 20% of the total body area of the recipient. The material component, a drop of milkweed fluid, is applied to the affected area while the caster gives a deep sigh.

Cause rash (Alteration)

Area of Effect: One person
Casting Time: ½ segment

The reverse of a *heal rash* cantrip, this spell causes a red, itchy rash to appear on one of the extremities of the victim. The rash is, for all practical purposes, the same as that caused by exposure to a rash-causing plant and must be treated in the same manner. A leaf of poison ivy, oak, or sumac is hidden on the subject's person; the druid then makes a scratching motion across his own arm while naming the arm or leg to be infected.

Mark path (Enchantment)

Area of Effect: One object
Casting Time: 1/3 segment

This cantrip allows the caster to place a small mark on an object, such as a rock or tree, for the purpose of marking a path. The mark is completely harmless and remains invisible until the caster or another druid passes within 10' of the spot. At this time, the mark appears briefly as a glowing arrow, pointing in the direction the caster has chosen. Once the mark has revealed itself, the spell is concluded. The somatic gesture consists of the caster lightly drawing a small arrow with his fingertip on the object to be marked, while whistling a jaunty traveling song.

Disinfect (Alteration)

Area of Effect: One person
Casting Time: 1/10 segment

When cast on a minor wound, this cantrip does nothing to heal the injury; it does, however, prevent the wound from becoming infected. At this point, the wound will heal at the normal rate even though it is not bandaged or kept clean. Somatic gestures consist of the caster

sucking on the index finger of one hand while pointing to the wound with the other.

Quench (Enchantment)

Area of Effect: One person

Casting Time: 1/3 segment

This cantrip is used to soothe someone who suffers from the effects of water deprivation. While no water is actually created, cracked lips are softened, and one's dry mouth and throat are moistened, giving the illusion of having partaken of liquid refreshment. The caster verbalizes a "glug, glug" sound in the back of his throat, while pretending to pour something into his or someone else's mouth.

Parch (Enchantment)

Area of Effect: One person

Casting Time: 1/3 segment

The opposite of the quench spell, this cantrip causes the unlucky subject to experience an intense thirst — no matter how recently he has drunk something. Lips crack, and the mouth and throat become dry until such time as a quantity of liquid is again consumed. The somatic

gesture consists of the caster gripping his throat while verbalizing a raspy, choking sound.

Disguise scent (Alteration)

Area of Effect: Caster

Casting Time: 1/10 segment

By employing this cantrip, the druid is able to neutralize his particular body odor for a period of one round. Animals that normally rely on the sense of smell to detect the presence of strangers will not be aware of the druid, and any creature or object the druid encounters while the spell is in effect will not absorb his aroma. The caster goes through the motions of pouring an imaginary liquid into his cupped hand and splashing it on his body, while humming a short ditty.

Edible plant (Divination)

Area of Effect: One plant

Casting Time: 1/2 segment

When cast on a plant, this cantrip allows the druid to determine whether or not consuming that type of vegetation would endanger his health. Note that even if only certain parts of the plant (such as the

berries or leaves) were to be dangerous, the entire plant would register as inedible. Also, such things as grass or maple leaves, while normally not eaten, would still be revealed as edible, since their consumption would cause no actual harm. The somatic gestures consist of pointing to the plant to be identified while making a chewing motion with the mouth.

Repel insect (Alteration)

Area of Effect: Caster

Casting Time: 1/4 segment

This cantrip causes the caster's bodily secretions (sweat, saliva, etc.) to act as a natural repellent to certain types of insects. The effect lasts for one hour, affecting only common insects (flies, mosquitoes, bees, wasps, ants, etc.), and only one type of insect at a time. While the spell is in effect, the insects may still swarm around the caster, but they will not bite or even light on his person. The insect to be repelled must be named in a verbal command, while the caster twirls his index finger around his head in a circle. The material component is the wing or body part of any common insect.

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King of the Jungle

The beastmaster NPC class: a druid's ally



by Ed Greenwood

[This class was designed exclusively as a nonplayer character class, and it is recommended that it only be used as such. Like the witch NPC class from DRAGON® issue #114, the abilities of this class are exceptionally powerful, more so than for many other classes of equivalent level. The beastmaster works best as a unique individual who can at least hold his own against a reasonably powerful adventuring party, ensuring a long life and continued use for this NPC. — The editor]

"No — look!" hissed Bhaera. "He has come!"

Into the circle of firelight, from the trees above, dropped a man, catlike and menacing. Clad in the pelt of a wild beast, his face masked behind the cloak's ears and fur, he looked scarcely human. He moved fluidly like a creature on the prowl, and spoke like a predator issuing a challenge. "Where is the one called Bhaera, who would hunt in my woods?"

Bhaera swallowed, his throat dry. "H-here," he said, stepping away from his comrades, his hand on his sword. "I am Bhaera."

"Then follow," came the rumbling reply, and with a bound the beastmaster was gone into the darkness. . . .

There are rare individuals with a natural affinity for animals, with telepathic powers and some aptitude for magic. If such individuals have a chance to roam wilderness areas and develop these talents, perhaps learning from others with similar skills, they may well become one of that mysterious breed: beastmasters.

Beastmasters must live in the wild almost continuously if they are to advance in ability, and most ultimately become beasts of the wild themselves. They may serve as animal handlers and trainers for a fee, and often work with rangers, druids, and forest denizens (satyrs, dryads, treants, sylvan elves, etc.) to gain the strength and abilities associated with life in the wilderness and to prevent the wanton destruction of wilderness areas.

Beastmasters must be human, halfling, or half-elven, of lawful neutral, chaotic neutral, true neutral, or neutral good alignment. They have minimum starting ability statistics as follows: S 14, I 12, W 12, C 15 (gaining hp constitution bonuses as fighters), and D 14. Beastmasters may be of either sex, and all are psionics who possess the very rare ability of *animal telepathy*. It is this ability that is the cornerstone of a beastmaster's power. All of a beastmaster's abilities grow with experience and practice, as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

A beastmaster continually surveys and is aware of his surroundings. As a result, beastmasters have very keen senses. A beastmaster's sense of smell extends to a 6" range upwind. Likewise, the beastmaster's acute hearing allows him to hear noises at a rate far better than that of normal ability (see Table 2, "Hear Noise"). An additional bonus to the beastmaster's sense of hearing is that deafness suffered due to explosions or other sharp, unusually loud sounds, lasts 1-6 rounds less for the beastmaster than for other classes. Lastly, beastmasters have exceptional vision in night or dark conditions, seeing clearly within a radius of 15'; this range increases rapidly with increases in available light (e.g., in moonlit fields, near a campfire, etc.) and decreases to a maximum of 3' of discernment (allowing a perception of outlines and movement, but not facial expressions or details) in almost absolute darkness, such as that caused by fog or a *darkness 15' radius* spell. In daylight, beastmasters can see clearly for miles across wilderness terrain and can easily pick out most moving creatures despite silence, natural camouflage, or thick undergrowth. As a result, a beastmaster is surprised only on a 1 on a d12, and nearly always notices partially-concealed creatures and creatures hiding in shadows (see "Sight" on Table 2). This continual observation and awareness is automatic; beastmasters do not relax their acute awareness in "safe" areas. Beastmasters do not depend on *ESP* or any sort of x-ray vision in order to see deliberately concealed creatures. They are, however, more likely to spot such creatures when the latter move across nearby terrain simply because they habitually scan places they recognize as affording cover, and

constantly think of such spots in terms of routes from one to another. In this way, beastmasters notice movement in the gaps between one piece of cover and the next.

Beastmasters can nap readily and can roughly determine the length of time they slumber. They do this regardless of environment, physical discomfort, and so forth, but always sleep lightly, awakening instantly upon hearing an unusual noise, upon being touched, or upon feeling an unexpected vibration.

Due to acute senses, strong willpower, and their necessarily fine physical condition, beastmasters are naturally resistant to diseases — including lycanthropy, against which they have a -5% chance per level of advancement of contracting (see the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, pp. 22-23). Beastmasters are not, however, immune to the effects of poison, nor to psionic or magical *charm*, *domination*, or *suggestion*; they do, however, gain a +2 bonus to all saving throws versus these dangers. Beastmasters use the attack tables of fighters but never gain more than one attack per round, regardless of level. They save as clerics and can employ all weapons. They can use only normal leather armor and may not employ shields, as a beastmaster does not like to be constricted or encumbered by clothing and equipment.

Beastmasters never wear perfume or strongly-scented garb or accoutrements, and do not like to be in close proximity of such items, as their sense of smell may be severely impaired. Beastmasters of all levels can easily live off the land, gaining sufficient food for themselves and up to 10 man-sized companions for an indefinite length of time. They can readily identify any beast they have been instructed to recognize or which they have encountered before by scent and signs (pawprints,

Table 1
Beastmaster Experience Levels

Experience points	level	Experience accum. hit points	8-sided dice for hit points	Level title
0-5,000	1	1	1	Handler
5,001-10,000	2	2	2	Breaker
10,001-16,000	3	3	3	Herdhand
16,001-28,000	4	4	4	Husbandman
28,001-50,000	5	5	5	Keeper
50,001-94,000	6	6	6	Ostler
94,001-160,000	7	7	7	Tamer
160,001-248,000	8	8	8	Trainer
248,001-392,000	9	9	9	Master
392,001-592,000	10	9 + 6	9 + 6	Wildrunner

250,000 experience points per level are needed for each additional level above the 10th. Beastmasters gain 6 hp per level after the 9th level.

dung, teethmarks, etc.). A beastmaster speaks the common, druidic, and his alignment tongues, and can learn (a process involving 1-6 months under a tutor) one additional language per level, including animal tongues and those of dragons, woodland beings, and aerial creatures.

Due to their acute senses, beastmasters save vs. all illusions of living beings at +3. At 3rd level, they gain the natural, nonmagical ability to pass at a normal rate of movement through overgrown areas (such as briar patches, tangled thorns, and thick undergrowth) without leaving a discernible trail. Note that this ability will leave traces of passage in deliberately arranged traps or set snags, walls, and fresh mud or sand that cannot be crossed by leaping, and cannot be used to avoid mechanical traps or such magics as entangle.

Beastmasters can use all magical items not limited to a specific class. Their directly animal-related powers (e.g., locate animals, monster summoning, and animal friendship) operate at a -10% chance when dealing with creatures not from the Prime Material Plane. These abilities are described in Table 3 and are all usable at will (one at a time).

If a druid or beastmaster tutor is available, a beastmaster gains the ability to work certain minor magics at higher levels, as follows:

Pass without trace (as the first-level druid spell) is gained at 6th level, and is usable once per day at 6th level and an additional time per day (any 24-hour or 144-turn period) for each level advanced beyond 6th.

Anti-animal shell is gained at 9th level, and is usable once per day.

Repulsion is gained at 7th level, and is usable once per day, with an additional daily use gained for every two levels advanced thereafter.

All of these spells require a verbal and somatic component when employed by a beastmaster, but none require a material component.

As psionics, beastmasters able to gain more than one minor psionic discipline always gain *empathy*; such powers (i.e., further minor and major disciplines gained) broaden at random thereafter.

Upon reaching 5th level, or at any point thereafter, the beastmaster acquires the ability to cause *fear* by means of an eerie *howl* — a full-throated cry which can be generated once every 144 turns (24 hours). A howl wracks the lungs and throat of the beastmaster, temporarily muting him for one round. During this time, the beastmaster is unable to speak or otherwise emit vocal sounds, and is further penalized a -2 on AC and on attacks due to "winded" shudders (an involuntary series of convulsions caused by the physical strain of the action). A *howl* causes *fear* (no saving throw) in creatures of animal to average intelligence within 6" of the beastmaster. The *howl* affects all creatures of 2 HD or less and zero-level humans, humanoids, and demi-humans. Creatures with more than 2 HD (or with 2 HD plus a bonus), and classed beings of 1st or greater level, are immune to a *howl*'s effects. For the effects of a howl, refer to the fourth-level magic-user spell, *fear*.

Level advancement

Beastmasters must live in a wild habitat to advance in levels, and thus grow in power through the constant use of their abilities. Beastmasters may self-tutor themselves up to and including the achievement of 4th level. Thereafter, each level advancement requires 2-6 months under a tutor (a beastmaster of higher level, a ranger at least four levels higher than the beastmaster trainee, or a druid at least

two levels higher than the trainee). To learn the spells listed above will require a tutor, although the tutor need not be able to cast the spells himself. Halfling beastmasters cannot advance beyond the 7th level; half-elves and humans are capable of unlimited advancement, so long as a tutor can be found. Tutors typically demand a period of service or one very difficult task prior to training the beastmaster.

Acquisition of experience points comes from hunting, observing, handling, and training wild animals, and is typically a slow process. It may take 25 years or more for a beastmaster to attain Master level (9th level), although some gifted individuals have attained it in a decade. Beastmasters of "Wildrunner" and higher status are few indeed (although such beastmasters may merely be far removed from society and may be more numerous than is generally believed).

Beastmaster Abilities

Sight: The ability to notice partially-concealed creatures, signs, or tracks, and creatures hiding in shadows. This ability is not affected by available light (due to the exceptional eyesight of a beastmaster), and can be used to locate secret doors, portals, and the like (-25% chance of success).

Move silently: Similar to the thief ability.

Hide in shadows: Similar to the thief ability. A beastmaster must remain motionless to hide thus (-15% chance of success if slight movements are made as a result of spellcasting, signalling, or readying a weapon); the beastmaster can, however, exercise psionic abilities, cast spells (with the modifier mentioned), or exercise other class abilities (such as *monster summoning*) while in hiding.

Hear noise: Similar to the thief ability.

Climb: This represents the chance a beastmaster has to successfully climb

Table 2
Abilities by Level

Level of beastmaster	Base chance to:								Detect snares & pits
	Sight	Move silently	Hide in shadows	Hear noise	Climb	Bound	Track	Stalk	
1	92	95	90	70	65	40	90	90	55
2	93	96	91	75	70	45	91	91	60
3	94	97	92	80	75	50	92	92	65
4	95	98	93	85	80	55	93	93	70
5	96	99	94	90	85	60	94	94	75
6	97	100	95	92	90	65	95	95	80
7	98	100	96	94	91	70	96	96	85
8	99	100	97	96	92	75	97	97	86
9	100	100	98	98	93	80	98	98	87
10	102	100	99	99	94	85	99	99	88
11	105	102	100	100	95	90	100	99	90

trees, rock faces, or pinnacles — even when these surfaces are wet (-12% modifier). In doing so, the beastmaster may be encumbered with a pack, weapons, etc., but cannot directly assist another climber. A beastmaster can climb a man-made wall if it is not tiled or smoothly dressed, but cannot climb slick, smooth-surfaced walls or oiled surfaces, or travel across ceilings without magical aid. A beastmaster accustomed to a swamp or jungle environment will be able to swing from vine to vine (a la Tarzan) and run along branches with this ability. If a beastmaster slips or falls in such situations (failing his roll for this activity), see the "Bound" skill below.

Bound: Through the observation of beasts, and through practice and conditioning, a beastmaster learns and develops the ability to make exceptional forward and upward jumps, with a successful recovery (a balanced landing, an "on target" pounce, or a sure snatch and grasp of vines, tree branches, and rock handholds when leaping or recovering from a fall). The maximum bounding ability of a beastmaster is equal to that bestowed by the first-level magic-user spell *jump* — 30' forward, and 10' backwards, directly sideways, or upward. The chance of successfully bounding increases with practice (as exemplified by level advancement), but bounding range does not increase.

Track: Similar to the ranger ability, with the same modifiers (see *Players Handbook*, p. 24); the base chance of success is shown in Table 2.

Stalk: This ability represents the activity of tracking and approaching a distant monster (including intelligent foes, such as humans) without alerting them by scent or sound. Success requires a successful "Move Silently" roll when the beastmaster is within 8" of the prey, and ensures *surprise* when attacking (only targets with

exceptional senses — including all PCs — are allowed a defensive roll against surprise; with all others, surprise is automatic).

Detect snares and pits: Similar to the first-level druid spell, save that the range is only 1", and only in the direction scrutinized. Through concentration, this ability can be sustained for as long as desired, but forbids the use of other class abilities (such as *move silently*, psionics, and spells while doing so).

Locate animals: Similar to the first-level druid spell, though this ability is gained through concentration and an acute use of the senses. This ability is usable at will, but only for one round duration at a time, as it is extremely tiring, requiring at least a one-round rest between attempts. This ability has only a 2" range, and a 2" viewing "front" (the beastmaster must face in one direction and remain motionless, as movement makes detection impossible). Intelligent creatures (such as humans) can be detected by use of this ability, but enchanted creatures or creatures from other planes (e.g., undead, demons, etc.) can only be detected with a -25% chance of success.

Call woodland beings: Similar to the fourth-level druid spell. Intense concentration (a "sending" of *animal telepathy*) is involved, rather than spell-casting. Unicorns never answer such a summons launched by a beastmaster. (No creatures answer such a call if it is made underground or in a large human, demi-human, or humanoid settlement.)

Monster summoning: A beastmaster must have an intelligence and a charisma of 16 or more to successfully develop or use this ability. This resembles the fourth-level magic-user spell *monster summoning* I, save that the monsters arrive in 1-4 turns, that the creatures come from a

surrounding radius of 3 miles, and that they obey the beastmaster for two rounds for every level of experience. The creatures flee if magically attacked by a *fear* or similar spell, or if facing overwhelming odds, large amounts of fire, etc. The beastmaster does not command or control the summoned creatures precisely, and cannot enable them to perform tasks beyond their physical or mental powers. By successful use of this ability, a beastmaster can cause creatures summoned against him to flee (70% chance) or to turn against the summoner (30% chance).

Animal friendship: Similar to the first-level druid spell, except that this ability uses a flesh-to-flesh touch and not verbal, somatic, and material components. Creatures affected by this ability become companions of a beastmaster, and if not ill-treated, they will remain friends with the beastmaster until death, regardless of any separation between the beastmaster and the creature, as long as no break of more than three days occurs during the three-month period of initial contact. A beastmaster need not train a creature to do tricks to cement this friendship.

Hold monster: A beastmaster must have an intelligence of 13 or more and a charisma of 15 or more to develop or use this ability. This ability is similar to the fifth-level magic-user spell (including *hold person*). A beastmaster can *hold* one creature per round by magic and by an exercise of will, by merely touching the creature (though not by a weapon attack). The *hold* lasts for 1-2 rounds, but may be reapplied. This occurs automatically, if the beastmaster does nothing else save touch the target again in the round in which the *held* creature would have recovered. No "to hit" roll is required, as the target is immobile.

Quiet: By body and at least fleeting eye contact, movement, and vocalization, a

Table 3
Beastmaster's Abilities by Level

Level of beastmaster	Locate animals	Call woodland beings	Base chance to:			Quiet	Charm monster	Wereform control	Dragon- riding
			Monster summoning	Animal friendship	Hold monster				
1	45	40	25	55	7	10	5	5	-
2	50	45	30	60	14	20	10	10	-
3	55	50	35	65	21	30	15	15	-
4	60	55	40	70	30	40	25	25	10
5	65	65	45	75	40	50	30	35	20
6	70	70	50	80	45	60	40	55	30
7	75	71	55	85	50	70	50	75	40
8	76	72	60	90	60	80	55	85	50
9	77	73	65	95	70	90	60	90	60
10	78	74	70	99	80	93	65	93	70
11	80	75	75	99	85	96	70	96	80

(11th level = maximum advancement of abilities.)

beastmaster can attempt to calm (*not tame*) a single excited or fearful creature (e.g., a wild horse being ridden for the first time, a stampeding animal, or one spooked by fire, sudden noise, or movement). Although beastmasters prefer to guide and influence animals rather than "break" and domesticate them, this ability can be used to determine the chance of success in any cases where this must be done (a process requiring 50 days minus 1-6 days for positive conditions — such as appropriate apparatus, isolation, and food for rewarding successful performance — and minus two days more per level of the beastmaster).

Charm monster: A beastmaster must have an intelligence of 17 or more and a charisma of 16 or more to exercise this ability. This ability resembles the effects of the fourth-level magic-user spell, save that against monsters of average or greater intelligence (such as most humans), there is a -25% chance of success. Only one creature at a time (once per round) can be affected, and the *charm* lasts only one turn per level of the beastmaster. If the beastmaster handles a *charmed* creature carefully — i.e., does not cause what is perceived as extreme danger, does not cause it to act contrary to its nature (for example, leaving natural prey unmolested when it is hungry), and does not act in a hostile manner — the creature will be friendly toward the beastmaster at the expiration of the *charm*. Use of this ability is exhausting; a beastmaster can *charm* only one creature at a time, and after the expiration of the *charm*, must refrain from exercising this ability for at least a day (a 24-hour period). More frequent charming attempts are unsuccessful.

Werewolf control: A beastmaster who becomes a lycanthrope cannot advance in levels until cured of the condition, and has no more power over his form than any other lycanthrope. Moreover, the special abilities of the beastmaster cannot be exercised when in werewolf. Instead, werewolf control refers to an ability usable when a beastmaster encounters a lycanthrope. By flesh-to-flesh touch (slap or punch admissible, but not a weapon attack), the beastmaster can cause the lycanthrope to change form by exerting an overpowering effort of will. The change may be in either direction (suspected lycanthropes can be revealed by this means). If the target has been a lycanthrope for less than two years, it will experience 1-2 rounds of disorientation (treat as *confused*) upon the sudden shift in shape. The lycanthrope may suffer damage (i.e., by armor constriction) in the change, and cannot change back to the form it had before use of this ability for one round per level of the beastmaster.

This ability is usable only once per level of experience in every 24-hour period, and can be used only once per day on a particular were-creature.

Dragonriding: Beastmasters of high level can befriend dragons to the point of riding them as steeds. Successful befriending of a dragon requires clear sight and conditions of audibility between beastmaster and dragon; the beastmaster must be able to speak the specific tongue of the type of dragon encountered as well. Befriending lasts for 1-3 turns, plus one turn per level of the beastmaster (and may continue longer at the DM's option, if the alignments of dragon and beastmaster are similar, and if the beastmaster's words and actions do not offend or endanger the dragon, or make it uneasy).

A befriended dragon will not attack the beastmaster as long as he does not attack it or plunder from its hoard (this protection does not extend to companions of the beastmaster, whether animals or intelligent beings). Furthermore, the dragon may agree to allow the beastmaster to physically aid or assist it, or to trade material treasure or food for an opportunity to ride it.

Dragonriding is always perilous due to the limited duration of the beastmaster's influence over the dragon. Dragons often swoop and soar to show off (both endangering the rider and wasting time), and although they almost never dive to attack a creature or engage in aerial combat, it has happened at a beastmaster's suggestion — and is particularly likely when the creature in question is a known enemy to the dragon. Beastmasters cannot successfully hold, charm, or cast repulsion on a creature they are riding. Dragons may buck, attempt to scrape off a rider on rock walls or pinnacles, buffet, roll, or even land on and crush riders whose befriending has worn off. Ridden dragons will agree to pick up (and ferry) items or creatures, or allow their rider to do so, however.

Beastmasters of all levels are immune to the *fear* auras of all dragons, regardless of hit dice or circumstances.

Befriending details

Beastmasters may befriend any animal whenever that creature is of average or greater intelligence, and is a solitary wilderness dweller. This ability may be attempted by the beastmaster with a greater or lesser chance of success according to the situation and the creature in question. The sole exception to this is the unicorn — although a beastmaster may indeed befriend a unicorn, such friendship is born of deeds and mutual respect, and not a beastmaster's force of will and ability to influence this creature. Although a beast-

master is never awed into inactivity by the mere sight or presence of a unicorn, no beastmaster would ever ride a unicorn unless the creature allowed it. Likewise, no beastmaster would ever agree to hunt, tame, or attack a unicorn, as they are the creatures most sacred to a beastmaster.

A tale is told of Iraven the Tracker, a famous beastmaster. When orcs came into his woods hunting with arrows, he harried them from the trees, dropping from ambush to slay one here and another there, confusing them with animal calls and false orc-talk. In this way, he whittled a band of 40 down to 20 or less. These remaining orcs were terrified and wanted only to escape the forest. Having lost their way, they blundered on until they suddenly came upon a unicorn in a little dell. Leaping from concealment, Iraven attacked them openly and so drew their poisoned arrows from slaying the unicorn. He was nearly slain himself. Pierced by a dozen black shafts, he fled only a few paces before falling from the effects of the poison.

When he awoke, the orcs were gone, his wounds were clean and nearly healed, and the arrows were drawn forth. When he regained his strength, Iraven searched for elves until he found one who could teach him the tongue of unicorns. From that day to this, it is a mark of pride among beastmasters to learn the speech of unicorns, even if they never expect to see one. (It is 86% likely that any NPC beastmaster of 9th or greater level knows the tongue of unicorns.)

It is said that Iraven sought the unicorn who had saved him for many years, and when he found it one moonlit night as both came to drink at the same forest pool, he was able to properly thank the beast. Its name was Aerbraen, the tale tells, and they met at the pool on many other nights before Iraven died.

The dragon and the unicorn represent the breadth of the abilities of a beastmaster: savage and graceful power. Few can match them; few would want to. Ω

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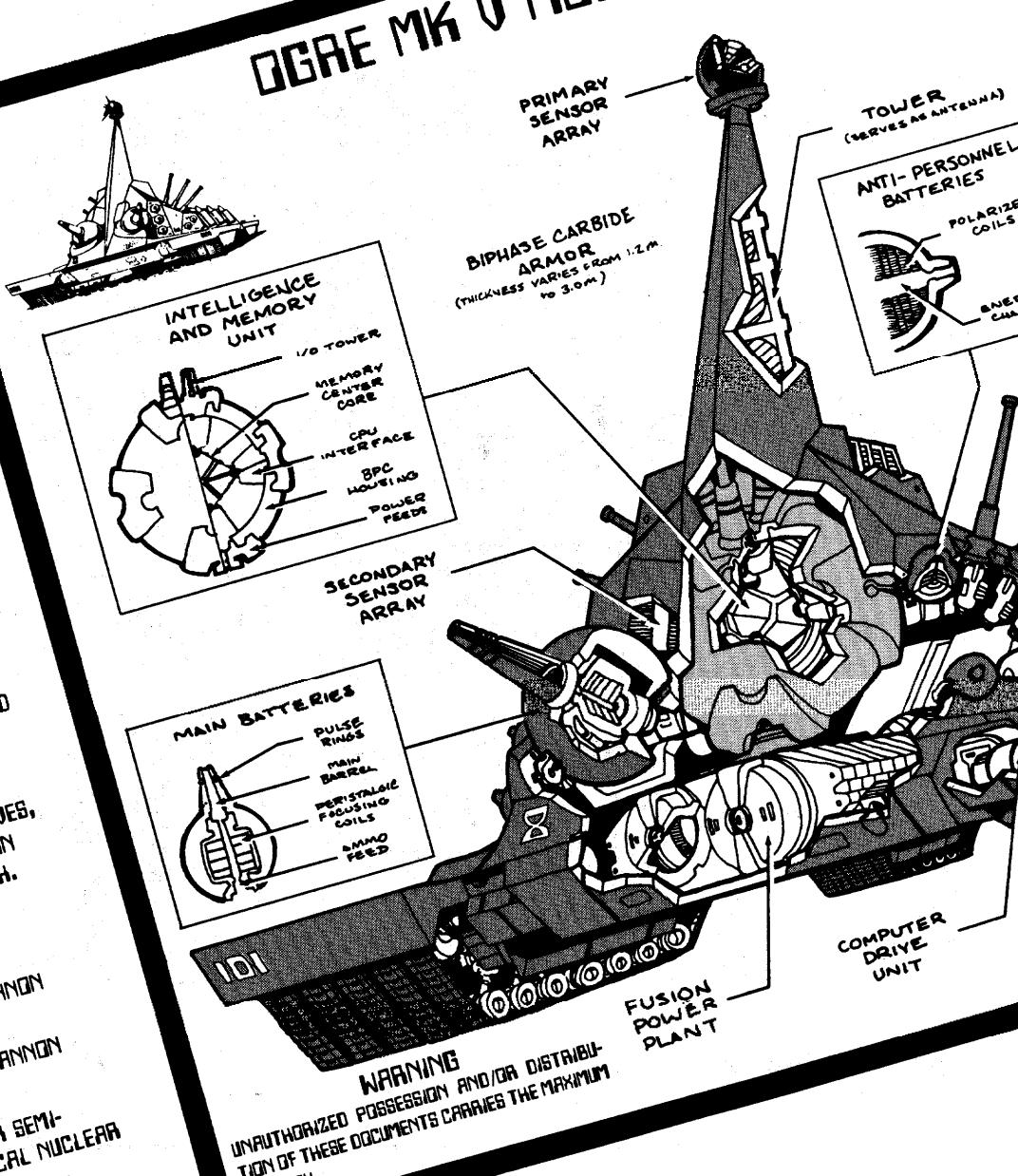
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FREQUENCY: Rare

NO. APPEARING: 40-400

ARMOR CLASS: Variable, by armor type

MOVE: 6"

HIT DICE: 1

% IN LAIR: 50%

TREASURE TYPE: Individuals M (x4); F, Q (x20) in lair

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon or 1-10

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Save at 4 levels higher

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Very

ALIGNMENT, Lawful good

SIZE: S (4' + tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

Uldras dwell in icy dungeons or tundras. They are closely related to dwarves and gnomes, and have a great love for nature. As a result of this love, uldras have a strong love and empathy for wild animals. Uldras generally live in clans similar to those of dwarves and gnomes.

For every 40 uldras encountered, there is an uldric ranger of 2nd-6th level experience. If 160 or more uldras are in a group, there is an additional 6th-level and 4th-level ranger acting as chief and lieutenant of the group. If 200 or more uldras are encountered, there is an additional uldric druid of 4th-6th level. If 320 or more uldras are encountered, the following additional uldras are with the group: an 8th-level ranger, a 7th-level ranger, a 7th-level druid, a 4th-level druid, and a 4th-level ranger. If encountered in their lair (home), an additional 2-12 rangers of 2nd-5th level are present, with 2-8 druids of 2nd-4th level, and females and young equal to 50% and 25% (respectively) of the number of adult males. An uldric lair is always an underground complex mined through ice or solid rock.

Uldras are typically armored with leather armor and shield (AC 7), and some may carry *rings of protection* +1 or other devices. Table 1 shows typical weaponry carried by Uldric armies.

Uldras are 70% likely to have tame animals serving as guards in their lairs. These animals are as follows: 5-30 giant badgers

(01-30%), 2-8 brown bears (31-50%), or 5-20 wolves (51-00%).

Uldras can see up to 120' in the dark (via infravision) and can automatically identify plants, animals, and pure water. Uldras can also pass through overgrown areas without leaving a discernible trail (-50% on all tracking attempts). These creatures speak the common tongue, kobold, gnome, elvish, dwarfish, and of course, uldric. Uldras can also speak with any creature that has animal intelligence or better.

The skin of the uldra is fairly colorless, as indicated by its whitish-yellow complexion. Uldras have grey or white hair, and their eyes are most often gray. Uldras also usually wear drab, gray clothing. The average uldra lives for 900 years; see the age categories in Table 2.

Player character information

Being demi-humans, uldras would make excellent player characters if so allowed by the DM. Uldric PCs have the same abilities to speak with animals, walk without leaving a trail, and see in the dark as

uldrics. The following information also applies.

Uldras have most of the aspects of their gnomish and dwarven cousins, although uldras are somewhat more cheerful than dwarves, but still less cheerful than gnomes. Uldras enjoy eating, drinking, and telling stories around campfires – especially if they are about their patron deity, Aslak. Uldras view dwarves and gnomes as their brothers, and are on friendly terms with both races. Uldras love precious metals and gems, and are consequently excellent miners and gemcutters; they are also good woodworkers. Although uldras generally view elves with neutrality (and sometimes even with apathy), they tend to associate well with elves after the “first impression” is broken, especially since

both races share the same love of nature. Uldras are highly courageous, and friends or foes are never forgotten.

Uldras have very sensitive hearing, allowing a base chance to hear noise of 25%. Uldric thieves have the same bonuses and penalties to their skills as gnomes have, save that they have a + 15% chance to hear noise. Otherwise, their senses are at least as sharp as a humans.

Uldric player characters have a + 1 adjustment to initial scores in dexterity and constitution, and -1 penalties to charisma and comeliness scores. Their typical height and weight values are given in Table 3.

Uldras are generally of the lower middle class (LMC); consequently, they have a - 20% on rolls on both the Birth Table and the Parents’ Marital Status Table (*Unearthed Arcana*, page 83).

Uldras may be fighters, rangers, clerics, druids, or thieves; they cannot be of any other class, such as illusionists or assassins. Uldras with no class as such are treated as 1-HD beings akin to fighters. See Table 4 for class level limits. Uldras may be of any alignment, though most are lawful good. Player character and NPC uldrlic druids may be of several non-neutral alignments and may worship any uldrlic deity, though the majority of them are

neutral good and worship Maitak (see below). This came about after the death of the old druidic deity in the time of Ilmarhil (see below). The druid’s alignment must match that of his or her deity in any case.

As is the case with their dwarven and gnomish cousins, uldras have a high resistance to magic. Thus, for every $3\frac{1}{2}$ points of constitution, an uldra character gains a +1 bonus to its saving throws versus wands, staves, rods, spells, and poisons. In addition to their alignment language and the common tongue, uldrlic characters can speak all of the languages previously listed for them. Uldras are unable to learn more than two additional languages, regardless of their intelligence score. Note that because of their resistance to magic, uldras cannot ever cast a magic-user spell, even if otherwise allowed to do so by their class; this does not apply to druidic and clerical spells.

Due to their knowledge of nature, uldras have the ability to identify plants, animals, and pure water. Also, since uldras are fairly proficient miners, they have the ability to detect the following constructs: grades or slopes in passages with 60% accuracy; unsafe walls, ceilings, or floors with 50% accuracy; traps involving pits, falling blocks, or other stonework with

Table 1
Uldric Weaponry

Sword and light crossbow	10%
Sword and short bow	15 %
Sword and spear	20 %
Axe and pick	20 %
Axe and mace	15 %
Mace and hammer	20 %

Table 2
Age Categories

Race	Young adult	Mature	Middle aged	Old	Venerable
Uldra	50-100	101-400	401-600	601-900	901-1000

Table 3
Height and Weight of Uldras

	Height (“)	Weight (lbs.)
Males	$38 + 2d6$	$105 + 2d20$
Females	$36 + 2d6$	$80 + 2d20$

Table 4
Character Class Level Limits

Ability score	Cleric	Druid *	Fighter	Ranger **	Thief
15	4	7	9	9	U
16	5	8	9	10	U
17	6	9	10	11	U
18	7	10	-	-	U

* A charisma score at least equal to the wisdom score is also required.

** Intelligence and wisdom scores at least equal to the strength score are also required.

Table 5
Ability Score Minimums & Maximums

Ability scores	Min.	Max.
M/F	M/F	
Strength	8/8	18/17
Intelligence	6/6	18/18
Wisdom	8/8	18/18
Dexterity	3/3	18/18
Constitution	10/10	19/19
Charisma	3/3	16/16

Table 6
Racial Preferences

Dwarves	Elves	Gnomes	Half-elves	Halflings	Half-orcs	Humans
1 G	A	G	A	G	H	N
2 G	N	G	N	G	H	N

Line 1 shows other creatures’ attitudes towards uldras; line 2 shows uldras’ attitudes towards other creatures. Uldras prefer their own race.

40% accuracy; and, approximate depth underground with 70% accuracy. Ability scores are given in Table 5 and racial preferences in Table 6.

Uldric deities

It is said that when the gods assembled in the beginning of time to draw lots for the parts of the world where their people would dwell, humans were allowed to dwell anywhere; elves received the green forests, dwarves received the mountains, gnomes received the hills, halflings received the fields, and the evil orcs were scattered amongst all the realms. The uldras received the lot for the icy tundras and the northern pine forests. The uldras grew very fond of their habitat and developed their intense love of nature as a result of their existence in these regions.

Uldric gods and clerics frequently refer to "the time of Ilmarhil." It is said that this was a time of happiness for the uldras. However, this time was ended by an evil, uldric god who was a high-level assassin. Before Aslak killed him in fair combat, this god managed to eliminate most of the uldras from the original uldric pantheon. This is why there are no female or greater gods left among the remaining gods. This is also why Aslak (who ruled the pantheon during the time of Ilmarhil) hates evil so passionately, but this does not mean that there are no evil uldras. It simply means that such uldras are unbelievers, or worship the dwarven god Abbathor or the gnomish god Urdlen.

Uldrads do not usually worship non-uldric gods (with the exception of Abbathor and Urdlen); nevertheless, they maintain a casual respect for the gnomish and dwarven gods. In fact, uldric gods are known to cooperate with gnomish and dwarven gods when they are needed. Moradin, Garl Glittergold, and Aslak once fought side-by-side against several major demon princes united under Demogorgon when the demons threatened the three demi-human races. (The uldric deities have always had difficulty dealing with the demons of the Abyss.) The uldric gods live on one of the planes of Arcadia in an area known as the Silver Tundra. They are all ruled by Aslak, the wise one.

Elks (and the horns of such animals) are commonly viewed as sacred elements of nature; the uldras view elks as symbols of the beauty and purity of nature. As stated before, uldras have a great love of nature and severely punish vandals who abuse their natural surroundings.

Because of their uncommon appearance and demeanor, uldric deities possess dual charisms and comelinesses; the one given in parentheses applies to uldras and other uldric deities, and the other applies to all other races and their deities. Uldric deities do not usually deal with gods from pantheons other than the dwarven and gnomish ones. Additionally, the uldric gods view orcish and goblin deities as bitter enemies.

ASLAK ("The Wise One")

Greater god



ARMOR CLASS: -5
MOVE: 12"
HIT POINTS: 380
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-50 (+14)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%
SIZE: L (10' tall)
ALIGNMENT: Lawful good
WORSHIPER'S ALIGNMENT: Lawful good (uldras)

SYMBOL: The horn of an elk
PLANE: Arcadia

CLERIC/DRUID: 25th-level druid
FIGHTER: 17th-level ranger
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 18th-level magic-user

THIEF/ASSASSIN: 10th-level thief

MONK/BARD: 16th-level bard

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

S: 25 (+7, +14)	I: 23	W: 24
D: 22	C: 24	CH: 19 (25)
CM: 19 (27)		

Aslak is the leader of the uldric pantheon (he is also the only greater god therein). The uldras respectfully call him "old" as he is truly old, wise, and experienced. Aslak has fought battles with many evil orcish and goblin gods, and with many demons of the abyss. (The evil side usually suffered the worst casualties of the battle.) Aslak has fought Maglubiyet, the patron god of goblins, and Gruumsh One-Eye (whom he forced to retreat). Aslak also killed the evil god that murdered most of the original pantheon (his name is never spoken and very few uldras actually know what this god was called). Aslak always appears as a handsome, gray-skinned uldra.

Aslak owns an elkhorn with very sharp points. This weapon strikes for 5-50 hp damage and can also summon 2-20 woodland beings of Aslak's choice once per day. The elkhorn may also heal Aslak completely once per day. Aslak, like his people, bears a great love of nature and punishes those who abuse their natural surroundings.

MAITAK (lord of nature and mountains)

Demigod

ARMOR CLASS: -2
MOVE: 18"
HIT POINTS: 210
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30 (+14)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%
SIZE: S (4' tall)
ALIGNMENT: Neutral good
WORSHIPERS ALIGNMENT: Good (uldras)
SYMBOL: A great pine tree
PLANE: Arcadia
CLERIC/DRUID: 10th-level druid
FIGHTER: 18th-level ranger
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 5th-level magic-user
THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
S: 25 (+7, +14) I: 20 W: 20
D: 20 C: 24 CH: 19 (25) CM: 23 (29)

Maitak is the son of a great uldric god (who was killed during the time of Ilmarhil) and a female uldra from the Prime Material Plane. Maitak is the half-brother of Talminen. He is both the god of nature and of mountains. As the god of nature, Maitak protects the realm of nature and those creatures who depend upon it for their sustenance. As the god of mountains, Maitak can increase the amount of precious metals in a mountain.

Maitak appears as a handsome uldra with gold-colored hair, but has a shorter beard than uldras usually have. He often travels with his half-brother, Talminen.

Maitak wields a silver-colored spear (a gift from his father) which does 3-30 hp damage.

KAIKO (*Aslak's elk*)

FREQUENCY: Unique
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -1
MOVE: 24"
HIT POINTS: 200 hp
% IN LAIR: Nil
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-24 horns/2-16 kick
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 35%
INTELLIGENCE: Genius
ALIGNMENT: Lawful good
SIZE: L (16' tall at the shoulder)
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil
LEVEL/XP VALUE: X/21,000

Kaiko appears to be a normal elk in all respects except for his size. Kaiko usually allows only Aslak to mount him, but he is known to have saved uldras in dangerous



situations. Kaiko is not only Aslak's mount – he is also the messenger of the uldric gods.

Kaiko can teleport to any plane at any time, and can be used as a mount in any mode of transportation (normal or magi-

Kaiko's two horns are magically sharp and are +2 to hit. The horns also have all the functions of a *wand of enemy detection*. Kaiko fights as a 16 + HD monster.



SALTUREN (*god of justice*)

Lesser god

ARMOR CLASS: 1
MOVE: 15"
HIT POINTS: 279
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-25
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Lightning bolt*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Shield*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 20%
SIZE: M (7' tall)
ALIGNMENT: Lawful neutral
WORSHIPER'S ALIGNMENT: Lawful good
or lawful neutral (uldras)
SYMBOL: A set of scales
PLANE: Arcadia
CLERIC/DRUID: 5th-level druid
FIGHTER: 15th-level ranger
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 14th-level
magic-user
THIEF ASSASSIN: Nil
MONK/BARD: 5th-level bard
PSIONIC ABILITY: VI
S: 20 (+3, +7) I: 25 W: 25 D: 17
C: 20 CH 18 (20) CM: 19 (24)

Salturen appears as a man-sized uldra with a grayish-black beard. He is the god of fair justice and believes all lawful-evil actions are an abuse of the law. In battle, Salturen summons great lightning bolts which do 2d12 +1 hp damage. Salturen owns a shining white shield with an uldric rune written upon its surface in black ink. This shield reverses all attacks so that damage inflicted upon Salturen is instead inflicted upon the attacker (this power can be used once a day for one turn's duration). The shield can also *heal* Salturen once a day. Salturen's clerics and druids serve as judges at court and are empowered to enforce uldric laws.





TALMINEN (god of freedom)

Lesser god

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 302

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30 (+10)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 30%

SIZE: S (4½' tall)

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good

WORSHIPERS ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good (uldras)

SYMBOL: The broken thorn

PLANE: Arcadia

CLERIC/DRUID: 10th-level druid

FIGHTER: 10th-level ranger

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 12th-level magic-user

THIEF/ASSASSIN: 15th-level thief

MONK/BARD: 3rd-level bard

PSIONIC ABILITY: I

S: 22 (+4,+ 10) I: 20 W: 23

D: 20 C: 25 CH: 19 (25) CM: 18 (22)

Talminen has the same father as Maitak, but a different mother (his mother was an uldric goddess who is now dead). Talminen resembles his brother in many aspects,

although Talminen is a bit taller than Maitak and has a beard that is slightly grayer. Both Talminen and Maitak appear to be in their youthful stages.

Talminen's traveling partners are his half-brother Maitak and a unicorn named Anor Speedrunner (who is exceptionally intelligent and is of chaotic-good alignment). Anor is AC 1, moves at 18", has 94 hp, does the usual damage inflicted by a normal unicorn, and fights like a 16+ HD monster. Anor only allows Talminen or Maitak ride upon him.

When the orcish gods imprisoned a great uldric lord who had beaten an orcish tribe, Talminen and Maitak went to the Nine Hells to speak in the lords behalf. "Free him; he has only done what was right," said Talminen. Gruumsh looked down on the little uldric god and sneered. "What he has done cannot be forgiven. No one defeats my people and lives. He shall be a prisoner for life — nay, he shall be a prisoner even after his death. He shall be a slave for infinity." He-Who-Never-Sleeps laughed loudly and long.

"Then, One-Eye, there is nothing else to do," Talminen said, and began tearing down the fence of thorns that imprisoned the uldra. Talminen, Maitak, Anor, and the uldric lord escaped the wrath of Gruumsh because the orcish god was afraid of confronting Aslak, whom he had once fought. (Gruumsh did not actually lose this original confrontation; he was, however, forced to retreat — an action which was very dishonorable. This is one of the reasons why orcs and uldras hate each other with such violence.)

The story of the imprisoned uldra is the main reason Talminen is the patron of freedom; it is also explains the symbol of the broken thorn. Talminen wields a magic spear like the one his brother owns. It was also a gift from his father.

**Table 7
Gods of the Ultras**

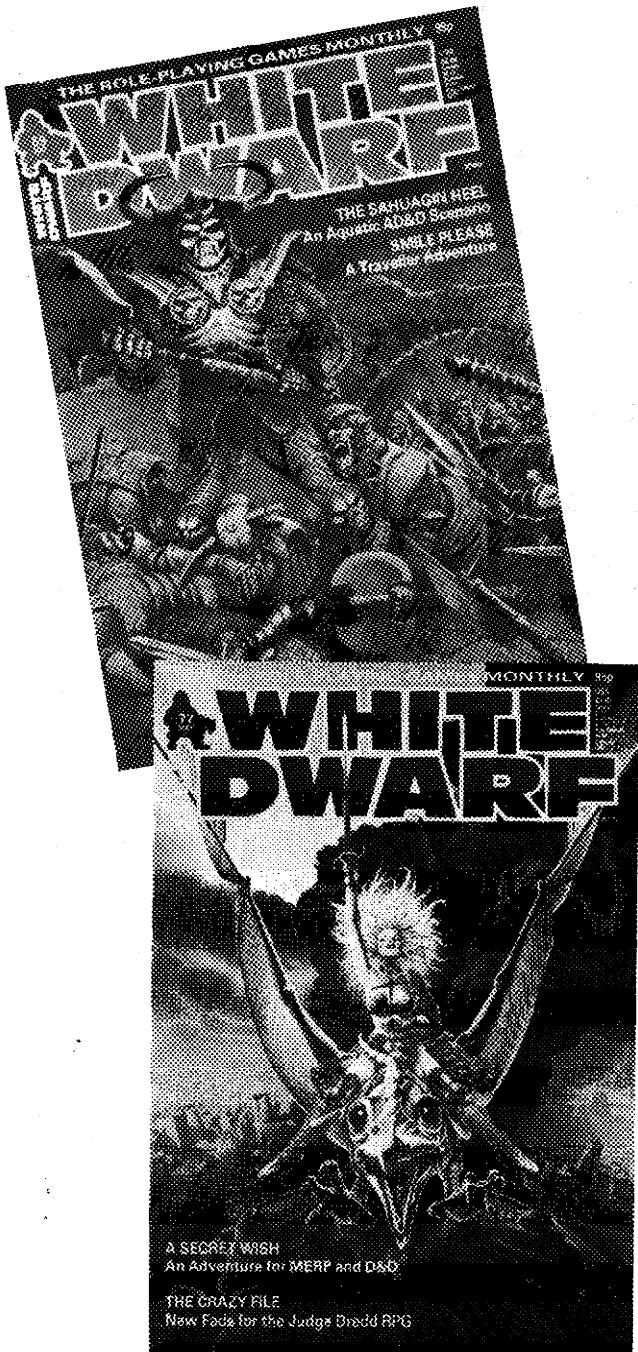
Deity	Sphere of control	Raiment	Color
Aslak	Ultras	Conical hat	Grey
Maitak	Nature	Conical hat	Yellow
Salturen	Justice	Conical hat	White
Talminen	Freedom	Conical hat	Green

**Table 8
Holy Days and Sacrifices**

Deity	H o l y d a y s	Sacrificial frequency	Sacrificial form
Aslak	New moon	Monthly	Berries/leaves
Maitak	1st spring day	Monthly	Earth
Salturen	1st winter day	Monthly	Gems
Talminen	Quarter moon	Monthly	Feathers

Animals associated with uldric deities are: Aslak, elk; Maitak, unicorn; Salturen, none; Talminen, unicorn. Places of worship for these gods are: Aslak, sunlit cave; Maitak, cave or forest clearing; Salturen, wooden temple; Talminen, vast field or tundra. Note that uldric druids are *not* restricted to the neutral alignment. Uldric clerics and druids are usually male, but female ones do exist.

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by Ed Greenwood

In the northern Realms, the tale of Olithard's Tune is well-known and often heard around a taproom hearth or barracks-board, when the night is old and the drink running low. Elminster tells me he lacks the proper storyteller's flair, and I can't even come close to *his* melodious voice and the perfect mimicry of various beast calls and accents he used, so here's a bare-bones summary of the tale:

Olithard was an indifferent bladesman and a capable but half-hearted thief — who longed to become a bard. His tongue was nimble, his wits quick, he could carry a tune, and he loved to pipe airs on his flute. Often, he sat in gardens or woody glades and piped for hours, lost in thought, barely noticing the occasional curious stare, copper piece, or kick aimed his way. He dreamed of entrancing courts and serenading ladies by moonlight with a magical harp, being called on by kings to write the lays of their lives, being looked up to by other harpists, and having his name writ in the Roll of the Remembered after he was gone. "That song was written by the great Olithard," he often said to an imaginary audience as he set down his flute. Yes. He would be a bard, and a great one.

When he at length scraped together a fistful of gems (enough, he hoped), he set out from Silverymoon south into the vast forests, seeking a college of bards that he had heard of, determined to learn all the old songs and how to play the harp. He walked alone, awed by the beauty of the woods but unfamiliar with their ways — and was soon hopelessly lost. Weeks passed as he wandered in the unending shade, until he lost track of his journey days.

One night he sat playing his flute while he pondered (for he was too naive to fear attracting attention to himself), when he found his song answered. He was playing along, working harmony, before he fully realized that another flute was being played nearby!

He trilled, and the other flute answered, echoing his own. Then it piped short, sharp, rapid calls, like an anxious bird — followed by silence. Olithard matched the piping, and was answered again, a little faster. He stayed with the unknown piper this time, faster and faster, falling into a rapid, swirling rhythm of little runs and slurs. The tempo picked up again, and another piper joined in. Olithard thought with leaping hope that he had stumbled upon the bards he sought, and played on like a man possessed, as more pipers joined in and the music rushed its crazy tune to pounding speed. Olithard's head swam, he breathed in hoots and gasps, and his fingers hurt and yearned to fall off — then the music rose into one eerie shriek and ended. Panting, Olithard let fall



The Ecology of the Korred

The wild lives of the Dancing Folk

his flute, head spinning, exhausted — too exhausted to run when suddenly he was surrounded by bearded, grinning faces — belonging to cloven-hooved creatures no higher than his belt, with blue-black hair hanging in wild manes all about their heads. He groaned as the weird creatures loomed over him, cudgels in hand, and fell into darkness.

When he awoke, with a splitting headache, it was morning. Of the horrible creatures there was no sign — but in front of his nose was a pile of gleaming gold shears, daggers, bowls, and coins. Atop the pile was his flute. And scratched in the dirt was an arrow and the words: "Silvery-moon — go."

It is generally agreed that Olithard (who went on to become a respected and skilled songsmith and bard) met with a band of dancing korreds, the strange "dancing folk" of the forests. Little is known of them, but I put Elminster to work and have boiled his findings down to the notes below.

Korreds are curious folk indeed to humans, who tend to lump them together with the fey, dangerous creatures of the woods and wilderlands (like satyrs, grugach, leprechauns, and pixies) that are best avoided. This is wise policy, for korreds dislike and fear intruders, and entrap them (usually in deadfalls, pits, and snares, but sometimes in ambushes — then, korreds favor rocky places where they may use stones as both weapons and shields through use of their spell-like powers over stone). Intruders who are favored, who are considered dangerous to harm because of retaliatory consequences, or who are obviously harmless are carried away to some lost, remote place and set free (usually separated from captured companions, if any). Captives are always shorn of their hair, which the korreds use to make ropes (see below).

Korreds prefer to live in woodlands or rolling, rocky, forested country, and dwell in well-hidden underground caverns and lairs, which they can literally seal off whenever intruders come near. If intruders persist, the korreds magically dig themselves away from the area without ever emerging aboveground. It is very rare for the precise location of such a lair to be divined, because there are always guards posted to watch for intruders. Korreds may dwell in colonies of up to a hundred, but almost always a hunting band of 1-4 adults is encountered, for these range far afield in search of food. Female korreds, like female dwarves, are bearded and maned with hair, and are difficult to distinguish from the males (although a korred can readily tell the difference). Korreds trap small game with animated hair-snares and club it to death, and slay bigger game by animating rocks as weapons. Korreds pair to have a child and remain together until birth is imminent, whereupon the mother-to-be literally

"goes to earth." There she is fed by the hunting of others as she rests underground until the child is born. In large communities, elders take care of the young korreds and educate them, and the mothers return to hunting. Korreds may pair with several other korreds over the years to produce various children, or remain together in a stable pair. Korreds often do not hunt or live directly with their chosen mates.

Korreds are primarily hunters and fishermen, using magical nets of woven hair in lakes, coastal waters, and rivers or mountain streams. They also collect the edible fungi of the deep caverns as a staple, and gather woodland berries of all sorts to mash and ferment (in large stone vats) into a potent red wine.

Korreds are independent, but all obey without question the commands of their god, Tapann (see below) and his servitors — Jambul, Hrressek, Tishlun and Bresk are four of the most famous of these. They also respect and revere the thoughts and advice of community elders, but are only punished for disobedience to elders if such disobedience seriously and willfully endangers other korreds.

Korreds worship Tapann, the eldest and wisest of korreds — Tapann the Undying, the Father of the Dance — but they do not have an organized priesthood with shamans, clerics, or spells granted by Tapann. Instead, once every seven days (or more often in times of gratitude or need), communities of korreds worship Tapann together through dance.

Korreds dance in solitude as a form of self-calming and relaxation, or in asking Tapann for a sign to guide them in making a decision or plan, but once a week they gather with all other korreds in the vicinity and join in a religious, magical "circle dance." Korreds unable to dance due to infancy or infirmity are carried along to observe.

A circle dance is performed in a woodland glade, clearing, or hilltop, or where there are none to be found, in circles created by raising stones of great size to stand in an open circle. The circle may be of any size, depending upon the number of korreds, and the dance is performed to the music of the slap-drum (an instrument of hide stretched over a circular frame, struck with a fist or open hand) and bone flute (hollow bones holed so as to produce a variety of tones when differing combinations of holes are covered with the fingers), and the humming and exultant wailing of the korreds themselves (the korred musicians always dance unless physically unable). The dance begins casually and builds as more korreds join in and the tempo and noise increase. Elder korreds of a community serve as leaders, and after casual, free-form beginnings to the dance, the dancers begin to move in unison, following the leader's movements with (to human eyes) uncanny precision, building to a wild frenzy that always ends with a unison shout (often heard echoing across wastelands at night by travelers) and a collapse to the ground. After a time of rest, the dancers usually dine on berry

Contents of a korred pouch

Item

Item	Chance of finding in pouch
Hair (of various creatures and differing quantities)	80%
Shears* (of iron, steel, bronze, or silver-plated iron)	70%
Dagger* (varying quality and makes)	30%
Whetstone* (rough, irregular)	90%
Skin of water, 1 quart	96%
Skin of berry wine, 1 quart	40%
Berries, 2-6 cups	50%
Berry bowl, wood or stone*	99%**
Meat (various sorts)	30%
Cheese (goat's or cow's)	10%
Coins* seized from captives (1-20, all types possible, usually mixed types)	10%
Gems* (cut, 1-6, all types possible, seized from captives)	3%
Gemstones* (uncut, 1-12, all types possible, found in rock by korreds)	35%
Slap-drum (circular wooden hoop covered with stretched hide)	52%
Bone flute (hollow bone pierced with finger-holes)	73%
Leather thongs, 1-4 in number, up to 3' long	62%
Hide (cured or uncured, one large beast, uncut)	22%
Hide (cured, small scraps or complete hides of small creatures)	53%
Bone needles, 1-6 in number	19%

* Potentially of alunrum (33% chance)

** (100% if berries carried)

wine and the roasted flesh of livestock or forest creatures such as bear, deer, and wolf, slain by bands of korreds hunting or animating rocks as deadfalls.

The circle dance drains vitality from korreds; indeed, aged or mortally injured korreds strive to "dance to death," considering it an honor. Each turn a korred dances, 1 hp is lost — and even more is lost (1 hp/round) from non-korreds who join the dance (including captives). This life-force is used to raise a *sending* to Tapann, who may appear to aid his people by healing the sick, advising korreds,

fighting for them, or working with them. (Forest folk such as satyrs, pixies, brownies, and the like are drained by a circle dance as korreds are, not at the greater rate suffered by non-woodland creatures.) There is a base 4% chance that Tapann will appear at the "shout" of a circle dance (8% if more than 66 korreds are dancing in unison). If a korred is slain while in a circle dance, Tapann is 33% likely to appear; destruction of the circle by moving or destroying a stone or stones (or causing a tree to fall into the glade) adds a further 5% probability of his appearance. Unless

prevented from doing so, korreds always bury any korreds who die or are slain at a circle dance.

Korreds speak their alignment tongue, common speech, and usually a smattering of other woodland tongues (brownie, centaur, dryad, satyr, sprite, sylph) and dwarfish or gnome. Tapann and his servitors can employ *tongues* at will. Korred have an average strength range of 19-21 (typically 20); elders have a strength of 19. Their intelligence range is 11-12 (elders usually have 13).

TAPANN ("The Horned Dancer" or "The Horned Leaper")



Lesser god

ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 16"

HIT POINTS: 260

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACKS: 2-12 (plus strength bonus) or by weapon (plus strength bonus)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Laugh*, rock throwing

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%

SIZE: M (6' tall)

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral

WORSHIPERS ALIGN: Chaotic neutral (korreds)

SYMBOL: Laughing mouth

PLANE: Limbo

CLERIC/DRUID: 30th-level cleric/ 16th-level druid

FIGHTER: 15th-level fighter

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 16th-level illusionist

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: Nil

PSIONIC ABILITY: II

S: 22 (+4, +10) I: 20 W: 17
D: 25 C: 25 CH: 19 (25 to korreds)

Tappan appears as a 6'-tall male korred, bearing a cudgel. He wears a rough tunic of bearskin or owlbear hide, a belt, and a pouch containing locks of his own hair,

a pair of silver shears (damage 1d8, plus strength bonus if wielded by Tapann), and 2-6 steel vials of *holy water*.

Although his abode is a hill studded with standing stones in Limbo, Tapann spends much of his time on the Prime Material Plane, for he may journey thence whenever he hears the hooves and music of korreds dancing in worship. He actively aids his people on many occasions and may fight with his shears, his cudgel (damage 1d12, plus strength bonus), or bare hands to aid them — although he prefers to utilize certain magical powers, primarily his *laugh* (usable at will, but Tapann can never *laugh* on successive rounds, so that each *laugh* is preceded and followed by a round in which he does not *laugh*), which causes creatures within 9" to be *stunned* (01-60%), *feebleminded* (61-71%), affected by *reverse gravity* lasting two rounds (72-82%), or (83-00%) as if by an *Otto's irresistible dance* spell for 3-8 rounds (save vs. breath weapon at -6 to avoid these effects). Creatures caused to dance by Tapann's *laugh* cannot move about but are forced to remain, dancing, within 1" of their location when affected. Tapann may also weave any strands of hair not attached to a living creature into a rope, and animate such a rope, within one round. All animated ropes obey his will, even if they are enchanted ropes normally under the command of another creature, and he may command any number at once. If Tappan so wills, the touch of a rope can cause a creature to suffer effects identical to *Otto's irresistible dance* for 2-5 rounds. Beings who save vs. spells at -3 may avoid this effect. Note that Tapann can employ such ropes to trip, constrict (cf. *rope of constriction*), entangle (cf. *rope of entanglement*), whip (cf. *Quaal's feather token: whip*), bind, or otherwise hinder opponents.

At will and by touch, Tapann can *consecrate* water and cause *faerie fire*. He can also use the following abilities at will, one at a time and only once per round: *stone shape*, *animate rock*, *stone door* (unlimited teleportation and intraplanar if desired; up to a dozen living creatures can accompany Tappan unharmed on such a journey if he wishes), *shatter rock*, *vanish* (up to 666,000 gp weight) rock (stone is trans-

ported to the Ethereal Plane and replaced by air), *transmute rock to mud*, and *stone tell*. Tapann regenerates 2 hp damage/round, and can (by touch) *heal* himself or another creature once every two turns. He can also transmute all non-organic matter to "alunrum," a substance which becomes gold at the touch of *holy water*, and does this as a matter of course to all items left in the centre of a circle-dance ring if he appears. (Creatures to be healed are also placed by korreds in the center of the dance circle.) Korreds use this gold to trade with dwarves, sprites, and other such creatures to obtain clothes (used as dancing finery), shears, some foods, and certain services — or, in a pinch, to bargain for their lives. Such *transmutation* is usable by Tappan once per turn, and affects up to 666 gp weight of non-organic matter (such as metal). Tappan or his servitors can *enchant hair* at will, so that it obeys the will of the last korred to touch it, for 1-6 rounds after activation (being magically consumed at that time). The hair of any creature suffices, and the hair can be carried for decades, if need be, before a korred weaves it and works his or her will on it to bring it to animation.

Korreds of unusual bravery, strength, and loyalty to their people are *raised* or taken by Tappan to Limbo to be his personal servants. Such korreds (usually 6-14 of them) gain the ability to *laugh* seven times per day and regenerate 1 hp of damage suffered, every second round. They guard Tapann's abode in his absence, and he may bring up to a dozen of them with him when he appears on the Prime Material Plane, to aid him in battle or in assisting korreds. Tapann is immune to the effects of a *laugh* by one of his servitors, and can strip all powers at will from servitors who misuse them. If physically threatened, he can also shift his anima (self or spirit) to one of these servitors and possess it, adding its life-force (hp), memories, and intelligence to his own, so that it becomes Tapann. He can do this despite intervening distance or planar separation.

Tapann glories in the natural rhythms of living things, their celebration in dance, and both admires and cherishes skilled and acrobatic dancing on the part of any creature. Ω

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The Dragon's Bestiary

A walk through the woods

This month's selection of creatures includes those which are commonly found in woodland settings. Druids, rangers, and other sylvan classes might find one or more of these beings appearing in future adventures, if they haven't already met them.

DRAGON® Magazine is open to monster submissions, but the following guidelines must be followed. Each monster should be typed or printed on a letter-quality printer, double-spaced, with 1" margins around the text on the paper. Each monster description should be reasonably detailed but no longer than three typed pages. Do not put two or more monster descriptions on one page. Include your name and address on the first page of each monster description; you may staple or clip the pages of each individual monster description together. Do not send more than four new monsters to us within a six-month period, as our files are still *very* full. We no longer look at submissions which include great numbers of new monsters; just send us your best ones. Finally, send a sketch of how the new monster appears, for use by our artists.

Because of the great number of submissions and the tendency for them to overlap on monster descriptions, we do not offer acceptance of any particular monster submission. Instead, we keep the submission in our files until such time as we decide to use it. We then pay for the submission on publication, returning all other submissions which were similar but were not used. If an author wants to know if we've received his submission, he should send a stamped, self-addressed postcard with the submission so that we can fill the card out and return it.

ANUCHU

Created by: Allan Hopkins

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 10-200

ARMOR CLASS: 8

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 1+2

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: *Individuals M; Q, Z in lair*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite or 1 weapon

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4 or by weapon type

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Missile use (+2 with normal bows); possible spell use; surprise on 1-4

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Possible spell use

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: *Very to genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*



PSIONIC ABILITY: Possible in 1% of

individuals

Attack/Defence Modes: Variable

LEVEL/XP: II/44 +2/hp and up

The anuchu are a race of gregarious, forest-dwelling humanoid canids. Their communities are composed mostly of mound houses or dens covered with an overgrowth of vegetation. The anuchu deal with other humanoids in a friendly manner, though they mostly prefer the company of other anuchu to that of elves, dwarves, humans, or halflings. Similarly, most humanoid races find the anuchu talkative and perhaps a bit arrogant as well.

For every five anuchu, there is one with the powers of a 2nd-level ranger. For every 20 anuchu, one possesses the powers of a 2nd-level cleric. For every 50 anuchu, there is a 4th-level ranger, a 3rd-level cleric, and a 3rd-level magic-user. For every 100 anuchu, there is a 9th-level ranger..

The anuchu can speak with most canine animals and even use normal wolves (5-20) to aid them in guarding their communities. Few anuchu wear armor, though all use normal tools and weapons. The anuchu usually arm themselves with the following accoutrements:

Sword and bow	01-15%
Sword only	16-35%
Bow only	36-90%
Bastard sword	91-00%

Anuchu have infravision (70' range) and a keen sense of smell (50' range). In natural surroundings, anuchu can move silently (surprising on a 1-4 on 1d6). Anuchu are able to speak halfling, elvish, gnomish, their own language, and the common tongue.

Anuchu have orange fur covering much of their torso, except for white fur on the chest, hands, muzzle, and feet. They have reddish-brown eyes, pointed ears with black tips, brown padded palms and soles, black lips, sharp canine teeth, and a mane of long red hair (favorite mane styles are braids and ponytails). Most humans who see them think of them as "fox-people." Popular dress includes tunics, cloaks, and so forth of green, brown, gray, or blue coloration. The average life span of an anuchu is 140 years.

CAPYBARA, Giant

Created by: Robert Benedetti

FREQUENCY: Rare

NO. APPEARING: 2-8

ARMOR CLASS: 7

MOVE: 9"/15"

HIT DICE: 2+4

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Animal

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

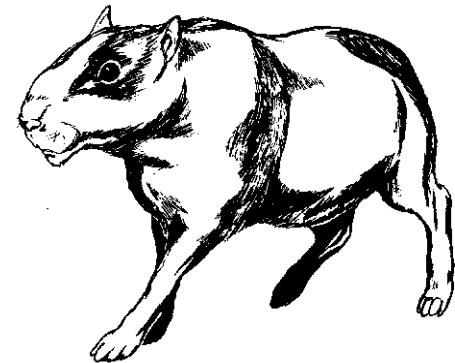
SIZE: L (6-8' in length)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defence Modes: Nil

LEVEL/XP: II/35 + 3/hp

bara moves at a slow, lumbering pace on land, it is a good swimmer, and is able to stay submerged for up to eight rounds.



The capybara is the largest living rodent, resembling a guinea pig. Normal specimens have a length of over 40", a height of 20" or more, and may weigh as much as 150 pounds (1 HD, 1-2 hp per bite). The giant capybara is similar in appearance to its smaller cousin, though it ranges from 6-8' in length and weighs anywhere from 300-400 pounds. Coloration for the giant capybara is usually reddish-brown to gray on the upper body parts and yellowish-brown on the under parts; a black coloration sometimes occurs on the face, outer surface of the limbs, and rump.

The capybara inhabits forests with dense vegetation around ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, and swamps. It will rarely stray more than 100 yards from water, retreating to this source whenever it is threatened. While the capy-

The capybara usually travels in family groups of 2-8, but herds numbering over 50 have occasionally been seen. These beasts are active in the morning and evening, and rest in a shallow bed in the ground during the day. The giant capybara's food consists of water plants, the bark of trees, and sometimes cultivated crops. The giant capybara is most often encountered in a prehistoric setting.

HALFLINGS, Wild

Created by: Arthur Collins

FREQUENCY: Very rare

NO. APPEARING: 3-30

ARMOR CLASS: 7

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 1-1 (2-5 hp)

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: See below

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 weapon

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Missile use (+3 with bow or sling); possible spell use

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Save at 4 levels

higher; possible spell use

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Average to very

ALIGNMENT: Neutral good

SIZE: S (3' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defence Modes: Nil

LEVEL/XP: III/18 + 1/hp and up



Known mostly only as a fireside tale, the so-called "forest children" are in fact wild halflings: descendants of primitive halflings that never adopted the settled life typified by their civilized halfling cousins. Wild halflings constitute a fourth gene pool alongside the Tallfellows, Stouts, and Hairfeet. Known also as "Bramblings" (because they sometimes live in bramble-covered mounds), the wild halflings live in secluded deep woods and are very shy of contact with nonforest dwellers. They especially fear "Big Peoples" (humans,

demi-humans, and humanoids). They are playful hunter-gathers, living off the bounty of the free forest. Wild halflings practice virtually no agriculture and have no metal-working talents or other such abilities (they are great weavers, however). Some travelers believe the forest children are the spirits of dead children who were lost in the woods, hence the popular name of these beings.

Wild halflings are small even for halflings, but their senses are even sharper

than those of their civilized cousins. Forest children can remain perfectly quiet and still, being nearly invisible in natural surroundings, and can hear and see as well as elves. Their infravision is superior for halflings (extending to a 60' range), and their sense of smell is keen enough to identify most creatures at 120' when the wind blows in their favor. Wild halflings are limited to the 3rd level of fighting ability; they make up for this deficiency by utilizing their skills to set snares and traps (which is one of their preferred modes of hunting). The Brambling language has the same relationship to other halfling languages that Gothic has to modern English and German; it is a sister language, frozen in its ancient form, and is consequently, all but totally unintelligible to speakers of other halfling languages.

Most wild halflings are equivalent to 1st-level fighters, though few have more than 8 hp. One wild halfling in six has above-average fighting ability (2nd level). If more than 12 are encountered, a 3rd-level fighter is found among the group. These leaders wear ring mail armor or its equivalent.

Brambling lairs are usually located in a copse of trees with a pool or stream nearby. Their homes are usually briar-covered mounds in the sides of hills, although some groups prefer to live in the trees. In this latter habitat, the wild halflings construct independent structures similar to tree houses, which they disguise with branches and leaves. In their hidden communal lairs are found 2-12 additional forest children, including appropriate leaders and 3-12 young. Forest children rarely stay in the same lair two winters in a row, if they can help it. In summer, wild halflings are very nomadic. During this season, the whole tribe wanders from place to place. Males and females are met in equal numbers, and leaders are equally likely to be of either sex. Those wild halflings that do remain in one location often live in the wooden constructs amongst the trees as mentioned earlier.

Also in the communal lair is a wise-woman, who is the head of the tribe, and

from whom the other leaders take direction. She is a 4th- to 6th-level druid of Sheela Peryroyl, with a variety of special powers. The wisewoman has 0-2 assistants of 1st- to 3rd-level druidic ability. The wild halflings have never domesticated any hunting animals, but songbirds, squirrels, and other such forest creatures living nearby are treated as friends and act as guards for the wild halflings' lair, sounding a general alarm if trouble threatens.

Forest children have the saving-throw bonuses that all halflings have, as well as their concealment, surprise, and quiet movement abilities. In addition, they are as good at tracking in the woods as rangers or elves are. Conversely, forest children are nearly impossible to track if they know they are being followed. Dexterity and small size account for their AC, for they wear no armor. Brambling clothing is typically buckskin, some furs, and some woven fabric. The wild halflings gather many fibers: wild sheep's wool, certain vegetable matter, spider silk, and their own hair. With these, they weave nets and cloaks, twist bowstrings, and make rope for snares. All of this weaving is done by the wisewoman and her assistants. A cloak made by the wisewoman is usually found on a leader-type (1-5 on 1d6). This cloak acts as a *cloak of protection +1*.

Wild halflings typically carry the following weapons:

Short bow	20%
Sling	10%
Flint dagger	10%
Club and net	10%
Spear	10%

If threatened, the wild halflings usually run away, but they are fierce in combat if cornered. If they must fight, males and females alike cast stones, wield stout sticks, or do whatever they can to protect themselves.

All wild halflings are very good at imitating bird calls and the like, and they use this ability to communicate without being discovered. They can summon any friendly bird, squirrel, or other small

animal within the vicinity and use them as "messengers" to convey simple messages, such as a request for another Brambling's presence and so on (bird song and squirrel chatter are not very articulate languages). Wild halflings have no written form of their language, and speak no other language (leaders, however, might know 0-2 other languages of woodland folk; the wisewoman also knows one additional language per level. Pick all such languages from the druidic language choices). Despite their basically good intelligence, wild halflings are unable to grasp much of the normal knowledge their civilized cousins take for granted. As a result, wild halflings appear beautiful and innocent in their pastoral setting, but a trifle backward and simple (which may cause some underestimation of their abilities).

All wild halflings have thieving abilities commensurate with their level. They are curious folk and sometimes borrow things to see what they are. Later, the items are found in their original locations, having "mysteriously" reappeared. Wild halflings have been known to aid injured travelers and hunters if there are only one or two victims. The wisewomen are master herb-alists, and all such wild halfling druids learn to make the following potions:

First level: *Tonic*. This potion has the same effect as a *dispel exhaustion* spell cast by a 1st-level illusionist.

Second level: *Purgative*. This potion reduces the effects of deadly poisons to 2-16 hp damage, rather than allowing death to result (if taken within 10 minutes of swallowing the poison). Otherwise, the potion reduces the effects of nondeadly poisons by half. It can also be used in a poultice for drawing out insinuative poisons.

Third level: *Antidote*. This potion has the same effect as the druidic spell, *neutralize poison*.

Fourth level: *Restorative*. This spell cures all *confusion* and other such mental handicaps, whether caused by spells, magical items, or spell-like abilities.

Fifth level: *Sedative*. This potion causes the imbiber to sleep for 7-12 hours, gaining back 2 hp per hour of sleep.

Sixth level: *Nectar*. This potion sends the imbiber into a deep trance, wherein the entranced recipient is aware of all living things around him. It is equivalent to a *commune with nature* spell, lasting for 3-8 turns and allowing one fact to be gleaned per turn. After communicating the knowledge gained to anyone who might be on hand to hear it, the imbiber sleeps for 3-12 hours.

A lair contains 1-4 bottles of each potion the wisewoman is capable of making. These potions and their protective cloaks are about the only treasure wild halflings have, since money is unknown to them. There is a 20% chance of finding 1-8 pretty stones as personal ornaments among the wild halflings' belongings (maximum value: base 50 gp). Wild halflings are

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very fond of singing and poetry, and enjoy playing practical jokes (as do all halflings). Found among their personal belongings are small skin drums and reed pipes, and an occasional primitive harp or ram's horn. Wild halfling are very adept at woodcarving and basketry, although their skills of pictorial representation are rather crude. In the fall, they secure their winter lair and gather food for the coming freeze. Wild halflings are nevertheless active even in winter, for they love to play in the snow. Forest children live about 120 years on average. Wild halfling are keenly aware of their surroundings and are usually knowledgeable of every plant or living creature within a day's walk of their lairs.

LESHY

Created by: Douglas Lent

FREQUENCY: Rare
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 7
MOVE: 15"/35"
HIT DICE: 3+6
% IN LAIR: Nil
TREASURE TYPE: Nil
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Spells; surprise on 1-5
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Spells; hide in foliage
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 5%
INTELLIGENCE: High
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral
SIZE: M (5' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defence Modes: Nil
LEVEL/XP: V/265+4/hp

Leshies are mischievous inhabitants of forests and wooded hills, delighting in bothering and misleading unwary travelers. They have their own sense of "fair play," however, and usually let up on their victims if the unfortunate souls either retain their sense of humor throughout the ordeal or somehow manage to evade the tricks. Leshies are nomadic creatures, having no fixed lairs and acquiring only those items they can carry upon their persons.

Leshies have a number of powers at their disposal which they use to bewilder unsuspecting passersby. They can hide among foliage with a 90% chance of success, allowing them to surprise others on a roll of 1-5 on 1d6. Leshies possess normal ultravision and *pass without trace* automatically. They can use *audible glamor* and *ventriloquism* at will, as well as the following powers, one at a time, once per round, at the 9th level of ability: *confusion* (1/day), *dancing light* (3/day), *entangle* (3/day), *heat metal* (2/day), *summon insects* (2/day), *trip* (3/day), *warp wood* (2/day), and *woodmaze* (1/day). *Woodmaze* is a special variation of the magic-user spell *maze*, resembling that spell in every way except that the barriers are of impenetrable vegetation rather than planes of force.

Leshies are immune to the effects of *maze*, *woodmaze*, and illusion/phantasm spells.

Leshies appear as wizened humanoids with long noses and matted, dirty brown hair and beards. Their bodies are covered with hair of a similar color and consistency, and their skin is light blue in complexion where it shows through. While they can be more than a little irritating, leshies are on good terms with most non-evil, nonlawful forest creatures, including

most elves (particularly grugach and wood elves), faerie dragons, grigs, buckawn, and centaurs. There is a longstanding enmity between the leshies and kech. A leshy will go out of its way to trouble these forest fiends, even going so far as to assist adventurers in foiling their schemes. The kech return this hatred threefold, but are frustrated by the fact that few of them have ever been able to capture one of these wily tricksters.

LUPOSPHINX

Created by: Lance Hankins

FREQUENCY: Rare
NO. APPEARING: 1-4
ARMOR CLASS: 2
MOVE: 18"/30" (MC: D)
HIT DICE: 6 to 8
% IN LAIR: 25%
TREASURE TYPE: E
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite and 2 claws
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12/1-6/1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Howl
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
INTELLIGENCE: Average to very
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil
SIZE: L (7' in length)
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defence Modes: Nil
LEVEL/XP:
6 HD: IV/225 + 6/hp
7 HD: V/350 + 8/hp
8 HD: VI/550 + 10/hp



Luposphinxes are wolf-headed sphinxes found in wooded areas. They speak their own language, their alignment language, and the common tongue. There is a 40% chance that any luposphinx encountered is accompanied by 5-20 humanoids, usually gnolls or xvarts.

Twice per day, the luposphinx can emit a deafening howl, which has the following effects: all creatures within 60' must save vs. spells or be deafened for 2-8 rounds. Additionally, all creatures under 2 HD must save vs. fear or flee in panic; crea-

tures with 3-5 HD must save vs. spells or fight at -1 to hit and damage (creatures under 3 HD are subject to this penalty even if they make their saving throws). All creatures with six or more hit dice are unaffected by all but the deafening effects of the luposphinx's howl.

The luposphinx attacks once per round with each of its clawed forepaws, and

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L E A D I N G E D G E
G A M E S

once per round with its bite. The luposphinx's body is closest in size to the hieracosphinx. Its hair color ranges from dark gray to light brown. Luposphinxes are carnivorous and prefer elves and halflings to other humanoid prey.

MUSICAL SPIRIT

Created by: Mark DeForest

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 0

MOVE: 12"/15" (MC: B)

HIT DICE: 4

% IN LAIR: 100%

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *Nil*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Nil*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Song*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +1 or better to hit;
resistant to various spells

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%

INTELLIGENCE: *Very*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

LEVEL/XP: IV/160+4/hp

These undead creatures inhabit woodlands (usually sylvan woods). They know how to sing 13 songs and may teach up to 12 of these songs to a person for 5,000 gp or a few magic items. These songs are very lovely and are appreciated by every one who hears them. A character who wishes to learn these songs (and who is willing to pay the price) must already have musical skill similar to that of a bard, although a secondary musical skill is equally helpful.

The thirteenth song requires all living creatures hearing it to save vs. spells at -4 each round that they are within a 60' radius. Those failing their saving throw start to dance and continue dancing as long as the song is sung. All creatures dancing lose one point of constitution for every hour they dance. When a creature reaches a constitution of 3, he falls unconscious from exhaustion. Musical spirits sing this song only when attacked or aggravated. Damage to the spirit (other than fatal damage, of course) does not interfere with the continued singing of this tune. Likewise, plugging one's ears does not prevent a character from hearing any of

the 13 songs. Musical spirits do not tire from singing these songs due to the fact that their energy comes from the spiritual rather than the material world. Only creatures who have learned the 12 nonhostile songs can learn the thirteenth song, and then only by provoking the musical spirit into playing it.

In addition to their magic resistance, musical spirits are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and all cold-based spells. They have the following spell-like powers which are useable at will: *speak with animals*, *speak with plants*, *animal friendship*, and *stone tell* (4 times a day). They can be turned by clerics, though they are neutral, not evil, undead beings; they count as "special" undead if turned.

Musical spirits are believed to be the spirits of bards or druids sent to the Prime Material Plane or who have remained on the Prime Material Plane after their death to protect the forests and forest creatures. Musical spirits do not know their exact origin or anything of their previous life. Both male and female (human, elven, and half-elven) musical spirits have been encountered in sylvan settings.

SASHALUS

Created by: Ed Greenwood

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 8

MOVE: 2"

HIT DICE: 2+2 to 4+4

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

TREASURE TYPE: See below

NO. OF ATTACKS: See below

DAMAGE/ATTACK: See below

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Missile use (spines)
with poisonous fluids*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Semi-*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: S (3-4' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

LEVEL/XP: III/105+3/hp and up

The sashalus is a sentient, ambulatory fungus that dwells in marshes, subterranean caverns, and woodlands. It feeds on creatures of all sorts, attacking only those that it judges it can overcome (i.e., small, disabled, or helpless creatures, including unconscious or sleeping prey).

A sashalus has a curious appearance. Its white mushroom or puffball "head" (which has white or brown mottling upon it) is pocked with many oval depressions, and rises on a stalk from grassy roots — which on closer examination prove to be many tan to grey rubbery-skinned tendrils projecting from a spine-ringed base. The sashalus attacks faster-moving or formidable prey by shooting these spines up to 20 yards with great force. A sashalus may have from 8-17 (1d10+7) of these spines

and can regenerate up to two every 24 hours. A sashalus can fire 1-4 of these spines per round (at different targets if necessary), shooting as many at a given target as it feels necessary for self-defense or to bring about a successful kill.

The sashalus' spines contain (and exude into any victim they pierce) a liquid that reacts with air to become useless within 1-2 days after the spine leaves the body of the sashalus. This liquid affects creatures as follows:

Roll Effect

01-22	Unconsciousness occurs within two segments, lasting for 1-6 turns.
23-56	The victim is <i>confused</i> for 1-3 turns (successful save vs. poison equals duration of only 1 turn minus 1-2 rounds).
57-69	The victim is wracked with convulsions and nausea (-3 on dexterity attacks, thus making spell-casting impossible, and -2 on strength) for 1-2 turns.
70-84	The victim suffers chills, dizziness, and nausea (-1 on dexterity, temporary 1-2 hp loss) for 4-9 rounds.
85-00	The victim suffers no effects.

For creatures with more than 4 HD or with a constitution of over 15, add + 10 to the die roll per point of constitution (for all characters) or hit dice above the minimums given.

Slow poison and *neutralize poison* spells have normal effect on sashalus spine-fluid. This substance has not yet been synthesized by alchemists. The spines themselves

pierce for 2-5 hp damage, conveying more damage due to the effects of the liquid they carry.

The spines are 5-9" long thorns produced in an interior organ at the base of a sashalus's stalk. A sashalus can break down fired spines with its digestive juices



and reabsorb their substance for later use. In like manner, it absorbs the organic nutrients of all prey, leaving only bones and metals. A sashalus approaches disabled prey and opens sucker-like mouths on the undersides of its tendrils. These tendrils exude a highly corrosive acid (2-8 hp damage to all organic matter save sashalus flesh, per round) that dissolves flesh and organ tissues (neutralizing natural or carried poisons) into a thick fluid. The sashalus absorbs this fluid through its skin; this feeding takes roughly two turns for man-sized prey. A sashalus moves away from bones; it also hides, moves, or arranges treasure and remains to lure further prey, if it deems such action will entice more meals.

A sashalus detects prey with infravision (7' range) and with vibratory sensors in its tendrils. It has 10-30 eyes studded all about its gas-bladder "head," and a ring of 8-19 eyes about its base (each located between two of its rings of bristling spines). The sashalus fires its spines via pressurized gas, bleeding jets from the large bladder where it produces gases.

Although slow, a sashalus is quite nimble and can climb low walls, trees, and the like, right itself if overturned, squeeze itself through narrow cracks, and so on. It can close its eyes at will, and can curl or contort its body to blend in with stumps, tangled vegetation, shriekers, and other similar vegetation. The sashalus is quite crafty in ways of hunting and survival.

Sashalus are solitary creatures who wander widely in search of food, having

no definite lair, though they do have favored ambush spots. When encountering another sashalus, they mate briefly; 8-11 months thereafter, each gives birth to 1-2 tiny young who are born with full powers. These young are typically 1+1 HD, have only 4-9 spines, and a total of 2-20 eyes. They grow to maturity in about a year, leaving their parent immediately after birth. Sashalus usually live for up to 30 years. They communicate with other sashalus only by a limited touch-telepathy (exchanging feelings, directions, and mental images — such as the whereabouts of prey, dangerous enemies, etc.).

WENDIGO

Created by: *Mark DeForest*

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 6

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite and 1 weapon

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4 and by weapon

type.

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Roar

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: As per former rating

ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

LEVEL/XP: V/275 + 6/hp



A wendigo is sometimes created (5% chance) when a human or humanoid gets lost in the forest and resorts to cannibalism to survive. When the person tastes human or humanoid flesh, he becomes — in mind, not form — a carnivorous animal. This beast is only capable of living off the flesh of humanoids; it does not kill any other creature. Wendigos have a strength

of 17, and attack with a bite and with primitive weapons (usually clubs, pointed sticks, and rocks). Although wendigos are humanoid, they are immune to all spells that effect only people (e.g., *charm person*, *hold person*, etc.). When a wendigo kills a creature, it lets out a loud and terrifying roar. This roar can usually be heard within a half-mile radius around the wendigo. All humanoid creatures hearing the wendigo's roar may feel compelled to wander into the woods (save vs. spell at +8 to negate the effect). This wandering lasts one day, and the affected creature does not know where it is wandering. If a second saving throw vs. spells (with wisdom bonuses) fails at the end of this wandering, the affected person turns into a wendigo as well.

Wendigos look very much like the humanoid they once were, except that they wear no clothing, are very dirty, and act like wild creatures. No one has discovered how to cure a person of its wendigo alter ego, beyond using a *wish* spell.

WHISPERING PINES

Created by: *William L. Bowman, Jr.*

FREQUENCY: *Rare*

NO. APPEARING: 10-100

ARMOR CLASS: 7

MOVE: *Nil*

HIT DICE: 1 per 2' height

% IN LAIR: 100%

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *Nil*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Nil*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: None

SPECIAL DEFENSES: "Whispering" susurration

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: Non-

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: L (10-100' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

LEVEL/XP: Not applicable

High in certain mountainous regions, there grows a species of magical pines. Every branch grows perfectly straight and carries an inherent charm. Subsequently, magic-users and manufacturers of fine bows, clubs, staves, and arrows intended for enchantment search these forests for this valuable wood (300 gp per board foot). Druids bent on preserving these pines sometimes arrange for a treant (15% chance) to be located in or around a stand of the trees.

These trees do have their own special defenses. They can sense the presence of any blade within 50 yards, and begin a moderately loud susurration which resembles the sound of many voices whispering. A character encountering these trees must save vs. spells or be compelled to listen and attempt to hear what is being "said." The spell can only be broken by removing the affected person outside of the effective

radius of the spell (50 yards); otherwise, the victim starves to death in 5-20 days.

Druuids of 3rd level or higher are immune to the effects of the whispering. At 12th level, druids may communicate with the pines most of the time (70%), and thus learn the passage of creatures through the vicinity. However, this is like asking a question of a treant, as the answer may take a week to complete.

Once the trees begin their susurration, a *charm plants* spell is the only thing that can cause them to stop. In such an event, the entire stand makes its saving throw as a group rather than each individually.

Only magical blades can fell these trees, and the lumber can be worked only with enchanted tools; likewise, the wood from whispering pines can only be burned by magical fire. If struck by any nonmagical blade, the trees regenerate instantly and the tool must save vs. disintegration. The wielder must also save vs. spells or be paralyzed for 1-4 rounds, after which he must save vs. spells at -5 or be enthralled by the whispering as above.

In the fall, some druids harvest the needles of the pines with silver hand sickles, while chanting special prayers to the gods of nature. To accomplish this, they trim the ends off the lower branches, dry them for 10 days, and pluck the needles from the boughs. Druids then use these needles to create a tea which offers a state of mind which has spell-like scrying abilities similar to those of a *reflecting pool* (of course, no pool of water is necessary for

scrying while in this frame of mind). Any one who attempts to harvest and use the needles without the sacred chants is stricken in 1-4 rounds after consuming the tea with severe cramps (as per the magic-user spell *symbol of pain*).

Any weapon manufactured from the wood of the whispering pines is automatically +1 in value. Also, any wand, rod, or magical scepter has one extra charge or is 10% more effective.

WOOD GIANT

Created by: Samuel J. Offutt

FREQUENCY *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-4

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 7+7

% IN LAIR: 33%

TREASURE TYPE: E

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 weapon

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Missile use (giant arrows, +1 to hit); surprise on 1-4

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Resistant to certain spells; polymorph self use

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: High to exceptional

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good

SIZE: L (9½' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

LEVEL/XP: VII/1250+10/lip

Wood giants are one of the smallest of the minor races of giantkind, their average height being 9½'. They have a lightly built frame and are not as strong as other gi-

ants. The strongest usually have a strength of 18/00, but the weakest rarely have a strength lower than 18/01 (there are, of course, the exceptions of some very weak wood giants with 17 strength and some extraordinarily strong wood giants with 19 strength). Wood giants inhabit the same forests as wood elves and, for as long as either race can remember, have mixed freely and have maintained attitudes of good will between their races. Although both races mingle, the wood giants, like the wood elves, generally (75%) avoid all other humanoid contact. This close mixing has caused many similarities in the evolution of both races.

The wood giant (even with its great height) can move silently in its natural surroundings (surprising on a 1-4), and can blend into the forest vegetation, requiring the ability to see invisible objects or heat variations in order to locate it. Although they are not invisible while attacking, they are extremely quick and can move out of hiding, fire a missile weapon (with giant-sized bows), and move back into hiding in the same round. Wood giants are 90% resistant to *sleep* and *charm* spells, and have infravision to 90'; they do not, however, have the ability to locate secret doors as elves do. The life span of the wood giant usually reaches 1,500 years.

Along with these abilities, wood giants have the ability to *polymorph* themselves, once per day, into any manlike figure from the size of a halfling (3' tall) to the size of a frost giant (15' tall). Even though they dislike contact with any humanoids other than elves, wood giants occasionally use this ability to join a party of humans or

WOOD GOLEM

Created by: Loran Wlodarski

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 4

MOVE: 6"

HIT DICE: 9 (55 hp)

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 punch

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-24

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Missile use (fire seeds)

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Surprised on 1-2; hit only by +2 or better magical weapons; resistant to various spells

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Non-

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: L (8½' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

LEVEL/XP: VII/2460

Wood golems are generally made by high-level druids of at least 13th-level proficiency. Construction is also possible by lower-level druids who have the necessary instructions, although such druids

have a cumulative chance of 10% per level of experience below 13th level that the golem rots and becomes useless. In order to create a wood golem, the druid must first have the instructions provided by a *manual of wood golems*. If the druid has such a manual in his possession, the wood golem costs nothing to create other than the costs incurred for materials. If the druid does not own such a manual, the cost for one (provided one can be located) is anywhere from 55,000 to 70,000 gp. Without the *manual of wood golems*, no such creature can be built (thus, DMs should include this item in treasure hoards as desired).

The druid must then find a large fallen oak or pine tree (one that is not rotting or infested with insects) or a recently dead treant shell to begin. To start, large branches of the same tree type must be placed appropriately for the arms and legs, and the rest of the tree must be carved to give it a roughly humanoid appearance. The druid must use the following spells in the following order to animate the wood golem: *reincarnate*, *wall of thorns*, *plant growth*, *barkskin*, and *fire seeds*. Finally, to complete the process, the



humanoids in order to trick them out of their treasure. Wood giants, also like elves, are extremely fond of finely cut gems and well-crafted magical items.

The wood giant usually carries a large sword (as large as a normal two-handed sword), which it wields in one hand. Their favorite weapon, though, is a huge, non-magical long bow which gives them a +1 to hit. The great size of the arrows gives the missile 1-8 hp damage. The wood giant's naturally low armor class is due to its high dexterity (16), but most wood giants wear studded leather armor or ring mail, thus lowering their armor class even further. Wood giants do not hurl boulders.

When encountered, wood giants are often in the company of either 1-4 wood elves (01-60%), 1-4 dire wolves (61-90%), or both (91-00%). Wood giants have no lairs; they either live under the stars or with the wood elves for a time. If encountered in the forest, these wood giants are mostly male (90% chance). Female wood giants usually remain at their makeshift camp or with the wood elves at their lair.

Characters who have had contact with wood giants have described them as friendly enough, but flighty and frivolous, and never in a great hurry to do anything other than eat and drink large amounts of wine. Treants (with whom they occasionally converse) think the wood giants irrational, foolish, and occasionally obnoxious (though they also claim to enjoy their company).

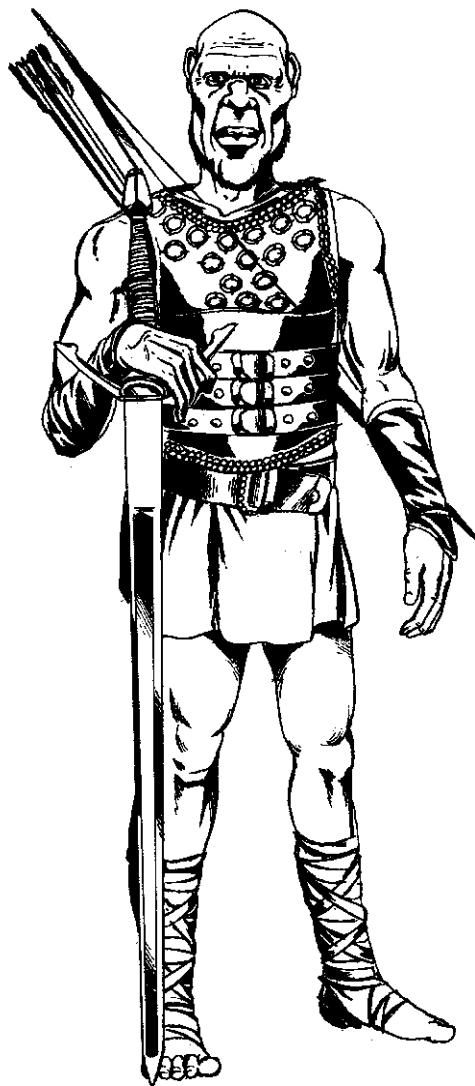
Wood giants speak their own dialect, their alignment tongue, elvish, and treant; they can also communicate with most woodland animals. Wood giants have the basic appearance of giant wood elves.

druid must sprinkle a *potion of plant control* on the wood golem and drink the remainder of the potion at the same time. The golem then comes to life. The wood golem takes one month to complete. There is a base 30% chance that the golem goes berserk and attacks its creator upon any command (minus 2% for each level of the druid). Like other golems, wood golems are only able to understand simple commands given to them.

If created from the shell of a dead treant, the golem has the following additional powers:

1. An AC of 0.
2. HD of 11 (65 hp maximum).
3. Can do structural damage like a treant.
4. Has the same weakness to fire as a treant.

All wood golems can blend into woodlands well; thus, if encountered in the forest, they are likely to surprise (1-5 on 1d6), and in return, can only be surprised on a 1-2 on 1d8. Wood golems can normally destroy wooden objects in three melee rounds or less, and save vs. fire at



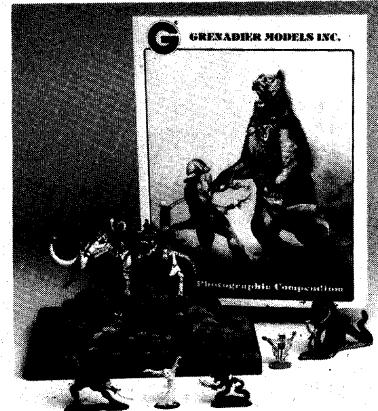
-2. This particular golem can attack by punching for 2-24 hp damage, or it can fire up to six acorn fire seeds (as per the spell) once every turn (three from each hand). Magical weapons of +2 or better enchantment are needed to hit wood golems, although sharp weapons have a 70% chance of making the wood golem "bleed" a sticky substance which (if consumed) can heal up to 5 hp damage done to any being by the golem.

Because of the magical nature of the wood golem, magics used to control plants (like certain spells or magical devices) have only a 50% chance of working on it. After the effects of such magics have worn off, the golem becomes enraged and proceeds to attack the person who formerly controlled it. Electrical- and cold-based spells do no damage to a wood golem, but slow it for 1-6 rounds unless it makes its saving throw. A *wish* or a *time stop* spell works against this creature, and a *turn wood* or *warp wood* spell stuns a wood golem for 1-4 rounds. A *plant growth* or a *wall of thorns* spell restores hit points to this golem (the effects are similar to a *cure serious wounds* spell). No other spells affect the wood golem.

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Henchmen and Hirelings

A review of the rules on NPCs

by Charles Olsen

As we move through the personal and professional segments of our mundane lives, we often find it necessary to purchase the services of other people. We hire mechanics, carpenters, accountants, plumbers, consultants, programmers, electricians, writers — the list goes on and on.

The introduction in the AD&D® game *Prayers Handbook* (page 7) states, "This game lets all of your fantasies come true. This is a world where monsters, dragons, good and evil high priests, fierce demons, and even the gods themselves may enter your character's life."

With all this going on in the AD&D game world, it's not surprising that characters occasionally need to hire outside help. It's obvious that accountants and programmers would be of little use, but there are other types of servants who could be very helpful.

The AD&D game rules provide for two general types of servants: henchmen and hirelings. Player characters, who often need all the help they can get, should take a look at these servitors and be prepared to make use of their services when appropriate.

What, then, is a henchman, and what is a hireling? How are they different, and how should they be treated, both by a player (through his character) and by the Dungeon Master?

To begin with, let's define these terms. According to the AD&D *Players Handbook*, "A henchman is a more or less devoted follower of a character. In return

for the use of his or her abilities and talents, the henchman receives support, lodging, and a share of his or her master's or mistress' earnings — in the form of stipends or as a share of treasure taken. Henchmen are always of a character race and character class, but are never player characters."

On the same page (page 39), the *Players Handbook* discusses hirelings thus: "At any time, a character may attempt to hire various different sorts of workers, servants, or guards. The success of such hiring is entirely dependent upon availability of the type desired, wage and bonus offers, and to some extent the character's charisma."

It then lists typical hirelings: alchemist, armorer, bearer, blacksmith, crossbowman, engineer, linkboy, man-at-arms, steward, teamster, and valet. Other hirelings listed in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* are the sage, scribe, ship master, spy, and weapon maker.

As far as PCs are concerned, hirelings are generally the AD&D game equivalent of contract labor. Adventuring characters often have no permanent home (or if they do, they don't spend much time there), so they usually have little concern for hirelings such as cooks, lackeys, stableboys, and sweepers — indeed, the *DMG* dismisses these, saying that they "are assumed to come with the cost of maintaining a stronghold," and are of "no concern to the player character" (Although the PC who believes this may be in for some nasty surprises; this will be discussed later.)

But adventuring characters need armor and weapons, alchemical concoctions, information, and many other services.

These hirelings can be employed for the length of the job, then the PC can move on to the next adventure. If necessary, the hireling can be employed on a long-term basis, and might even travel with the PCs. (A ship master and ship crew are good examples of this.) The *DMG* includes the monthly costs of standard and expert hirelings.

The henchman is more difficult to define. The information presented in the *Players Handbook*, *Oriental Adventures*, and *DMG* is contradictory.

In "Notes Regarding Charisma Table," the *Players Handbook* says "Maximum Number of Henchmen" states the number of non-player characters who will serve as permanent retainers of the player character. It does not affect the number of mercenary soldiers, men-at-arms, servitors, and similar persons in the pay of the character." This implies that henchmen are not paid.

Also, in *Oriental Adventures*'s discussion of charisma, it says "Maximum Number of Henchmen" states the number of NPCs who will serve the character as permanent, unpaid companions."

Yet in the *Players Handbook*, in the section discussing henchmen, it states, "In return for the use of his or her abilities and talents, the henchman receives support, lodging, and a share of his or her master's or mistress' earnings . . ."

And the *DMG* section concerning henchmen is very explicit on the expenses of locating a henchman and the cost of successful employment, including initial payment, equipment, quarters and support, and activity and shares.

Thus, there are two practical differences between henchmen and hirelings. One: henchmen are of a character class that is available to PCs (fighter, magic-user, bushi, kensai, etc.), while hirelings are not. Two: hirelings are paid a specific amount for a specific job (e.g., an armorer might be paid 400 gp to make a suit of plate armor). The amount of a henchmen's pay is not specific, as it is usually a percentage of the treasure that his or her master receives.

Hirelings

Doing business with hirelings ought to be easy for PCs. Such dealings should be dictated by common sense, and this is one of the few times in AD&D games that PCs can draw on their experiences in the real world to help them make decisions.

As stated earlier, hirelings are essentially the AD&D games equivalent of contract labor. Consider, for example, a plumber in the real world. He offers a service for which a one-time fee is assessed.

The plumber names a price, which might seem outrageous. A decision must then be made: is the price too high, or do you want the toilet to flush? Sometimes, it doesn't matter if the price is exorbitant — you *must* have the service, whatever the cost. Of course, there are other plumbers; another might have a lower price. Compe-

tion helps keep the price down.

The same principle applies in AD&D games. For example, a 7th-level magic-user might want to manufacture some potions in preparation for a big adventure. A mage of that level must work with an alchemist to prepare potions; in this situation, the alchemist has the freedom to name his price. The mage may feel the price is ridiculous, and at this point he has three options: pay the price, find another alchemist, or forget the whole affair.

Hirelings are a little difficult for the DM, but not much so. The *DMG* devotes several pages of text to the subject of hirelings, including their prices and a description of their occupations and professions. The personality of a hireling can be determined by using the tables under "Personae of Non-Player Characters" (page 100).

DMs must exercise common sense when using these tables to create an NPC, so as not to inadvertently create a contradictory character. For example, when you get to the dice roll for intellect, a roll indicating "dull" would be most inappropriate for a sage or alchemist.

The same reasoning applies to the tables within the descriptions of hirelings. If you're determining the fields of study for a sage who lives on a mountaintop, rolls indicating amphibians, crustaceans and mollusks, or ichthyoids should be rolled again.

As mentioned earlier, page 29 of the *DMG* states, "Various hirelings of menial nature are assumed to come with the cost of maintaining a stronghold; thus, cooks, lackeys, stableboys, and various servants are no concern of the player character."

Any player who takes this seriously, who isn't concerned about these NPCs wandering through his stronghold, deserves whatever fate befalls him. Player characters should be especially careful about their cooks, to be sure that no poison is forthcoming from the kitchen. Even if the PC spends very little time in the stronghold, it only takes one meal to do the job.

If a PC sets up a stronghold without screening the kitchen personnel — or, at least, arranging to have the kitchen crew screened by someone he or she trusts — the DM can have some fun with this. Does the character have any enemies? Is there anyone who wishes to see him killed?

The kitchen is a natural setting for an assassination attempt; there are many ways to attempt. A cook could be bribed to "look the other way" while poison is introduced into the food, or the cook could be coerced to introduce the poison himself. Likewise, a cook could be kidnapped (and, most likely, killed). The assassin could then apply for a position as cook. Unless the PC has a careful screening process, he could easily end up hiring one or more assassins among the "menial" hirelings.

As a final note on hirelings, the *Players Handbook* states "that the number of

hirelings is in no way limited by charisma, and hirelings differ considerably from henchmen. . . . The loyalty of hirelings is quite similar to that of henchmen, though, and the discussion of the loyalty of henchmen can be applied to hirelings of all sorts."

Player characters should carefully consider their needs and, more importantly, their financial status before seeking a henchman. The presence of a henchman cuts into a PC's earnings — that is, assuming he can afford to hire the henchman in the first place.

The first step, naturally, is to locate a prospect. The *DMG* lists four methods of varying costs and degrees of effectiveness for locating a henchman. Players can use one or more of these methods in combination. Each method can be employed only once a month.

Method	cost	Effect.
Posting notices in public	50 gp	10-40%
Hiring a crier	10 gp	1-10%
Hiring agents to seek prospects	300 gp	20-50%
Frequenting inns and taverns	special	special

(The special costs for frequenting inns and taverns is a combination of the price of a round of drinks for the house and a fee to the barkeeper to mention the prospective employer to adventurers. For each 10 gp of fees paid in an establishment, to a maximum of 50 gp, there is a 1-4% chance of reaching a henchman.)

These percentages are cumulative — that is, if a PC posts notices that are 30% effective and hires agents that are 45% effective, the base percentage is 75%. But the *DMG* suggests the DM "reduce the percentage chance of effectiveness of each method by 5% when used in combination"; this means that hiring a crier in addition to some other form of advertising is more likely to reduce the effectiveness of the search.

For example, suppose a player posts notices in public that are 40% effective. He then hires a crier, which we'll suppose is 10% effective. The base percentage is 50%, but because of the duplication of effort, each method's effectiveness is reduced 5%, for a 10% loss of effectiveness. The base percentage is still 40%, and the PC has thrown away the 10 gp that he paid the crier.

That was a best-case scenario; usually, a crier is less than 10% effective, so by hiring a crier, the player loses more than he gains. If this rule is followed, it seems that hiring a crier is not worthwhile, unless that is the *only* method employed.

At the bottom of page 35, the *DMG* gives an example in which the PC uses all four methods to try to find a henchman. The total percentage in the example comes to 78%, then 15% is subtracted: "use of 3 methods beyond the first at -5% per method."

The example doesn't quite follow the rule set in the preceding paragraph. This contradiction is probably best resolved by following the example, rather than the stated rule. That way, there's a chance that hiring a crier will be effective. If the crier's effectiveness is 5%, there is no gain or loss (apart from the player throwing away 10 gp). If it's greater than 5%, the player is actually getting something for his money; if it's less, then he's reduced the total effectiveness by hiring the crier.

Among humans and half-orcs, only one character in 100 is suitable to serve as a henchmen. Among other races, the ratio is 1 in 50. But most of these characters are adventurers who are satisfied with their current situation, and will not consider serving as a henchman. On the average, only one character out of every 1,000 considers employment as a henchman. (Naturally, the DM must adjust this ratio if the area is not "average." If the locale is an active adventuring area, the ratio of prospective henchmen might be as high as 1 in 200. But if the area is settled and quiet, the ratio might be as low as 1 in 5,000.)

When a prospective henchman responds to the summons, the DM can determine his characteristics according to the tables in "Personae of Non-Player Characters," in the *DMG*. Experienced DMs might prefer to generate some or all of the henchman's characteristics "on-the-fly" without resorting to the dice.

Naturally, most of these characteristics will not be immediately available to PCs, apart from the obvious; race, age, and "general" (dirty, clean, unkempt, immaculate, rough, ragged, etc.). Even the obvious cannot always be trusted, for the applicant might be wearing a disguise. (For that matter, if the adventurers are particularly well-known or wealthy, they might even merit the notice of an illusionist or someone who might hire an illusionist.)

The DM also rolls percentile dice to determine the NPC's character class. A table is provided in the *DMG* (page 35) under "Classes of Prospective Henchmen," but this table doesn't include new character classes defined in *Unearthed Arcana* and *Oriental Adventures*.

Below is a table of recommended percentages for determining a prospective henchman's character class in European-style AD&D game, including the new classes in *Unearthed Arcana*. This table is presented in the same form as the table in the *DMG*.

Classes of prospective henchmen

Cavalier	10% (d6, 1 = paladin)
Cleric	20% (d6, 1 = druid)
Fighter	35% (d20, 1 = barbarian, 2 or 3 = ranger)
Magic-user	20% (d6, 1 = illusionist)
Thief	15% (d10, 1 = acrobat, 2 = assassin)

(The monk character is not listed on this table, because *Oriental Adventures* states

that the monk does not belong in the European setting.)

This table is merely a raw set of percentages, and the format is not consistent with most other tables of percentages that appear in the AD&D game books. Below is another table that presents the same information, but in a format that is easier for the DM to use.

Die Character

roll class

01-10	Cavalier (d6, 1 = paladin)
11-30	Cleric (d6, 1 = druid)
31-65	Fighter (d20, 1 = barbarian, 2 or 3 = ranger)
66-85	Magic-user (d6, 1 = illusionist)
86-00	Thief (d6, 1 = acrobat, 2 = assassin)

For campaigns set in an Oriental *Adventures* scenario, DMs should use the following table. If the dice roll indicates that the prospective henchman is a bushi, wu jen, or yakuza, percentile dice are rolled again to determine if the NPC is also a ninja.

Die Character

roll class

01-20	Barbarian
21-70	Bushi (d%, 01-03 = ninja)

71-90	Kensai
91-94	Monk
95	Wu Jen (d%, 01-03 = ninja)
96-00	Yakuza (d%, 01-03 = ninja)

Prospective henchmen must be offered at least 100 gp per experience level; this gives a base 25% interest in accepting the position. A higher initial payment increases this base interest — each additional 100 gp increases interest by 10%, to a maximum of 55%.

For example, suppose a 2nd-level fighter named Aric responds to the summons, indicating an interest in being a henchmen. He must be offered a minimum of 200 gp, and this will generate a mere 25% interest. His interest can be increased to 55% by offering another 300 gp, for a total of 500 gp.

For each magic item offered, Aric's interest increases by 15%. Cautious PCs probably won't offer any magic items at this point. (Incidentally, DMs could use this as a mechanism to do away with magic items when the players have accumulated too much — an NPC pretending to be interested in becoming a henchman could abscond with magic items.)

"The PC must offer reasonable housing and promise free food and clothing as needed to the prospective henchman," as stated in the DMG. This merely increases Aric's interest by 5%, but if he isn't of-

fered this, it reduces his interest by 25%.

If the adventurers are on the go (and what adventurers aren't?), it might be difficult to offer Aric "reasonable housing." He must at least be offered free food and clothing, and the DM might choose to lower Aric's base interest somewhat, if the housing isn't reasonable enough.

Next, the PC must tell Aric what is expected of him, and it's time to determine what share of treasure and magic items he receives. However, both the *Players Handbook* and the *DMG* pass the buck at this point, each book referring the reader to the other.

According to the *Players Handbook*, "Once a henchman is brought into your character's service, it will be necessary to pay a wage plus support and upkeep. Your referee will inform you as to such costs. When a henchman accompanies your character on adventures, he or she must be given a portion of treasure, both money and magic, just as a player character would. However, the share can be lesser, for all of the henchman's expenses are paid for by his or her master or mistress. Naturally, it is a good idea to give a henchman as much treasure as possible, for in that way the henchman gains experience points" (page 39).

On the other hand, the *DMG* states, "the prospective henchman must be told what share of treasure he or she can expect from adventuring, and what division of magic items can be expected" (page 39).

The two books also differ in stating when the share is decided: according to the *Players Handbook*, it's after the henchman has been employed. It seems more sensible, however, to follow the method in the *DMG*, where the share is decided before the henchman accepts the position. This share might then affect Aric's interest score.

The *DMG* doesn't provide any numbers here for adjusting the percentages on the prospective henchman's interest, so it's up to the DM to decide how to handle it. A suggestion on this note: If the DM considers the offer marginally reasonable, the interest is not changed. If the offer is less than reasonable, Aric's interest goes down, while a particularly good offer increases Aric's interest.

What is a reasonable offer? A henchman might consider himself a member of the party, and thus expect a full share, equal to what the PCs are getting.

Of course, the prospective employer can point out that Aric is getting free food, clothing, and equipment, and doesn't deserve a full share. In fact, since all of Aric's expenses are being paid, his share could be small — one half, perhaps even one quarter. Whatever the final decision, this haggling could lead to some interesting role-playing between the DM (as the henchman) and the PC.

Paying the henchman's expenses and salary are the responsibility of the employer. The employer can ask that

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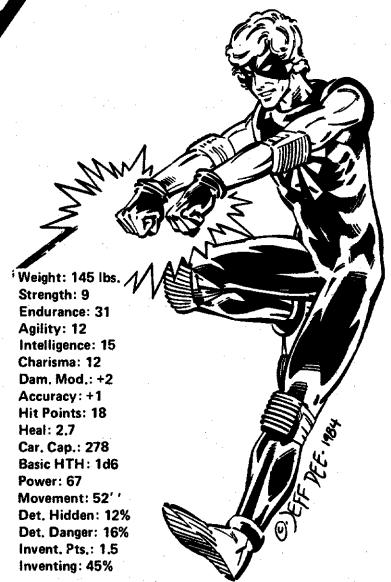
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Identity: Jack Dunn Age: 23

Side: Good Level: 1

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1. Heightened Endurance: +19
2. Regeneration: Max, once per turn, takes one action, heals full healing rate.
3. Invulnerability/20
4. Flight: Max. airspeed = 279 mph, PR = 1/hr.
5. Power-Blast: 20 inch range, PR = 1 per shot, does 1d20 damage.



Weight: 145 lbs.

Strength: 9

Endurance: 31

Agility: 12

Intelligence: 15

Charisma: 12

Dam. Mod.: +2

Accuracy: +1

Hit Points: 18

Heal: 2.7

Car. Cap.: 278

Basic HTH: 1d6

Power: 67

Movement: 52'

Det. Hidden: 12%

Det. Danger: 16%

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the other members of the party help with these expenses, pointing out that the henchman's presence is helping them all, but the other members of the party are under no obligation to help.

Finally, the PC's charisma reaction adjustment is added to the interest level.

Once the basic level of interest has been determined and the player offers Aric the position, the DM rolls percentile dice. If the dice score does not exceed the interest and charisma reaction adjustment, the NPC accepts employment.

All henchmen own normal clothing and possibly a few copper or silver coins, but otherwise they have nothing of value. In fact, that is why the NPC is applying for the position.

The exception to this rule involves exceptional henchmen, which are henchmen who are higher than 2nd-level. The *DMG* is not explicit as to what equipment they might have, saying only "they might well have considerable goods" Beyond this, it's up to the judgment of the DM. However, since exceptional henchmen are rare, this needn't be a problem.

If Aric accepts employment, the PC must then provide him with the proper equipment, which we'll assume he is going to buy at this time. For the purposes of this example, we'll furnish Aric with ring mail, a large shield, long sword and scabbard, dagger and scabbard, leather backpack, hooded lantern, skin for water or wine, and one weeks iron rations. The total cost of this equipment and supplies, using the prices given in the *Players Handbook*, is 71 gp and 15 sp.

Is the henchman worth this amount? If we use the example given in the *DMG* for locating a henchman, the PC in this illustration spent 500 gp to find the henchman, 500 gp to entice him to accept employment, and another 71 gp for his equipment, for a total of roughly 1,071 gp. Remember, this is only the cost before the adventure begins — as the group finds treasure, the PC who employs Aric must give part of his share to the henchman.

A henchman's initial loyalty is determined by the employer's charisma, which can be read from the "Charisma Table" in the *Players Handbook*. This base loyalty is modified by continuing relations between master and henchman. The DM should make notes regarding the player's treatment of the henchman and modify the henchman's loyalty appropriately.

There are several situations when a henchman or hireling's loyalty should be checked. These situations are listed below, along with the result when the loyalty roll fails:

Typical loyalty, obedience, and morale check situations

Situation
Offered bribe

Failure result
accepts

Ordered to testify against liege
Has a chance to steal goods
Left alone in possible danger
Abandoned
Ordered into possible danger
Ordered to perform heroic act
Ordered to perform heroic and dangerous act
Ordered to rescue party member(s)
Ordered to rescue liege
In combat with possibly dangerous foe
Lieu incapacitated or slain
Offered surrender terms
Surrounded by superior foe
Ordered to use up or diminish own magic item

agrees
steals
deserts
deserts
refuses
refuses
refuses
refuses
refuses
refuses
refuses
refuses
refuses
refuses

Associated NPC
Hired mercenary, short term
Hired mercenary
Henchman

-10%
-5%
0%
+5%

Training or status level	Modifier
Untrained or peasant	-25%
Little training, levied troops	-15%
Newly recruited regulars	-5%
Trained regulars	+10%
Elite, sub-officer, minor officials/expert hireling	+20%
Guards, officers, or major officials/henchmen	+30%

Racial preference for:	Liege	Associated group
Antipathy	-5%	-10%
Good will	+10%	+5%
Hatred	-20%	-15%
Neutrality	0%	0%
Preference	+20%	+15%
Tolerance	0%	-5%

Note: Preference adjustments are cumulative, but only with regard to the liege and his associates; with respect to the latter group, only the most disliked or most liked are counted.

Loyalty base modifiers

Enlistment or association	Modifier
Slave	-30%
Captured and enlisted	-15%

Loyalty is subsequently modified by the amount of pay or treasure shared, discipline and activity, the general treatment

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by the liege, the alignment of the liege, the relative alignments of the liege and henchman/hireling, special considerations, and situation modifiers, as shown below:

Pay or treasure shared	Modifier
None	-20%
Partial, late, or unfair	-10%
Average	0%
Above average, choice shares	+5%
Exceptional, bonuses, gift items *	+10%

* Typically magic items, if referring to a henchman

Discipline/Activity	Modifier
None/one	-10%
Lax/little	-5%
Firm and harsh/occasional	0%
Firm and fair/often	+10%

General treatment by liege	Modifier
Inhumane and heartless	-25%*
Cruel and domineering	-10%*
Indifferent and uncaring/or variable	-5%*
Just and invariable	+10%
Just, kind, and invariable	+15%

* Applies only when the liege is not present, incapacitated, or dead; if the liege

is near and in power, minuses are treated as plusses.

Alignment of acquaintances is not instantly apparent, unless a *know alignment* spell is used, so the alignment factors do not affect loyalty immediately. Once the henchman/hireling has been with the group long enough to get an idea of their alignment, the following tables regarding alignment provide further modifiers:

Alignment factors

Alignment variance	Associated Liege	group
1 place removed	0%	0%
2 places removed	-15%	-5%
3 places removed	-35%	-20%
Examples: LE to LN = 1 place removed; LE to LG = 2 places removed; and, LE to CG = 3 places removed.		

Alignment of liege	Modifier 3
LG	+15%
LN	+10%
LE	+5%
NG	0%
N	0%
CG	-5%
CN	-10%
NE	-15%
CE	-20%

Finally, as time passes, there are two more matters that must be taken into consideration regarding loyalty: special considerations and situation modifiers.

Special considerations	Modifier
Killed faithful henchman or hireling in front of a witness	-40%
Tortured faithful henchman or hireling in front of a witness	-30%
Reputed to have slain faithful henchmen or hirelings or actually left them to die	-20%
Forsworn, oath breaker, or deserter	-15%
Rumored to have tortured faithful henchmen or hirelings	-10%
Discharged faithful henchmen or hirelings without cause	-5%
Given a choice gift or bonus within last two months (hireling) or three months (henchman)	+5%
Risked life for within last six months (hireling) or one year (henchman)	+10%
Ransomed or rescued within one year	+15%
Saved life directly or personally	+25%
Uses and diminishes his or her own magic to benefit the NPC (including use of spells, especially cures)	+25%

Returned henchman or hireling to normal state from death-like state (e.g., had raised or resurrected)

+50%

Note: Apply only one penalty and one bonus maximum, whichever of either category is the higher.

Situation modifiers	Modifier
Liege dead or surrounded and outnumbered	-25%
Liege <i>hors de combat</i> (disabled)	-15%
Each henchman dead or <i>hors de combat</i>	-5%
Each hit die or level dead, friendly	-3%
Each hit die or level alive, enemy	-1%
Each hit die or level dead, enemy	+1%
Each hit die or level alive, friendly	+2%
Each henchman present, in sight, alive	+5%
Liege present, in sight, alive	+15%

When all modifying factors have been added to or subtracted from the base loyalty, roll percentile dice to determine the outcome. If the dice roll is greater than the loyalty score, the NPC's loyalty is considered to have failed. (The DMG indicates that if a DM is confident of his abilities, he should be able to determine these factors without actually checking them by merely empathizing with the character or group in question and having them act accordingly. But if the DM is not completely confident of his ability in this respect, he should rely on the tables and dice.)

While it isn't stated explicitly, the DMG implies that players might be allowed to play their henchman character as well as their own character. Page 34 states "henchmen serve as a means of adventuring when the player character is unable to," and page 103 says "Some few players will actually play their henchmen as individual characters, not merely as convenient extensions of their main player character. In these rare cases, your involvement with these henchmen will be minimal."

This should be self-explanatory. At the DM's discretion, players might be allowed to play the roles of their henchmen — but it is important that the player remember that the henchman is a separate person and is not in constant telepathic contact with his employer. (Some players might try to have the henchman do exactly what the employer wants in situations where it is impossible for them to communicate.)

So, as your PCs prepare to face monsters, dragons, good and evil high priests, fierce demons, and even the gods themselves, they should remember that NPC help is available in the form of henchmen and hirelings — if the players are willing to pay the price.

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The Game Wizards

My dinner with Elminster

by Jeff Grubb

It was a late evening in early January when I first met him, here at the office. The first winter storm to hit Wisconsin (it being a mild winter up to that point) was making up for lost time with its severity. A heavy, wet snow blanketed the region, with more coming down. It was a lightning storm as well, not a rare occurrence in this area, but stunning nonetheless.

A sudden flash of lightning appeared through the glass-block windows of the building, its intensity causing me to shield my eyes. When normal vision returned, I realized I was not alone. In the doorway stood a tall, lean figure cloaked in brown.

Elminster.

I have been working with Ed Greenwood since last summer. Readers of DRAGON® Magazine know Ed best for his extensive contributions, among them many "Ecology" articles and his "Pages from the Mages" series. These and host of other articles dating back to DRAGON issue #30 are set in the Forgotten Realms, a world of fantasy and high magic that Ed has been using for his own AD&D® game campaigns. Ed ascribes much of his Forgotten Realms knowledge to his all-night, drink-and-bull sessions with a world-wandering sage named Elminster.

Half a year ago, TSR was casting about for a new campaign setting for the AD&D game, using what we've learned from building Krynn for the DRAGONLANCE saga. Immediately, Ed's name came up, and the noble Canadian leaped at the opportunity. Ed would provide the information on the world of the Forgotten Realms, I would add the game design and stats, and Karen Martin would turn my writing into English as she edited the work.

We quickly set about creating a new campaign which would not only be the home for the AD&D game modules of 1987, but would act as the basis for adventures in the Second Edition AD&D game system. It had never occurred to me to ask Ed how the primary source of his information would react to this. Apparently, Ed had told the sage about our endeavour, and so it was that Elminster popped into my life, heralded by thunder and lightning.

Elminster. I should have expected it, but when the time came to confront our pri-

mary source, I was badly rattled. He was tall (6' with change), and he glowered at me with electric blue eyes that Ed, in one of his more charitable moments, described as "dancing." He wore a brown cape over a stained brown vest and faded blue jeans (Ed had mentioned that the sage had acquired a taste for Earthly fashions).

"Ye be the one cataloging all the tales about my land," he said, in a voice that echoed the thunder outside. A statement, made a question only by the flick of his grey eyebrows.

I nodded, wondering if the 911 operators handled 26th-level magic-users.

Elminster dropped some papers beside my other office chair and sat down. He unexpectedly produced a pipe, lit a match off my thank-you-for-not-smoking sign, and made himself comfortable while I waited for the axe to fall. Finally, he noticed me again, leaned over, and (in a gravelly voice that would make pit fiends head back to Avernus) said, "Tell me about this project."

I admit that my voice was a little unsteady and high-pitched at first, but it gained strength as I talked on. Here is what I told him:

The FORGOTTEN REALMS™ boxed set is the launching point for TSR's new campaign world of the same name, in the tradition of the worlds of Oerth and Krynn. It will be the "home base" of the AD&D game universe, and — with the arrival of Second Edition — the home for that as well. It is based on the Forgotten Realms campaign that has been in existence for over a decade. (The Realms, by the way, take their name from the fact that these magical lands have "always" been there, but we just haven't been paying sufficient attention to them. That situation will change in the next few months, but the appellation will stick.)

The boxed set forms the foundations of a world, and lays out the ground rules on running an AD&D game campaign. A lot of things that were discussed in the various hard-cover books have depended upon the interpretations of various individual DMs and campaigns. It is hard to set down precise rules on matters like local justice, government, trade, or customs, especially when every campaign has its own rules on them. By creating a coherent campaign world, we can give examples on how to handle particular situations encountered

in play and provide the detail to bring an AD&D game campaign to life.

The boxed set also gives a common ground for discussing situations that occur in every campaign. How do characters advance in level? Where can characters get training? How do characters determine what faiths exist in a town? Who rules, and how? What happens to all that treasure the characters rake in? (At this, Elminster broke in with a warning that the Realms, while rich, are in no way as flagrant in their hidden wealth as indicated in the *Monster Manual* tables).

The boxed set is a starting point, beyond which we can explore and expand upon the world around it. This ranges from getting a campaign started with low-level characters in some small community in the Dales, to high-level adventures ranging between the planes or covering the building of empires in this world. The Forgotten Realms is designed to take in a broad range of play and playing styles. The initial set will contain almost 200 pages of information, not only on the Realms themselves but on the down-and-dirty details on running adventures, making it invaluable not only as a campaign world but as a guide to creating AD&D game campaigns.

The Realms occupy a region about the size of North America, spanning from the equator to a thousand miles south of the North Pole. Most of this region will be shown on two large maps, as well as on two more expanded maps of the main adventuring areas for game play (1" = 100 miles). The first pair of maps gives you the idea of the scope of the project, while the latter two are usable for everyday play. The area of the Realms is huge and will continue to grow as we develop more products for it.

"More product? Do ye mean, more tales of wonder?" asked Elminster at this point. "I'm glad that ye realize that one cannot contain a whole world in single box."

Well, we're certainly trying to do that in the Forgotten Realms, but there are a number of other projects that people are involved with that relate to the Forgotten Realms. The Bloodstone Pass module series that started with H1 is set in the Realms, as is the Desert of Desolation module series (I3-I5). For starting players, N-5, *Beneath Illefarn*, is set in the Realms as a starting point for a campaign. Then too, Ed Greenwood is doing the first

sourcebook on the Realms, discussing the greatest city of the North, Waterdeep, and Doug Niles is writing about the Moonshae Isles. Doug, I should add, is basing his sourcebook on his first novel, *Darkwalker on Moonshae*, which is the first product from the books department for this line. Like the adventures, the books of the Forgotten Realms series will be by a variety of authors and will span the reach of fantasy fiction, and the length and breadth of the Realms themselves.

"All the way to Kara-Tur?" Elminster asked, eyebrows raised.

"Kara-tur?" I said, recognizing the name of the world of *Oriental Adventures*. "You mean Kara-Tur is in the Realms as well?"

"As well as where?" said he, puffing on his pipe. "I grant ye, it's a long, long walk from Cormyr to Kozakura, but it can be done, if ye be willing to walk half the way around the world." Ignoring my dumbstruck look, Elminster examined his pipe, which had gone out. "Excuse me a moment," he said. Before I could protest, he walked out of the office.

I arose and followed him, but found no sign of him by the time I had reached the doorway. He had vanished completely.

It took three tries to get the right phone number to Ontario. After many rings, Ed answered with his standard "Y'hallo."

"He was here!" I shouted into the receiver.

"He?"

"Elminster! He was just here, finding out about the Forgotten Realms boxed set!"

There was a short silence. "Uh, Jeff," said Ed. "I hate to tell you this, but Elminster has been here with me all evening. We've been talking about the Skyships of Halruaa. I'm looking at him right now and . . . hold it, he's grinning like the cat that ate the canary. How 'bout I get back to you later?"

I sighed and quietly agreed. It's going to be a very interesting project. How many campaign worlds have their own wizard checking up on things?

Ω

LETTERS

(continued from page 3)

I also like all the new PC and NPC races and classes. They add to the game and give you more choices. I agree that they all shouldn't be made official, but they should still be put in a book.

No name given
Mansfield, OH

A collection of AD&D game modules from early issues of DRAGON Magazine is currently being discussed for the next "Best of" anthology. Some of those early modules are pretty strange, too! If anyone has any ideas they'd like to offer, now's the time!

If you really like Ed Greenwood's writing (I, for one, certainly do, and one reader even demanded that Ed be chained to a typewriter and forced to write on a 24-hour-per-day basis), then you should be pleased to know that the

Forgotten Realms will soon be released by TSR, Inc., as a new AD&D game campaign world. Jeff Grubb has all the details in this month's "The Game Wizards" column.

We're still collecting new NPC classes for the AD&D game, but we've gotten very choosy about them. Expect only the best ones. — RM

Guidelines

If you're interested in contributing an article to DRAGON® Magazine, the first thing you need is a copy of our guidelines for writers. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Writer's guidelines," c/o DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147; and we'll send you back a sheet with all the basic information you need to make sure our manuscript has the best possible chance of being accepted.

One for Michael

(continued from page 3)

in Mannheim, West Germany — now scattered across America from California (Mike) to New England (Tom and Marc) back to Kentucky (John) and Arizona (Bill #2). We write, call, or visit each other rather frequently.

When I go back to see my folks in Louisville, I drop by and see Neal and David (from a third group), and we wonder what Jamie (now in Washington, D.C.) is doing. I may drive down to Ft. Knox to see John (from the Mannheim group), and we'll cruise around looking for a hobby shop. Then, too, there's Michael, who used to work around here but lives in Louisville now, who created a renegade Timelord duck in a TOON game that made us laugh until we lost hope of breathing normally again.

This making of friends didn't change when I came to Lake Geneva, either. Margaret's family became close friends after her daughter Lizzie appeared in a gaming group I ran at a local convention. Two other wonderful friends, Karen and Vince, lived across the hall from our apartment when we first came here, but I never got to know them until we kept meeting each other in the (now defunct) Dungeon Hobby Shop in town; after that, it was all downhill.

In short, the thing I like best about gaming is the chance it gives me to meet new people, who quickly become new friends. It is worth noting that these are friendships which, in many cases, have lasted for years, and they will probably continue far into the future.

When you think about the reasons you like role-playing games, think about the people who have made them worthwhile and fun, and the friendships born from the playing of a simple game. And I'll think of Michael in Louisville, who asked me to write an editorial with his name in it. Here you go, Michael. Anything for a friend.

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Labyrinth

STAR(S):	G	AP DISTANCE:	36
POP. VALUE:	13	GRAVITY:	Heavy
ATMOSPHERIC DENSITY:		Standard	
ATMOSPHERIC HAZARDS:		None	
UNUSUAL CHARACTERISTICS:		None	
NATIVE POWERS:		None	
GOVERNMENT TYPE:		Bureaucratic	
INDUSTRIAL LEVEL:		5	

Labyrinth was selected by the UP as the replacement prison planet for Takron-Galtos. Originally a mining colony world whose rare earth deposits were heavily exploited, Labyrinth is a planet honeycombed with tunnels. These underground caverns, alleged to be structurally stable, are scheduled to be used as living quarters for the prisoners since the surface of the world would require extensive terraforming to make it suitable for human life.

The prison's control center, erected by the Legionnaires and armed with state-of-the-art energy weaponry (Star-bolt [Stun]: 18; three batteries), is the only structure currently on Labyrinth's surface.

In preparation for its new role, Labyrinth has been provided with an improved version of Brainiac 5's original planetary force shield design (Force Field: 45; Flame Immunity: 18; Sealed Systems: 35). The energy to generate the force shield is drawn directly from the system's smaller star.

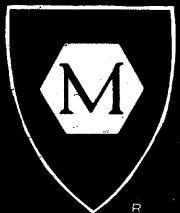
The job of being Warden of the UP's prison planet is perhaps the most pressure-packed and unrewarding assignment the Science Police has to offer. Over the past three years, at least four different individuals have held this position. Each had apparently divergent viewpoints on proper prison administration techniques. The latest in this line is Warden Tsaquin, a blond-haired, greenish-skinned male of normal humanoid size and appearance, save for the disconcerting feature of the single elongated eyestalk that extends from the center of his brow. Tsaquin's assignment as Warden began with the arrival of the prisoner ark on Labyrinth; only time will tell how effective or lasting his tenure in this position will be.

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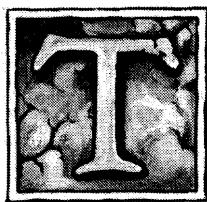
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DARLENE
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HEY MADE US STAND IN A long row, stripped naked, our wrists tied behind our backs. Man to man, we were linked together by heavy chains attached to the manacles around our necks.

The tall one entered, the one the others called Crux, their leader. I had seen his face close up in the battle; it had been the last thing I had seen, followed by a merciful rain of stars as his mallet struck my temple. Merciful, because in that instant when I glimpsed his face, I knew true terror for the first time. The long red scar that began at his forehead and swept in a jagged arc down to his cheekbone and chin was terrible enough, but it was the look in his eyes that had sent the chill through my veins. I had never seen such a man, such a face, contorted by madness. I have hunted the wild boar that dwells in the ruined bowels of the city, seen the flare of its nostrils and the desperate red hatred in its eyes when the beast stands cornered and ready to kill — but the evil there was nothing to rival the face of Crux in battle. It was the face of a warrior who rejoiced in conquest, of a man who laughed at the pain of his own body, and delighted in the pain of others, who knew nothing of guilt or remorse. The cold, hard face of a Slave Raider.

We stood with our backs against the high stone wall of the Great White Tower, the tallest of the ruined buildings in the city. It was from the highest window of the tower that I had seen the approach of the Raiders that morning and called the alarm. Keeping watch was a duty of the young, of those with strength to climb the twenty flights of stairs and sharp eyes to see across the plain. I had always resented the duty, the long lonely hours of boredom spent staring northward at nothing above the craggy twisted wreckage of the city below. But the elders had insisted that the watch should never go untended.

"They will come," old Bosch wheezed in his grating singsong voice. "They will come for us, just as surely as they have come for all the other nomads of the south, and when they come, we must be ready to flee, or if we must, to fight. Never think that we are safe or that they have forgotten us. They will come."

And so they had. I had been given night duty. I did not sleep, I was not negligent. I fixed my eyes to the north and watched for the signs that Borsch had warned of, for a moving band of torches approaching across the plain like a fiery snake, for the distant glint of metal under moonlight. But the night was moonless, and the Raiders came in utter darkness. I heard them first. The hour was not quite dawn when I imagined I caught the sound of hooves somewhere in the distance, a heavy animal tread carried on the dry wind that sweeps down from the north on summer nights. I should have sounded the alarm then, at the first suspicion of danger, as Bosch had always instructed, but peering down into the darkness that blanketed the plain, I still could see nothing. Even if I did hear the sound of hooves, it might only have been a herd of wild beasts, crossing the flatlands on their way from the mountains of the west to the mountains of the east. I kept silent, and I watched.

The Pawns of Crux

by Steven Saylor

Illustrations by Darlene

Dawn came very swiftly. The edge of the sun rose above the jagged Eastern Range, glinting across the snowy peaks, and the plain was lit with vague amber light. Still I did not see them. Then I heard a distant splashing, and lowered my gaze to the shallow stream that marks the northern edge of the city. They were already upon us, hardly a mile away.

I gave the alarm, snatching up the metal ball at my feet and dropping it from the window. It fell straight to its target, the wide square of tin elevated on posts above the pitted tarmac of the street below. The sharp din of its collision was almost inaudible above the beating of my own heart. For a moment the street remained empty, then old Bosch and the others poured out of the buildings all around. I leaned from the window and pointed toward the north. Below, in the street, I watched them scurry about in the confusion of men pulled from their sleep by a nightmare more terrible than any demon of the dark.

I reached the others in minutes, making a frenzied descent down the hollow shaft. I ran into the street, holding my rope-burned palms open before me, and instantly my hands were filled as Bosch pressed a club into the right, a dagger into the left. "Too late for flight, Anstaat," he wheezed, gesturing toward the northern end of the broad avenue, where already I could see the Raiders charging toward us like a giant black hoard, their horses black, their bodies wrapped in black leather. I heard their war cries, carried on the wind, and I shivered.

"But the women, the children . . ." I whispered.

"Done," Bosch said, and I saw his eyes dart for an instant toward the other tower, the ruin of shattered black glass that stood opposite the Great White Tower, where the elders and the unmarried women took their sleep. The mothers and children had already been sent to rouse them and to join them in hiding. This, too, was a part of the many plans Bosch had made in preparation for attack, that if all could not flee together, then only the strongest should be left to face the Raiders while the others concealed themselves among the charred recesses and tumbled beams of the Black Tower.

The battle was brief. Few among us had ever fought another man except in mock combat. The Raiders overwhelmed us in minutes. They fought not to kill, but to capture; even so, our desperation was no match against their practiced skill. All was a tumult of shouting, confusion, and terror. I saw my companions trapped like beasts in heavy nets and lassoed, strangling to the ground by whips snapped tight around their throats. I saw the tall rider in the midst of the Raiders, barking instructions to the others, and I ran for him. I raised my dagger and leapt, and for an instant I felt that I could fly. I meant to stab his leg, but I fell short, and instead my dagger sank deep into his horse's neck. The beast screamed and reared, and my hand was covered with a glove of slick red heat. The horseman glared down at me, his mouth contorted in a strange and horrible laugh. His long blond hair whipped wildly about his face in the wind, snapping back to show the long scar from forehead to chin. I saw his eyes, wild and more terrifying than those of a charging boar, as he raised his mallet. Then the stars, and darkness.

* * *

My head still rang from that blow as we were made to stand in single file against the white wall of the Great Tower. The stone was warm against my back, heated by the midday sun. My nostrils were choked by the acrid smoke that belched from the portals above our head. They had found our sleeping places and our small stores of food, and set everything to the torch.

The Raiders were ringed about us, still mounted on their horses. They were relaxed now, laughing and joking among themselves but keeping their eyes upon us. They held their long slender pikes like lances, cradled against their bent elbows and pointed toward our throats. Occasionally, one of the Raiders would poke the tip of his pike against the man he guarded, prodding his chest or pricking his neck, smirking at the shudder that ran through the unguarded flesh. They outnumbered us, three Raiders to every captive. Bosch always said that they preferred to fight in overwhelming numbers; having no cause to fight for except greed, they took few risks. Perhaps, if there had been more of us, they might have fled. But I remembered how pitiful our resistance had been, and I knew that if all the tribes in the city had been gathered in one place to fight them, we still would have been lost.

Then the Raiders drew back, and down the aisle left in their wake the one called Crux came riding, leading Bosch behind him by a tether fitted around the old man's neck. Like the rest, Bosch was naked and bound, and to see him that way made me lower my eyes in shame. For that I was secretly glad, for it saved me from seeing the face of Crux again as he rode slowly by, the hooves of his mount thudding softly on the tarmac.

He reached the end of the row and wheeled his horse about, and then I heard his voice, piercing and harsh, like the clanging of metal on metal.

"Twenty-five!" he announced. "Twenty-five male nomads taken today in the ruined capital of the south!"

The raiders responded by beating their pikes against the ground and shouting his name: "Crux! Crux! Crux!"

I looked up, and was startled to see that his eyes were on me. I quickly lowered my face.

"You!" he shouted, and I almost looked up again, thinking he spoke to me. But from the corner of my eye I saw him pull sharply on the tether, and I knew it was Bosch that he addressed. "You seem to be the leader, old man."

I glanced up, keeping my head bowed, knowing that for a moment at least I was safe from his eyes. He was slowly rotating his wrist, coiling the tether around his fist to shorten the lead, drawing Bosch closer to him until the old man was forced to his toes. "Twenty-five men," he said, "and not a woman or child among you, and you the only graybeard. Where are the others?"

Bosch remained silent, then choked as the tether was drawn tight around his throat. I saw that Bosch did not lower his face in shame, as the rest of us did, but stared up defiantly. Then I saw him draw back his lips and spit. A gasp issued from the line of captives. Crux only smiled.

"Very well, old man. Your little troupe of nomads will not be needing a leader any longer, and we have no use for a doddering old weakling." A slithering sound then as

he drew a broad curving blade from his scabbard, then a blinding flash of sunlight on steel as he raised it above his head. I lowered my eyes and shut them tight, but I could not raise my hands to cover my ears. Helplessly, I heard the ragged slicing sound that followed, the heavy thud against the tarmac, the gasp that issued from the line of captives and rose to a great moan of defeat.

In the midst of the groaning I heard a whisper to my right: "Now it begins." It was Lino, the outsider. Lino, who knew the ways of the Raiders, for he had been captured once himself, and alone of all his companions had escaped. He was even younger than I, but at that moment he seemed to me as old as Bosch had been, his shackled body slumped in resignation, his face a drawn and lifeless mask, his lips bloodless and pale. Our eyes met briefly, and it was I who looked away first, for in his haggard face I saw an unbearable misery that eclipsed even the horrible gaze of Crux.

Lino had come to us a year before, ragged and thin, as naked as now and blistered by the sun. He had lived in the foothills of the Eastern Range, he told us. Then the Raiders had come. Nothing was left of his village, for all had been taken into slavery. But on the long journey north he had somehow escaped and found his way to us. Many of the men had argued that Lino should be sent away, for if there were Raiders still pursuing him, he would bring disaster on us all. He was not one of us, they had said, so he should find another place to hide. But Bosch had insisted that we take him in, saying that any youth who had escaped the Raiders must know many things of value. Time passed, and when it became clear that Lino had brought no Raiders in his wake, even those who had argued for his expulsion made overtures of acceptance. But no matter how we pressed him, he would not speak of his days with the Raiders. His face would become clouded with the strange expression that colored it now until we at last relented with our questions. He lived among us, always an outsider, keeping a portion of himself guarded and apart, as if there were something broken inside him that was too shameful and secret to share with anyone.

I felt Lino's eyes on me as he whispered again, "The same as last time. The same man, Crux. He kills the leader first. And then —"

His words were drowned by the clatter of hoofbeats as Crux galloped down the line of captives. At the far end of the row he wheeled about and began a slow parade up the line, looking at each of the captives in turn, occasionally pausing to issue instructions. "This one has a badly wounded leg. He will never pass the Crucible." Two of the Raiders dismounted, unshackled the wounded man, and led him away. "A shame," Crux said, sauntering on, "he had a strong body, the makings of a good slave." Again he paused. "And this one is too old. No market for his kind, not worth the care and feeding. And this one — see his harelip, and the slack set of his jaw. An idiot, common among these inbreeding nomads. Useless." The Raiders removed them from the line and reclosed the links so that I was forced to shuffle to the left, pulling Lino along beside me.

Crux continued down the line until the shadow of man and beast loomed over me, blocking the sun. I bit my lip,

praying for it to move on, but the shadow froze motionless before me. I slowly looked up.

I could not make out his face, obscured by the blinding halo of light that burned at the edges of his shaggy blond mane of hair. "And this one," he said, with a grim smile in his voice, "this one slew my mount in the battle. The best fighter among you, even if he is hardly more than a boy." He lifted his pike and jabbed my ribs, grazing the skin but not quite drawing blood. "Show some spirit, boy, or have we already broken you? Can't you even spit, like the old man?"

I stared back at him — it was easy to stare, since I could not see his eyes — but I did not move. It was not bravery, but perhaps it looked like it. I was frozen with terror.

"Very well." He chuckled, then moved on, reining his mount sharply after only a few paces. He was staring down at Lino now. Lino did not look up. After a very long pause, longer than he had spent staring at me, Crux moved on without speaking a word.

"He remembers me," Lino whispered, in a voice so low he could only have been speaking to himself. He began to tremble, so violently that I could glimpse his shivering from the corner of my downcast eyes and feel the vibration through the heavy chain that linked our necks. "I am lost."

Crux finished his inspection, removing two more captives from the group, then cantered to the center of the line. "And where are the women?" he asked quietly. No one answered. Suddenly, he flung his pike against the stone wall above our head. The sharp clanging of steel against stone was followed by the rattling of chains as every face jerked upright. "Where are they?" he shouted. "A single woman is worth more than this lot of sniveling cowards combined. Where have you hidden them?" Again no one spoke.

I glanced above his head, at the shattered wall of the Black Tower, then quickly looked away, fearing that he would see and read my thoughts. Crux leaned forward on his mount, crossing his arms. "Before we set out in the morning, one of you will tell me."

I I

That night we slept, still linked together, in the central atrium of the Great White Tower. The Raiders chained us in a circle around one of the broad marble pillars, then formed their own circle around us. They built a bonfire within the low brick walls of what once had been a fountain, and while some of them slept, others kept watch. One by one the captives were removed from the circle, taken away, and then returned. When the first man was brought back and the second taken in his stead, a circle of whispers passed around the pillar: "What did they do to you? Did you tell?" But the guards made it clear with their pikes that speaking would not be allowed.

Late that night, they came at last for Lino. I would be next. I tried to steel myself for whatever ordeal was to come, but Lino was kept for so long that my courage flagged, to be replaced by a succession of imagined terrors

and finally by utter exhaustion. I was almost asleep when they came for me, and I hardly noticed that Lino had not been returned to the circle.

They led me through the vast dark lobby of the White Tower, past its looming columns, over the moth-eaten carpets, around the thicket of fallen pylons and rusted beams. We were in the street then, dark and moonless, where Crux had pitched his tent. A soft light shone through its dark green panels.

Within the tent was another world, the world the Raiders carried with them in their travels. Dense carpet underfoot, glowing lamps mounted on slender tripods. Crux himself reclined on a low divan, his weapons and battle gear discarded for a richly embroidered robe and a slender webbed pipe connected to an urn at his feet. Great billows of sweet smoke issued from his mouth. When he saw me, he smiled.

"Ah, the defiant one." He waved his hand, and the guards pushed me forward, forcing me to kneel and pressing my throat into the bottom panel of a stock mounted at the foot of Crux's divan. They closed the yoke over the back of my neck, locking my head in place.

"And I suppose you will say the same as all the rest: Women? Children? But there are none, only us, and you have taken us, killed our beloved leader, and exterminated the weaklings, so what more do you want?" He sucked in a great draught of smoke and exhaled it in my face. His voice was hard and cold, with the dreamy edge of men who smoke the yellow herb. "I am not stupid. I am Crux, the finest Slave Raider in the peninsula, and I know the ways of the nomads. Your men are weak. They cannot bear to be without their women and children, so they travel always in a single group, dragging even the old bones and infants after them. This ruined city is a testament to the weakness and stupidity of your kind. The armies of the north destroyed it long before you were born, and now it is left to the Raiders to clean out what few pockets of vermin still slink among the wreckage. You should be grateful that we have come for you at last. Even life as a slave in the north should be a paradise after this pathetic existence. What is your name, boy?"

I swallowed; it was not easy, with the stocks pressed so tightly against my throat. "Anstaat. And I am not a boy."

"Anstaat." His lip curled in distaste as he spoke the word. "A common southern name. But I am remembering the spirit you showed in battle this morning, and I am thinking there must be at least a drop of Northern blood in your veins."

I would have spat at him then, but my neck was bent and the stocks were too tight around my throat.

"And perhaps you're not a boy after all. Then you shall be tested as a man. Now tell me: Where are the women hidden?"

I did not answer. Then I saw him raise his hand as if making a signal, and I felt a sudden explosion of fire against my shoulders. The whip, its power dispelled, slid from my back like a heavy snake.

Among the nomads, I had never imagined such a thing. My mother, before she died, had beaten me sometimes when I was a child, but no grown man ever struck another. Bosch would never have allowed it.

But Crux was not Bosch. He seemed to revel in it, laughing softly and asking me the same question again and again while the whip rose and descended like a scythe. I promised myself I would not weep or cry out, and broke the promise. By the end I could not have answered him if I had wanted to, for my breath came in sobbing tatters and my mouth had lost its shape.

Crux leaned forward, peering at me with one eyebrow raised. "You are a strong one," he said, nodding. "As I thought. So you will not tell me where the women are hidden?"

I thought of Bosch, of all his worried plans, of my own fault in sounding the alarm too late. I took a deep shuddering breath and managed a single word: "Never."

Crux drew on his pipe. His voice was thick with smoke. "As you will. It doesn't matter anyway. We already know where they are. My men are busy flushing them out even now."

I looked up at him in disbelief, but the grim amusement in his eyes showed that he was not lying. The pain, spread across my back like a sheet of fire, seemed suddenly to smolder and ignite, and I spoke through gritted teeth. "But how? Who told you?"

Crux clapped his hands. "Come out, little Eagle."

Lino emerged from behind a screen. His hands were no longer bound, and the manacle around his neck had been removed. Like Crux he was dressed in a fine embroidered robe, but his face was as frightened as it had been that afternoon, and I saw that he trembled beneath the gown. He would not look me in the eye.

The guard who had wielded the whip removed me from the stocks and pulled me to my feet. If he had not been holding my arms so tightly, if my hands had not been bound behind my back, I would have strangled Lino then and there. Instead, I followed Bosch's example at last. I spat. The spittle clung to Lino's cheek. He raised his hand to brush it away, then dropped his arm, and I thought, *He knows that he has earned it.*

"Restrain yourself," Crux said. "After all, you two will have all night together in close quarters to settle your differences."

At this Lino looked up, a sudden panic in his eyes. "No! No! You promised me."

Even as he screamed and tried to fight them back, the Raiders gathered around him. They stripped the fine robe from his shoulders, twisted his arms behind his back, returned the manacle to his neck. They attached us by a link of chain and pushed us from the tent. I heard Crux laughing over his shoulder: "Sleep well — tomorrow the Crucible begins."

As we emerged from the tent, so the Raiders and their prey emerged from the shattered stone portal of the Black Tower. The broad avenue brimmed with chaos — wavering torchlight and shadow, the shrieking of babies, the angry wailing of mothers, the clatter of steel pikes drawn together in close formation as the last of my people were gathered in captivity.

The bonfire had burned low. The guard had dwindled, as most of the Raiders were now occupied elsewhere. From the street there still came the sound of women wail-

ing. Those who still watched us had grown slack and nodding, trusting in the strength of our bonds. I lay on my side, my back turned to Lino, staring into the fire, searching for sleep and an escape from the pain that clutched my shoulders like the claws of a carrion bird. From behind me I heard him whisper, "You don't understand, Anstaat. You can't understand."

I ignored him for a moment. Then my anger grew too great for silence. I glared at him over my shoulder. "I understand, Lino. You betrayed us. What does it matter to you? We're not your people. You're only an outsider. You always were. But we took you in when you came to us starving and naked, and for that you owed us something. And if my hands are ever free again, I swear I'll kill you. For Bosch." My voice caught on the name, and I choked back an unwanted sob. No tears should spoil the pure white fire of my anger.

A dark moment passed, and Lino spoke again. "Your back is bleeding, Anstaat."

I turned to face him, rolling my shoulders against the pillar, wincing at the pain. "And yours?" I hissed. "Show me your wounds, Lino!"

He paused, then turned his back to me. His shoulders were thatched with welts. He turned back. His face, lit by the dying firelight, was so haggard and pale that for a moment my anger abated. Then I thought of Bosch and the women, and it rose again, no longer a pure white flame but still smoldering inside me. "So? So the monster beat you. He beat us all. Every man here has wounds to show."

"And do you think I was the only one to betray the hiding place?" His voice rose, and one of the guards muttered in his sleep.

"What do you mean?" I whispered.

"You kept silent, Anstaat. I know, because I was there. Every time the lash fell on you I cringed, and when you resisted him, I felt almost alive again. But what of the others? Why do you think they're so silent? A few are sleeping, but the rest are awake and speechless, afraid to talk. Because they are ashamed. You may be the only man among us who stayed true to Bosch's secret."

I was quiet for a long time, wishing I had not heard him. He began to whisper again, and I longed to have my hands free that I might cover my ears.

"It is their way, Anstaat. To divide us. To isolate each man in his misery, to shame us with our weakness, and to sow mistrust among us. Crux plays many games. They all have a purpose. The way to the north is long, and he must control us at every moment. Each day he will find some new way to break us so that when we arrive in the city of the north, we will be ready for the auction block."

I thought on this, and I knew that Bosch had been right. Only Lino, of all the men among us, knew the ways of the Raiders. If I was to survive, he might help me. I could learn from him, and still hate him for what he had done.

"He keeps speaking of the Crucible," I whispered.

Lino gave a sigh like the hissing of warm rain on a hot summer night. "The Crucible is the trek across the plain and the desert beyond. The Crucible turns nomads into slaves. It begins tomorrow. They will march us out of this

city, bound as we are now. By nightfall we will reach the river that flows from the Eastern Range. In the center of the plain it makes a steep turn and flows straight toward the north. There will be a ship waiting there, a galley commandeered by Raiders, oared by slaves. They will take the women and children and leave the men behind. Crux wants the women to be kept soft and unharmed — that is why they are taken by water. But the men he wants tested and hardened. That is why Crux will drive us on foot across the desert. Those who falter will be left behind to die. Those with the strength to survive the journey will be stronger than when they left, hardy slaves worth a fortune to Crux and his men when we reach the north. That is how the Crucible works."

He spoke as dispassionately as if he were explaining the workings of a flint or a simple pulley, but when the fire-light caught his eyes, I could see the pain that came from remembering. It took an effort of will to remember my hatred, and to keep my voice as cold and flat as his. "Crux called you his little Eagle. What does it mean?"

Lino drew in a sharp breath and hid his face in the shadows. "He lied when he called me that. He said it only to be cruel." His voice faltered, his shoulders gave a strange shudder and fell limp. "All right, I will tell you. Tell you what I would never speak of before, because like a fool I hoped that it was all past and I would never have to face it again. Once the Crucible begins in earnest, Crux will choose two scapegoats from among the captives. One for punishment, the other for reward. The Rabbit and the Eagle. Both will be examples to the other captives, pulling them in opposite directions, clouding their minds with confusion, cowing them with fear, tempting them with hope. The Eagle he will elevate above all the other captives, seeing that he is well fed and clothed, treating him almost as one of his own men, testing him to see if he can turn him against the others, seducing him with promises of freedom." He stopped, and seemed to have finished.

"And the Rabbit?"

He would not answer.

"The Rabbit, Lino. Tell me, or I swear I'll kill you."

"The fate of the Rabbit will be very different." Again, his voice had grown brittle and lifeless. A chill passed through me, dampening my anger as I understood.

"And last time," I whispered, "when Crux captured your village — you were his Rabbit."

He did not answer, but I saw him nod in the shadows.

"And tonight, in his tent, he promised that you would be the Eagle. That is why you told him where the women were hidden."

He nodded again, and a strange rattling issued from his throat.

"But you escaped him, Lino. You escaped the last time, even so. It can be done."

He was shaking his head now. His voice was so choked I could hardly understand it. "It could never happen again. I beat him, Anstaat, don't you understand? By escaping, I beat him at the game. Do you think he would let me do it again? Never. When he rode down the line of captives, when he saw us standing side by side and recognized me, that was when he chose his Rabbit and his Eagle for the Crucible."

"I understand." My voice was soft, and I was suddenly too weary to harden it. "But if you are to be his Rabbit, then who is the Eagle?"

Lino lifted his face into the firelight. Tears ran down his cheeks, and I saw that he stared straight at me with a strange, sad anger, amazed that I had not yet understood.

III

In the morning, it was as Lino had said. The Raiders passed a ladle of gruel among us, then unchained us from the pillar and led us into the street, where the women and children, bound neck to neck, were waiting. The elders were missing, and Crux did not bother to explain what he had done with them. They marched us down the broad avenue to the outskirts of the ruined city, across the shallow stream, and onto the plain. The pace was slow to allow the children to keep up, but even so the mounted Raiders made free with their whips, barking at us to stay in formation, punishing those who stumbled, blaring at the children to quiet their screaming.

At sundown we came to the river where the great ship was waiting. The women and children were herded aboard. No words of parting were allowed, and even a furtive look from lover to lover was punished by the whip. We slept that night in the open, laid out in a straight line with our chains bolted to iron stakes driven into the ground. The Raiders pitched tents and took their rest within. All through the night I could hear their laughter, Crux bellowing above all the rest, as they drank and smoked, and at some point they came back and took Lino away. Just before dawn he was returned, and the clatter of his refitted manacles woke me. He was trembling and slumped. I asked him what had happened, but he only turned away, hiding his face, and would not answer me.

On the second day we passed beyond the plain. The mountains withdrew on either side until there was only harsh blue sky from horizon to horizon. The grass beneath our feet grew thin and withered. The earth became dry and broken, then turned into a vast spreading sheet of hard stone dusted with sand, as flat and featureless as if it had been pounded with a great hammer.

We marched beside the river, which here became as straight and regular as a street, its banks lined by great blocks of carved stone. The sun blazed down upon our naked shoulders, and the sand ate into the soles of our feet. Though the river was only paces away, the Raiders gave us water only at dawn and sunset. We thirsted, and the sight and sound of so much water, so near, was enough to drive us mad.

That afternoon, Crux rode up alongside me and offered me water to drink, leaning down from his mount and holding the spout of his waterskin to my lips. I looked up and saw the thin smile on his lips. I felt Lino's eyes on my back. But as the spout entered my lips, I did not refuse it, letting its cool flow fill my mouth and rush over my chin. That night I was given an extra portion of gruel, and one of the Raiders, without a word, wrapped my bruised and blistered feet in a heavy binding of muslin. I saw the others watching, but when they began to speak among them-

selves, the Raiders quieted them with a crack of the whip. Again, after all the others slept, Lino was taken to Crux's tent, and his silent departure and return was like the passing of a ghost.

On the third day the Crucible claimed its first victim: Gebel, my mother's brother. It was Gebel who had taught me how to track the wild boar, who had showed me the secret of making a healing poultice of the yellow herb, and who had patiently made me practice scaling the ruined towers until I was more agile at it than any other man in the tribe. At midday he began to shout, and then he bolted toward the river, dragging the men around him stumbling after. The Raiders were upon him in an instant, forcing him back with their pikes, but still he struggled and screamed, cutting himself on the sharp points. Crux had him removed from the line and thrown into the water. Weighted by his chains, he sank beneath the surface like a stone. The water closed above him with a liquid slap, the ripples splashed against the stone banks, and then there was silence except for the low moaning of the arid northern wind sweeping gently across the sand. The captives said nothing, too stunned to speak, their eyes too dry for tears.

"So much for those who thirst," Crux said, and the Crucible continued.

It was also on that day that Crux truly set me above and apart from the others. Until then, his favors had extended only to the extra portions of water and gruel and the muslin wrappings that protected my feet from the sand. But that day, as the sun reached its zenith and even the strongest among us began to stagger beneath its heat, Crux had me removed from the line.

"Have you ever ridden a horse?" he asked me. Of course, I had not. Horses were wild and scarce in the south, and no nomad I knew had ever mounted one. "Then I'll teach you," he said.

The chains were removed from the manacle around my neck. My hands were released and retied in front of me, and a loose robe was thrown over my shoulders. The Raiders lifted me onto the back of a great black stallion. Two sets of reins were fixed to the beast's bridle, one tied to the pommel of Crux's saddle so that I should not escape, the other placed in my hands. And they hung a waterskin about my neck so that I could drink at will. I knew the others were watching in envy and confusion, but my legs were weak, my throat dry, my shoulders blistered from the sun, and I did not refuse his gifts.

As we rode together side by side, Crux tersely pointed out the parts of the harness and saddle and explained the art of riding. I had been terrified when they had first mounted me on the beast, thinking it would throw me to the ground. But our pace was slow, and I soon felt at home upon its back. I felt as well a strange kind of pride, to be elevated so high above the ground and moving so effortlessly forward, the master of so much power tamed between my legs. That night I was chained apart from the others, given a pallet to sleep on and all I wanted to eat and drink. As I fell asleep, I heard the others muttering nearby, and somehow I knew that they blamed me for betraying the women, thinking this was my reward. I was too sleepy from the heat of the day and the food that filled

my belly to care, and I did not even notice when Lino was taken away that night.

The days grew together in unending monotony. For me, they were all alike, long and grueling but hardly beyond endurance. My worst complaint was the sores that chafed my thighs, unaccustomed to the friction of the saddle. For the others, it was very different, and I saw them grow more desperate and ragged day by day. The ordeal was worst for Lino. He was moved to the head of the line, where the faltering of those behind him pulled constantly on his neck and where he was expected to set the pace. The Raiders swarmed about him like hornets, stinging him with their whips, driving him relentlessly on. I did my best not to see his suffering.

"You are not like the others," Crux said to me one day. I never returned his conversation, but this did not seem to bother him. "Look at them. The Crucible does not change men, it only brings out their true character. See how weak they are, how they stumble and walk blindly on, their minds as empty as the desert. And for all their sentimentality, their weeping for one another when they were captured, there is no brotherhood among them. See how they push and shove, blaming one another for every petty discomfort."

It was true. Chained together, the captives constantly jostled each other, pulling at one another's throats, tangling their feet. Any interruption in the march brought the whip upon their shoulders, and the anger this sparked was always directed by a captive against his neighbors, never against the wielder of the whip. Unable to strike out against the Raiders, they seemed to have turned all their fear and desperation against each other. The Raiders were as busy now in breaking up fights among the captives as in driving them on. I looked down upon them from the high vantage of my mount, and saw them no longer as men I had once known, but as wild animals, their hair tangled and knotted, their skin burned almost black by the sun, their faces passing in an instant from a sudden snarl to the passive acquiescence of slaves.

"You are not like them," Crux whispered, leaning close. "They're like rabbits, burrowing their dens in their mountain caves and ruined cities, constantly sniffing the air for danger, living only to breed and be captured. But you, Anstaat, you're more like an eagle, strong and proud and meant to fly above the rest. Look at them now, and tell me without lying that you are one of them."

I had not answered his tauntings before. Looking down at the haggard line of captives, I did not answer him then.

As the Crucible wore on, I felt more and more removed from the suffering of the others. I still slept chained to the earth, but I took my evening meal in Crux's tent along with the Raiders. I drank their wine, smoked their yellow herb from the passing pipe, and listened to their stories of the north; of the great cities and marketplaces, of lush gardens and streets paved with marble. In the north there was slavery, they said, but also freedom, and there a strong man might find every possibility and pleasure open to him. Crux spoke of the pleasure palaces where he spent his hard-earned leisure, surrounded by the caresses of a dozen dark-eyed houris, their flesh naked to his touch, their bodies redolent with perfume and oil. I began to see

that the life of the nomads in the south was a cramped and pitiful thing, fraught with fear and hiding and rewarded only by something Bosch had called self-respect. As I was led out of the tent each night, not wanting to leave its cool and cushioned comfort, the Raiders would be leading Lino in. I saw the weary terror in his eyes only in glimpses, for I always averted my face, and what they did to him in the tent I did not care to know.

I V

It was on the fourteenth day of the Crucible that Lino escaped. We had passed at last beyond the desert, into another plain carpeted with high grass and dotted with low trees. The mountains had again grown close on either side. In the northern distance they almost converged at a narrow pass that led out of the southern peninsula into the mainland beyond. On either side the steep cliffs of the pass were skirted with fortifications, their earth-colored parapets and turrets marking the true boundary between north and south. The river broke from its stone-lined banks to take a winding course through the pass, into a hazy green distance where, framed by the steep fortified walls of the gorge, I could make out the faraway spires of a great northern city glinting in the morning sun.

I learned of Lino's escape first from the whisperings of the captives nearby. He had not been returned to the line at dawn, and an excited exchange ran up and down the line. Their hoarse voices, hushed and hopeful, were more alive than at any time since the Crucible had begun, as if the prospect of Lino's escape had returned a part of their wounded humanity to them.

"He said he would escape," one of them whispered.
"He has done it!"

"But how?"

"He did it once before —"

"Unless he is still in the tent. Unless they have finally killed him with their games. . . ."

The Raiders came for me. As I was led past the line of captives, I heard them mutter the word "traitor" and spit into the grass.

In the tent, I glanced about and saw only the familiar faces of the Raiders, busy with their morning preparations. What the captives had said was true, then — Lino had escaped. Somehow, in the long night of wine and smoke, he had eluded them. Then the Raiders began to strip the robe from my shoulders and free my hands, and I had a sudden terrible premonition that I was to take his place.

Instead, they laid a pair of boots before me, black trousers, and a leather jerkin — the uniform of a Raider. They handed me a saddlebag and showed me what it contained: a length of rope, a short knife, a waterskin, a generous supply of food. Atop the pile they laid a long slender pike. I turned to Crux, who lay on his divan, taking his morning meal. He was watching me with the thin smile I had come to know so well, amused at my confusion. He gestured to the goods laid out before me.

"These are the supplies you will need for your mission."

I looked at him dumbly, still not understanding.
"The Rabbit has escaped, boy. Haven't you heard?
And now it is time for you to repay my generosity to
you."

While I listened, Crux explained. The Crucible had reached its end. For three days the Raiders would make their camp in this spot, allowing the captives who had survived to rest and regain their strength. Then a ship would come from the north, the same ship which had taken the women and children, its cargo unloaded and its hold once again empty. The Raiders would herd the captives aboard, and the ship would take them through the pass and into the city beyond.

Last night Lino had escaped. He could not have gone far, for he was still weighted by his shackles. He must have gone west, for he could not have crossed the river to the east, and the south led straight back into the desert. Toward the west the plain abutted a ridge of low hills where he might hope to conceal himself. The Raiders could have flushed him out easily in a day, but Crux preferred another plan.

"You will find him for me," he said. "You know how to ride well enough, and he should be easy to take with his arms bound behind his back. If he gives you trouble, you may slay him — I know you can do it, I've seen you fight — but you must return with his body for proof."

I shook my head. I thought of Lino's suffering, of the others calling me traitor. Then I realized that I might escape myself. But Crux, reading the hope that lit my face, shook his head.

"Don't even think of it. Certainly, you might take the horse and the food and make your way back to the south. If you can survive the desert. If you don't meet another band of Raiders on the way. Don't think the clothing will disguise you; no Raider speaks with your atrocious Southern accent. But even if you do escape me this time, I'll find you in the end. It might take me a year — perhaps two — but I will find you again. My men and I have been working these routes for many years, and every summer there are fewer nomads for the taking. We have flushed them from the mountains, destroyed their herds, burned their trading posts. Only the ancient capital remains, and within a season or two it will be emptied as well, with every nomad rooted out and taken to the north. There is no escape. The entire peninsula is ringed by mountains, frozen in winter, impassable even in summer. Even if you could cross over the peaks, there is still the sea, and the coastline all about is made of sheer cliffs without a single harbor.

"Besides, you haven't yet heard my offer. Return here within three days with the Rabbit trailing behind you — or the Rabbit's body, I don't care which — and when we reach the city, I'll make you a free man. You're young, Anstaat. You have spirit. Your accent will be held against you, but you can overcome that handicap. Freedom and a strong young body will take you far in the north. Consider the alternative, and make your choice."

I looked at the gleaming boots at my feet, at the knife, the pike, the coil of rope. I thought of Lino — Lino who had come to us as a stranger and an outsider, who had betrayed the women, who would only be captured again

and forced to pass the Crucible another time if I did not bring him back myself. What did I owe him, after all?

"And if you lie?" I said. "Why should I trust your promise? You lied to Lino — you told him he would be your Eagle, didn't you? Instead you made him your Rabbit."

Crux drew his blade from his scabbard, the same curving sword he had used to finish Bosch. He pressed the point to his forearm and drew a red line across the flesh. He held out his arm. "When a Raider shows his blood, he does not lie." I looked at the shallow wound, at the blood that oozed from the flesh. I looked into Crux's eyes. There was no amusement there, no deceit, only a strange kind of honor, and I knew he spoke the truth.

V

I remember the faces of the captives as I left the tent, their astonishment when they saw the uniform I wore. I remember their jeering as I rode out of the camp, followed by the clatter of pikes and snapping of whips as the Raiders quieted them. I remember turning my back to them and gazing toward the north, through the pass in the mountains where the faraway city with its auction blocks and pleasure palaces glimmered like a distant jewel beneath the sun.

It did not take me three days to find Lino, or even two. The trail he had left was far easier to follow than that of a boar, I could see from the spacing of his steps and the way the grass had been flattened by the ball of his each foot that he had run very fast at first, seldom pausing to rest. Then his stride grew shorter, his tread lighter, and I saw how quickly he had wearied.

I followed at a labored pace, cleaving to his trail and unsure of my skill at driving the horse at a gallop. The sun began its descent behind the Western Range, and in the twilight his trail became more difficult to follow. I pushed on, sensing that I was close and knowing that by morning he might regain his lead.

I crested the ridge of a low rolling hill and surveyed the dim valley below. He must have seen me first; from the corner of my eye, I caught his hobbling gait and heard the rattling of his chains as he sought to hide behind a scrubby tree at the valley's edge.

I approached him warily, thinking that he might somehow have freed his hands, that he might still have strength to fight. But when I saw him shivering against the tree, his hands still tied behind him, his face pressed against the bark as if he could somehow still conceal himself, I knew there would be no contest.

The only sound was the dry rustling of the tall grass beneath my horse's hooves. As I drew closer, Lino's shivering increased, and in that moment it seemed to me that he was exactly what Crux had named him — a rabbit, twitching and paralyzed in his panic.

He is not like me, I thought. I owe him nothing.

On a sudden impulse I lifted the pike, cradling the shaft in the crook of my arm as I had seen the Raiders do. I prodded his shoulder with the sharp point. As he quivered in response, a strange excitement rushed through me, a

thrilling sensation of power, infinite and irresistible.

"Look at me," I said. The sound of my own voice, so harsh and demanding, aloof and assured, surprised me. It was a voice I had learned from Crux. It was another kind of power, and Lino's response, the cowering way he instantly wheeled about, showed that I had mastered it on my first attempt. *Crux has seen its seeds inside me with a glance*, I thought. It was no mistake that he had made me his Eagle, that he had separated me from the rest, as the ancient miners of the Eastern Range separated gold from sand.

This was the moment, in any other hunt, when I would have killed the prey. A flood of memories poured through me, memories of other hunts, of the first boar I slew, of Gebel teaching me the secrets of pursuit, and of the way that Gebel had died, sinking like a stone beneath the waters of a river that would silence his screaming and quench his thirst forever. I thought of Bosch, of the head that had held so much wisdom severed from its shoulders, sent tumbling like a cabbage onto the pitted tarmac of a ruined avenue in a dead and broken city. I locked my jaw and crushed these thoughts inside me and prodded Lino again with the pike.

Lino had somehow stilled his trembling. He turned from the tree and stood beneath me with his face bowed. "Do it, then," he whispered. His voice was dry and hoarse. "Let Crux win his game this time."

I reached into the saddlebag and began to uncoil the rope.

"No!" Lino shouted and started back, butting his shoulders against the tree. "You won't take me to him alive. You'll have to kill me, Anstaat. It's what you wanted anyway, isn't it? On the night that I betrayed the women, you said you would kill me if you had the chance. Do it now! Didn't Crux tell you that you could bring me to him dead?"

His eyes flashed in the growing dark. They were not the eyes of a boar, mad with pain and fear, but of a man. The rush of power inside me suddenly contracted, and I knew I could not kill him. I began to knot the rope, fashioning a noose. Then I paused.

"How do you know what Crux told me — that I could bring you to him alive or dead?"

Lino's scarred shoulders, square and defiant before, slumped against the bole of the tree. "Because those are the rules of his game."

"But how would you know the instructions he gave me? You were his Rabbit the last time—"

"No."

"But you told me, that night when you first explained the Crucible—"

"You assumed I had been his Rabbit. You spoke those words, Anstaat; I only nodded." Lino shook his head and sighed. "When Crux captured me a year ago, I was his Eagle. Do you understand now? I was granted all the privileges, I was mounted on a horse, I was given my meals in his tent and told stories of the wonderful north. And when the time came, Crux promised me my freedom and sent me out to hunt the Rabbit — just as he now sends you."

His voice dropped to a whisper. "It took me weeks to

make my way to your tribe, skulking southward through the gorges of the Western Range, hiding from Raiders, living on dry roots and weeds. The horse died, and for a while Pons and I lived on its flesh — Pons the Rabbit, whom Lino the Eagle had been sent to recapture. And then Pons died, and what was the use of it all? I should have done what Crux wanted. I should have done what you are about to do. It all comes to this in the end."

My head was burning. I could not think. "But this time you really did escape . . ."

Lino laughed, then choked, his throat too dry for laughter. "I've never met a man as stupid as you, Anstaat. Do you think I did it on my own, with my arms tied behind my back and his Raiders all around me? Crux hounded me from his tent at spearpoint in the middle of the night. And why? So that you could have your test today. And when you return to the camp, dragging my body behind you, he'll reward you with your freedom. Or so he says. Why not? He will have had his way. You will have proven that everything Crux believes is true. He will have made you one of his own."

The endless power I had felt only moments before now seemed very far away. "I cannot kill you, Lino."

Lino stamped his foot and twisted his arms to one side so that I could see the ropes that bound his wrists. "Then cut me free, and I'll do it myself. He'll never know the difference."

I shook my head. "No. I could let you escape. I'll tell him that I couldn't find you . . ."

"Then you'll end up a slave like all the rest, or else he'll find some more terrible punishment for you. Crux has a boundless imagination for these things. Believe me, I know."

I twisted the rope in my hands, staring at the noose I had made, at the emptiness it contained. "We could escape together . . ."

"Don't be a fool, Anstaat. He'll only find you again, just as he found me. Do you want to be his Rabbit on your next Crucible? Imagine that, Anstaat. No, take what Crux has offered you. Kill me now! Or let me do it myself, if you lack the stomach for it — if the precious Eagle finds that his claws are too delicate and brittle to do Crux's dirty work."

The twilight had vanished, replaced by a half-moon overhead that blanketed the little valley with a dim silver sheen. The reddish glow of the Raiders' campfires loomed above the ridge. I stared at that smoky red glare, and for a moment it seemed that time congealed and stopped, and the world all around receded, leaving me alone in that dim valley. Even Limo seemed far away, and the horse beneath me might have been made of mist.

The future seemed to me like a many-faceted jewel, each facet reflecting a choice, all the facets flashing through my mind at once as I tried to peer into their surfaces and see the consequences beyond. To kill Lino, to cut his bonds and stand mute while he killed himself, to turn my back and allow him to flee, then to face Crux with my failure, to take flight myself. But the jewel was opaque, giving no glimpse of where these choices would finally lead, or what they meant.

The Crucible turns nomads into slaves: that was what Lino

had told me on our first night in captivity. And what had the Crucible done to me? I thought of the scorn I had felt for the other captives, riding high above them, proud and vain upon my mount, and suddenly my face grew hot. I thought of the sense of power that had surged through me when I came upon Lino cringing in the valley, and saw what Crux had done to me. I was no more a free man than Lino in his bonds. I stood on the brink of becoming just as much a slave of Crux as all the others, seduced by his promises, joining in the cruel game he forced us to play for his amusement, a puppet like all the rest, broken to his will.

Lino had once played the same game. Lino had defied the cruelty of Crux and taken flight, like a true eagle, not like the caged scavenger that Crux would have made him, and now was determined to make of me. Of course, Lino had lost in the end, I told myself. Immediately, I saw the lie, for this was not the end of Lino unless I chose it to be. Lino had faced the same choice himself when Crux had groomed him as his Eagle and set him upon the Rabbit Pons. Lino had chosen freedom, whatever its cost. Understanding that, I saw that I faced only two choices: to take the course that Lino had taken, or to submit to Crux and allow myself to be remade in his own monstrous image.

I turned my eyes from the dull red glow of the campfires and looked down at Lino's face, close enough to touch and yet far away, framed by my clouded thoughts like a face in a picture. I remembered the tears he had wept on the night of our capture and the lines of suffering that had creased his brow on all the nights since then. But now his cheeks and forehead shone smooth and silver in the moonlight. His eyes were bright and dry. There was no anger or pain or guilt there; it was the face of a free man, unconquered and still defiant, but composed and ready for death.

The jewel turned in my mind, and I strained to catch a glint of hope — that glint was the brightness of Lino's eyes. Crux had told me that escape was impossible, that freedom was only a nomad's dream, that no other game existed except the Crucible that ground men into the same coarse matter as himself, or else crushed them altogether. But how could Crux know the future any more than I, especially if there were those like Lino who could still summon the will to defy him?

The power of the north could not last forever. Once the south had been strong and men had thought its reign would never end — so the proud inscriptions on the towers of the ancient capital made clear, those same inscriptions that were now weathered and chipped with decay. So it would someday be with the north. And who could say what other realms and what other men would rise to take its place?

I closed my eyes. Such a thin hope: nothing more than a phantom offering a pale whisper of freedom. I would not delude myself. No amount of wistful imagining could soften the harshness of the choice I made. Call me fool. Call me Rabbit or Eagle — there is finally no difference. But let no man say that I became Crux's creature.

I slid from the saddle and pulled the dagger from its sheath. Lino turned and offered his wrists. I sliced through the heavy bindings. He turned back and reached

for the knife.

For an instant we clutched the hilt together, his finger laced with mine. I looked into his eyes and saw that he was still ready to die, that he did not know the choice I had made. I pulled the hilt from his grasp, returned the dagger to its sheath, and mounted the horse.

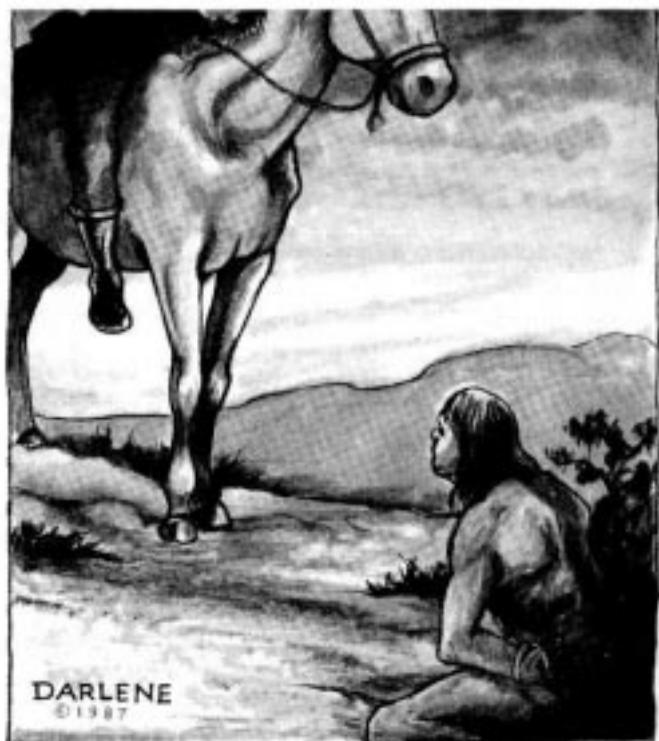
A sudden tremor of doubt ran through my fingers; the reins slipped from my grasp. To steady myself, I took inventory of the supplies that Crux had given me. We would have to eat and drink as little as we could. I looked down at the clothing I wore, the uniform of a Raider, and suddenly wanted to tear it from my body in disgust, but I would need its protection for the journey.

Lino had not moved. A band of clouds obscured the moon, casting its shadow across his face, and he stood so still that he might have been carved from stone. "What are you waiting for?" I said. I leaned forward in the saddle and gestured to the space behind me. "There's room enough for two. It will only slow us down if one walks while the other rides."

Lino slowly shook his head. "You're an even greater fool than I thought, Anstaat." But his whisper held no malice, and he turned his face away as he spoke. He could not resist a final jab, or perhaps he was giving me one last chance to betray him.

"And a better man than I had thought," I answered. Lino stood still for a long moment, then his shoulders began to shake, and I heard him draw in a shuddering breath. I turned my face away so that he would not know that I saw him weeping. "Hurry," I said. "We have a very long journey ahead of us."

I felt him climb into the saddle behind me and settle himself, felt the trembling of his body, then spurred the horse across the valley and up to the crest of the hill. There, I paused for a moment, looking to the east. The



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Raiders' campfires flashed tiny but distinct in the darkness. The river glimmered beyond, a thin ribbon of black marble beneath the moon. Far to the north, the parapets of the mountain pass were lined with torches smaller than stars. From the angle of my westward vantage, I could make out only a tiny sliver of the great city that lay be-

yond, a single tower brightly lit like a beacon.

I stared at that tower for a long time. Then I snapped the reins and kicked my heels against the horse's flanks, turning the beast southward, and we began the long uncertain journey toward freedom.

Ω

THE BESTIARY

A compendium of creatures and beings
from the lost world of Atlantis

Stephen Michael Seeth
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SAGE ADVICE

by "Skip" Williams

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Please do not expect a personal reply, as we no longer have the time to make them. However, we will do our best to answer as many questions in this column as possible.

This month's column focuses on the rules governing the highest levels of D&D® game play: the D&D Masters and Immortals Sets.

D&D® Masters Set

Can a *wall of iron* spell be cast with holes in it, so as to "handcuff" a creature?

No. A *wall* cannot be cast so that a creature is embedded in it. Any magical wall, however, can be cast so as to trap a creature inside an enclosure. In your example, the prisoner could be entrapped in an iron enclosure constructed with a *wall of iron* spell, but the victim couldn't be "handcuffed."

What would the effect of weapon mastery be for a mystic's attacks with his hands?

Mystics cannot gain mastery with their hands. The weapon mastery rules are limited to weapon-using creatures of sufficient intelligence, as explained on page 15 of the *Master Players' Book*.

Would an anti-magic shell prevent a mystic from using his special attacks or abilities?

A mystic's special abilities are not magical per se, so they cannot be disrupted by Anti-Magic in any form.

Do mystics get any armor-class bonuses for high dexterity?

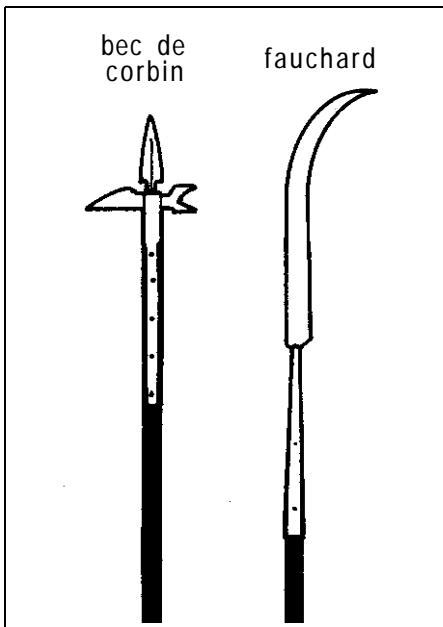
No, the mystic's armor class is derived solely from his discipline. Dexterity adjustments do not apply.

If PCs can become mystics, can they also become thugs or heads-men?

There are no rules for PC thugs or heads-men. You are free to develop your own, but we don't recommend it.

What is a *bec de corbin*? What is a *fauchard*?

A *bec de corbin* looks something like a halberd with a "beak" instead of an axe head; use the halberd rules for this weapon. A *fauchard* is a weapon much like a bill, doing the same damage.



When do the various dragon rulers appear in play?

These unique creatures generally appear only when the DM decides they should. Otherwise, they sometimes appear as wandering monsters in special areas such as other planes, remote mountains, deep caverns, or other exotic locales.

How about some advice on druid-vs.-druid combat?

The point of druid combat is for the lower-level druid to prove he is worthy to advance to his next level. To do so, he must defeat the higher-level druid in some sort of nonfatal contest. This could be something as simple as a wrestling match (as per the Companion rules) or a more elaborate contest, like "Let's see who can kill the greatest number of adult blue dragons in one month."

What are the Outer Planes, and why aren't they covered in the Masters Set as promised in the Companion rules?

Information on the Outer Planes didn't make it into the Masters Set for a number

of reasons, primarily because the author and editors thought this material more properly belonged in the Immortals rules. The Immortals Set explains the Outer Planes as they relate to Immortal creatures. The Astral Plane is a plane linking the Outer Planes to the Inner Planes, and is described briefly in the Immortals rules.

Why do DM-created high-level characters have so little cash?

The amount of treasure a high-level character has (1% or less of his XP total) reflects the making of all possible expenditures and the fact that some character experience comes from defeating monsters, not from collecting cash. To put it another way: Do all the PCs in your campaign have as many gold as they have experience points, or do they usually have much less?

Would a Lawful cleric have to worry about an alignment change if he cast the wizardy spell too often?

Why should he? There is nothing Chaotic (or Neutral or Lawful) about using this spell. It simply allows the cleric to use scrolls with low-level magic-user spells and devices such as wands.

Can the spell create normal monsters be made permanent?

Yes. Each monster, however, will radiate magic, and all will cease to exist if the permanence affecting any one of them is dispelled. Also, each of the monsters are considered to have one permanent spell and could only receive one more permanent spell (see the spell description). Finally, the created monsters would have to be fed and cared for by the spell-caster, and they are likely to make a nuisance of themselves in other ways (as in demanding care and feeding).

When a lycanthrope dies, it reverts to its normal form. What is a lycanthrope's normal form?

Any lycanthrope's normal form is human.

What are "special undead"?

Special undead (such as undead beholders) are constructs and servants of the various Immortals of Entropy (the Sphere of death and destruction).

Can an undead beholder be Turned?

Undead beholders are constructs and can be Turned by clerics as "specials."

A "T" or "D" result only Turns or destroys 2d6 HD worth of undead. Does this mean that undead with more than 12 HD cannot be Turned or destroyed?

A "T" result, or a successful roll on a Turn attempt when one is required, always Turns at least one undead creature, re-

gardless of its hit dice. A "D" result always destroys at least one undead creature. This is also true for both "D+" and "D#" results.

Can a cleric use the weapon mastery rules to learn how to use an edged weapon?

Weapon mastery never allows a character to circumvent class-based weapon restrictions.

Can clerics use the various shield weapons?

All shield weapons are edged weapons – and thus unusable by clerics.

Page 42 of the Master DM's Book says that the titanotherere is listed in the D&D Expert Set. I cannot find it there.

No, but you can find the titanotherere on page 13 of the D&D game accessory AC9, *Creature Catalog*.

D&D® Immortals Set

Can an Immortal character have an armor class better than -20?

No; AC -20 is the limit.

Is there an upper limit on the amount of power, permanent or temporary, that an Immortal character can have?

A Full Hierarch has 15,000 PP; this is the limit for both permanent and temporary power.

If Time is the fourth dimension, what do Immortals — four-dimensional beings — look like?

As the rules say again and again, Time is not a dimension – it is a Sphere. To answer the second half of your question, what an Immortal looks like depends upon who is looking. Humans can only perceive three dimensions, so they are unaware of an Immortals fourth dimension; the Immortal looks like any other three-dimensional being. Immortals look like four-dimensional creatures to other Immortals. I can't explain in this column what four-dimensional solids look like; perhaps a math or physics teacher can help you.

Is it possible for an Immortal PC to become an Old One and then reenter the multiverse?

No. Once a character becomes an Old One, he "wins" and is never again seen during the course of a D&D Immortals game campaign.

Could an Immortal PC shape-change into a blackball and cross the Dimensional Vortex?

No, as blackballs have no corporeal body. An Immortal could take the form of

a vortex creature with a corporeal body, such as a spectral hound. Anyone crossing the Dimensional Vortex, however, leaves the multiverse – never to return.

What is the Astral Plane?

The Astral Plane is an infinite pentaspace connecting the Inner Planes with the Outer Planes. Like most planes, it has large areas of empty space with widely scattered chunks of matter like our "outer space" has.

When will the Old Ones return to the multiverse?

The Old Ones will never reenter the multiverse during the course of a D&D Immortals game campaign.

What was the Old Ones' "Great Experiment?"

The creation of the multiverse.

What is the final fate of an Immortal character?

There are three possibilities for any Immortal: 1) continue to exist as an Immortal indefinitely; 2) "die" and cease to exist; or, 3) work up through the ranks of the Immortals twice, reaching Full Hierarch twice. In the latter case, the Immortal becomes an Old One, leaves the multiverse, and is never seen again.

What are the sixth and higher dimensions?

These dimensions are the domain of the Old Ones. They are not perceivable by creatures living in the multiverse and cannot be described – yet, anyway.

Where are the Immortals' home planes in relation to the D&D game world?

All of the Immortals' home planes are located across the Astral Plane among all of the other Outer Planes.

Where can I find the abilities of an Immortal's various forms? Why aren't they all listed in one place?

Basic abilities, by form, can be gleaned from the Forms section on page 3 of the *Players' Guide to Immortals* and from sections 2 and 3, on pages 8-21 of the same book. They have been presented this way so that a person new to Immortals play can more easily convert a formerly mortal character to newly acquired Immortal status. A shorthand listing of the abilities such as you have described might become available if TSR, Inc., ever does an Immortals DM's screen, but there are currently no plans for such a product. Finally, a look through IM1, *The Immortal Storm*, by Frank Mentzer, might help you grasp how Immortals' abilities change with their forms.

Can a new Immortal form be created anywhere, any time?

New forms may only be created while

the Immortal is on his home plane, although they can be stored anywhere. A new form can be assumed anywhere in the multiverse, but only when there is a form already available.

The rules describe at least three different ways for an Immortal to cross a planar boundary. Does the requirement vary with the direction and exact location of the crossing, or what?

Immortals have three options when crossing planar boundaries: 1) spend 50 PP (or no PP if traveling outward); 2) use *plane travel* with cost adjusted for Sphere; or 3) construct a *gate* with cost adjusted for Sphere. Note that once a *gate* is constructed, it remains open until some outside force closes it. Also, there is no power cost for passing through a *gate*. Ignore any statement in the rules that contradicts this paragraph.

Can an Immortal in a tetraspace use power to cross a planar boundary or create a magical effect?

Immortals in a tetraspace cannot use power to cross planar boundaries, but they could leave the plane through a previously constructed *gate*. They can, however, use power to memorize spells (one spell per round, as long as the power holds out), then cast those spells as a mortal would. Note that spells require at least four dimensions, and direct use of Immortal power requires at least five. If the dimensional requirement isn't met, then the magic in question cannot work, whether related to a spell, Immortal, or artifact.

What, exactly, is interdimensional travel?

Interdimensional travel is the ability to cross into spaces with varying numbers of dimensions. It is similar to interplanar travel in the sense that dimensions have boundaries just as planes do.

Why do mortals gain the ability to see the fourth dimension while in the Astral Plane? Are they then in fact seeing four dimensions? Can this effect be duplicated elsewhere?

Mortals see, at most, three dimensions – usually the first, second, and third. On the Astral Plane, this shifts to the second, third, and fourth. The shifting of dimensional perspective is a unique effect of the Astral Plane. *Wishes* can also be used to shift dimensional perspective "up" or "down" one "notch" per *wish*. It is possible that a mortal using a properly constructed artifact could also make such shifts (DM's option as to the availability and construction cost of such artifacts).

How can an Immortal enlarge his home plane?

Home plane enlargements are made by permanent power expenditure. The cost is

the same as that of moving the plane (*DM's Guide to Immortals*, page 21). This expenditure results in an enlargement of each dimension in the plane equal to the minimum size for the number of dimensions present on the plane (*DM's Guide to Immortals*, page 10). Home planes are always bounded spaces; no amount of power expenditures can make them infinite.

For example, a five-dimensional standard plane extends five trillion miles in each dimension. A permanent expenditure of 640 PP causes the plane to expand 5,000 miles in each dimension (5,000 miles is the size of a microplane, the smallest five-dimensional space there is).

How is nonmagical life created on an Immortal's home plane?

Non-magical life is created by spending permanent power. The Immortal makes a permanent expenditure for a *create monsters* spell of the appropriate type for the creature(s) to be created, with additional permanent expenditures for any unusual abilities the new life-form possesses (*DM's Guide to Immortals*, page 20).

Page 16 of the *Players' Guide to Immortals* gives a method and PP cost to extend the duration of a magical effect, and a different method and PP cost to extend both range and duration. Which is correct?

Use the information on extending both range and duration in the third column on page 16; ignore the information in the second column.

Are the magical effects listed on the inside back cover of the *DM's Guide to Immortals* the only effects usable by Immortals of Entropy?

The inside back cover lists the only powers usable by those Entropy Immortals known as demons, but there are other Immortals of Entropy who can use any magical effect at the appropriate Sphere cost.

How about creating a path to Immortality that favors demi-humans?

There is no path that favors demi-humans, this being one of the many drawbacks of the demi-human classes. If you wish to have a path that favors demi-humans, it should be Polymath since all demi-humans have fighting abilities.

Can a magic-user friend of a character who is following the Epic Hero path to Immortality make the Epic Hero's artifact for him?

An Epic Hero must obtain a major artifact from the Sphere of Thought (see *Master DM's Book*, page 15). No mortal can create an artifact, and no Immortal will create an artifact for a mortal seeking to become Immortal.

Can an Epic Hero have help on his quest?

An Epic Hero may lead a party on his quest, trial, or task (see *Master DM's Book*, page 15). He must, however, be the unquestioned leader.

Can two Epic Heroes take on the same quest?

Quests, trials, or tasks may never be shared, though they might be repeated.

The Dynast path to Immortality requires the character to find an artifact that will allow time travel — but there is no such artifact given.

Use the artifact rules from the Masters Set to create one. The time-travel power should have a big PP cost — at least 200 PP. Be sure to limit the artifact to prevent abuse of the time travel power; we recommend that a Doom strike the user immediately upon the fifth use of the power. This gives the user the four uses he needs (three for traveling ahead and one to get back) but prevents him from jaunting through time, creating paradoxes with which the DM must deal.

Will an anti-magic shell, prismatic wall, or similar barrier keep a blackball out?

No. A blackball simply "eats" anything that gets in its way.

Can creatures such as phoenixes or storm giants become Immortal?

Generally, only humans, demi-humans, and some of the Nightmare creatures (namely diaboli, the Nightmare "humans") can achieve Immortality. Note that diaboli don't usually succeed at being Immortal, due to their chaotic nature. Other creatures who manage to achieve Immortality will have a similar rate of failure for very similar reasons.

What do you do when you become the Full Hierarch of your Sphere?

Such a PC has three options: 1) play out the many duties and obligations of being the Full Hierarch; 2) retire; or, 3) disburse his essence into his home plane, become mortal, and start all over again at 1st level in hopes of reaching Full Hierarch a second time — and so becoming an Old One.

Can PCs become Immortals of the Sphere of Entropy?

The Sphere of Entropy is strictly off-limits to PCs.

Can an Immortal PC opt to become a Hierarch of all the Spheres, since this is actually more difficult than becoming the Full Hierarch of just one Sphere?

Any Immortal who changes Spheres immediately loses all accumulated power (both temporary and permanent) and becomes a Novice Temporal in the new Sphere. The lost power can never be regained except through experience. While an Immortal character could be-

come a Hierarch of each Sphere in this manner (except Entropy, which is off-limits to PCs), the character gets no special benefit from the effort.

Full Hierarchs have the option of disbursing their life forces into their home planes and reincarnating themselves as mortals, thus restarting the struggle toward Immortality. This is not the same as simply changing Spheres, and only a Full Hierarch may do this.

Unearthed Arcana

The book says that a character can assume any profession with a *hat of difference*. Does the power of the *hat* supersede the class restrictions based on alignment, race, and ability score minimums required?

No, on all counts. The *hat* merely allows the character to pursue a different profession; it does not bypass class requirements. If the character does not have what it takes to pursue the desired class, the *hat* does not provide it. For example, an ugly dwarf could not become a paladin or a magic-user simply by wearing the *hat* — neither class is open to dwarves, and the character doesn't have the charisma needed to be a paladin in the first place. Likewise, a chaotic-evil fighter cannot use a *hat of difference* to become a druid; spells would not be granted to an evil character.

A human fighter could use the *hat* to operate as a mage, however, assuming he met the intelligence requirement. The character would have to acquire a spell book before spell-casting would be possible, and spells would have to be memorized normally. Armor could not be worn, and weapon use would likewise be restricted according to the magic-user class while the *hat* was in use. All fighting would be done on the magic-user "to hit" table, not that of the fighter, and saving throws would be those of a magic-user as well.

The cavalier is no longer listed as a sub-class of fighter, but as its own class. What does this mean in terms of the hit point bonus for high constitution? As a non-fighter, the cavalier is only entitled to a maximum bonus of +2 hit points per die, rather than the +4 maximum for fighters.

Treat cavaliers and paladins as fighters for the purpose of determining hit point bonus. A cavalier is entitled to the same bonus as a fighter character with an equivalent constitution score, up to the full +4 maximum. Otherwise, their ability to raise their constitution score would be rather pointless. They are treated as fighters in most other respects, and this case is no exception. Ω

Politics Amid the Rubble

More minor Cryptic Alliances for GAMMA WORLD® games

by Douglas Lent

Cryptic Alliances in the GAMMA WORLD® game often wield great power throughout the ravaged lands that make up North America in the 25th century. The rule books present the major alliances in the second-edition game, covering those with the greatest followings across the continent. But there are other alliances, minor ones which fit in where their larger rivals cannot, will not, or simply do not go.

DRAGON® issue #93 presented a handful of these lesser Cryptic Alliances. This article gives the details on five more, using the same format that Peter C. Zelinski set forth in his article ("New Brotherhoods"). As in the earlier article, the modified dice roll after each base type should NOT be multiplied by 10 to find the number of individuals at that base. Any player character of Rank 2 or higher who learns of the existence of any one of these groups may attempt to join it (with the Game Master's approval).

Army of the Deep (The Trident)

TECH: III
TYPES: PSH (35%); H (45%); MA (40%); P (15%); A (10%)
NUMBER: 1d10
BASE: A (5d10; along seacoasts); B (2d10 + 50; along seacoasts); H (10d10+100; usually underwater)
SECRET SIGN: A trident is tattooed somewhere on the body. A trident on a field of

red is displayed on uniforms, flags, and various vehicles.

LOCATION: Along the east coast of America with bases on islands, the mainland, and beneath the ocean's surface.

DESCRIPTION: Created by members of several ocean-dwelling mutant races and a tribe of sea-going humans, the Army of the Deep has grown from a minor alliance of pirates to a force with almost complete control of large portions of the eastern coastal waters. Many tribes and a few of the weaker nations in this region pay tribute to the Trident's soldiers. For the moment, their area of operations and a relatively low membership have kept them from becoming a threat to the mainland, but even now they are working to consolidate their power over the ocean. Should they succeed, there is little doubt that they will then turn their attention to the continental interior. Already, the sign of the Trident is seen to have ominous implications by leaders of major alliances such as the Ranks of Fit, Red Death, and Purists.

The Army's success lies in its three-pronged approach to ocean warfare: dominance above, on, and below the water (hence their symbol, the trident). The Trident is commanded by three generals called Triarchs, each of whom oversees operations in one of the three branches (air, surface, and submarine). There is a degree of overlap in their authority, and all three cooperate closely when the Army is engaged in missions on the mainland.

The Trident possesses a vast store of Ancient technology recovered from several intact undersea bases it has occupied (at least three to date), as well as salvage from now-submerged cities along the

coast. It's arsenal of military hardware includes several submersibles, a number of air/sea fighter-craft, a few hundred marine battlesuits, and an extensive range of personal weaponry. However, it is debatable how much of this collection its soldiers truly understand how to operate, let alone maintain. Nevertheless, their success so far is unquestionable. Whether or not it will continue to be successful remains to be seen.

Knights of Avalon (Defenders)

TECH: II

TYPES: PSH (60%); H (45%); MA (10%); P (5%); A (5%)

NUMBER: 1d6

BASE: B (3d10); C (5d10+10); D (2d100 + 100); G (5d10)

SECRET SIGN: A white unicorn on a field of green, emblazoned on shields, armor, and clothing.

LOCATION: Northeastern America

DESCRIPTION: The Knights of Avalon were established about a hundred years after the start of the Black Years by a few idealistic individuals who were inspired by the image of chivalry as portrayed in old heroic epics and fantasy entertainments. The Knights are organized into two "orders" by their respective duties and abilities. The Order of the Lance is the Defenders' combat arm, consisting of many strong human and physically mutated warriors. The Order of the Scroll handles all administrative and support functions, as well as providing the Lance with skilled mental mutants for various operations. The Scroll is composed of scholarly humans, humanoids, and other beings. The entire organization is overseen by a council of seven members, consisting of those deemed to be the best from both orders.

The Defenders are dedicated to upholding their code, which includes protection of the defenseless, preservation of order, and the destruction of "evil." They can often be found allied with such groups as the Brotherhood of Thought, Healers, Restorationists, Friends of Justice (see DRAGON issue #93), and the Sisterhood of the Sword (see below). Most other alliances are viewed as "evil," and the Knights of Avalon stand ever prepared to thwart their vile schemes, especially those of the Red Death and the Brainlords (issue #93). A special enmity is held for the Knights of Genetic Purity, whom the Defenders view as a gross corruption of their basic ideals. Defenders go out of their way to utterly destroy any Purists they may find.

The Knights of Avalon commonly use Tech II weapons, usually swords and lances. They wear armor and can fight very well even when mounted (most often on a Brutorz or Podog). There is a 50% chance that any Knight has a minor device of the Ancients in his possession. Members of the Order of the Scroll are lightly

armed and armored, usually having a short sword or dagger with leather or normal clothing.

Road Clans (Wild Riders)

TECH: II

TYPES: PSH (50%); H (45%)

NUMBER: 1d8

BASE: A (5d10 +10)

SECRET SIGN: Various individual clan signs are worn by members as tattooed, war-painted, or sewn-on designs.

LOCATION: Scattered across North America, most often along old duralloy roads and highways.

DESCRIPTION: At the time the Shadow Years fell upon the world, a sizable percentage of the North American continent was covered by a network of duralloy highways. Although the following upheavals destroyed most of the population centers, the roads endured. In the Dark Years that followed, some bands of refugees decided that the best way to survive was to stay mobile. Thus were the nomadic clans born.

Each tribe or clan has customs peculiar to itself, but all share certain common characteristics. The most basic unit of road clan society is a single mounted warrior, found with or without a mate. To be recognized as a warrior (and thus as a mature adult), one must have some sort of mount. The better the mount, the higher the warrior's status within the clan (for example, the lowest ranks might ride podogs, higher ones have brutorz, and the elite possess functioning Ancient ground- or hoverbikes). The quest for a mount is often a part of a road clan's rites of passage. Larger families, old people, young children, and all supplies are transported in either brutorz- or rakoxen-drawn wagons, or (if the clan is particularly rich or lucky) in functioning, often revamped, Ancient trucks. The largest such vehicle is usually the property of the clan chieftain, as are any other functioning Ancient craft.

A clan has livestock with it as well, and members often forage for local plants and wild game, sometimes making the clan a double threat in times of famine or drought. The clans trade with local villagers or farmers for food. However, no clan is above an occasional raid on a village or caravan for various goods (especially if said parties tried to cheat the clans at an earlier time), though few will do so on a regular basis. Fighting between clans is not unknown but is rare, with clans observing mutual courtesies when they meet.

Except as noted above, all clans are equipped with Tech II items. Members have a 15% chance per person (30% for the chieftain and his immediate family) of possessing an Ancient artifact. They are commonly armed with spears, javelins, swords, and crossbows. Little armor is worn other than heavy furs or leather.

Sisterhood of the Sword (The Sisterhood)

TECH: II

TYPES (females only): PSH (50%); H (45%); MA (15%)

NUMBER: 1d10

BASE: B (2d6+3); C (3d10+25); D (3d100 + 50)

SECRET SIGN: Ancient symbol for womanhood, with a dagger and crosspiece as the tail, emblazoned on shields, banners, armor, and clothing.

LOCATION: East coast of America.

DESCRIPTION: The Sisterhood of the Sword believes that the Shadow Years and the fall of mankind were brought about by violent, male-dominated governments, and only females are suited to lead the way back to civilization by assuming all defensive and leadership positions. Despite these views, the followers of the Sisterhood do not, with the exception of a few splinter groups, force their views upon others, preferring to gain converts from example and other, gentler means of persuasion. Their bases are test sites for their doctrine, with regular reports to the Sisterhood's main base. The Sisterhood is on good terms with the Brotherhood of Thought, the Healers, the Friends of Justice, and the Knights of Avalon. Their own beliefs, however, often put them at cross-purposes with the Followers of the Voice, Restorationists, the Created, the Iron Society, the Ranks of Fit, and Zoopremists.

The Sisterhood is well equipped to Tech II standards but is always eager to gain functioning Ancient technology. The "Sisters" are most often armed with swords, spears, and crossbows. They prefer chain mail armor and usually have some sort of riding mount. There is a 30% chance that each will have some sort of minor artifact. The warrior elite are usually known as Amazons, Valkyries, Black Widows, or similar terms.

Those Who Wait (Listeners)

TECH: III

TYPES: PSH (60%); H (55%); MA (40%); P (15%); A (10%)

NUMBER: 1d10

BASE: A (5d6); H (5d20+50)

SECRET SIGN: Hummed or whistled portion of an Ancient tune (the opening bar of the theme for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*).

LOCATION: Most often found around the sites of old astronomical observatories.

DESCRIPTION: As humanity expanded into space during the time before the Social Wars, one of the ongoing concerns was the search for intelligent alien life (such as the few Luntarian survivors found on Mars; see POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, issue #26). For years, scientists had been monitoring interstellar radio wavelengths with no conclusive evidence of such life. It is

believed that some aliens were encountered, but little is now known about such contact. As international tensions increased, the resources for these projects were channeled into military applications; the great radio telescopes were closed down "for the duration," never to reopen.

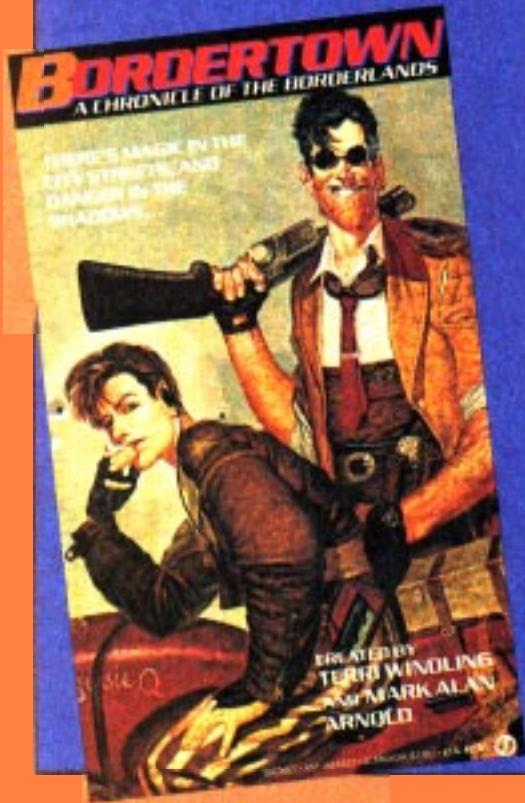
While the search was going on, speculation ran high about what forms alien life might be (if it existed at all). Eventually, a small fringe group arose which believed that the aliens would be benevolent, omnipotent beings who would teach mankind to overcome its self-destructive urges and create a golden age on Earth. After the Apocalypse struck, a small group of survivors adopted this viewpoint to ease the trauma of the holocaust they had just experienced. "The only reason we did not find them [the aliens] was because we had become too proud," their leaders reasoned. "Now we have humbled ourselves in our mad quest for power. Our world lays shattered about us, beyond our ability to repair. But fear not! Since we have lost our arrogance, we are now worthy of aid from our friends beyond the stars. All we need do is make the proper supplications and they shall come to help us fulfill our glorious destiny!"

And so began the Great Vigil of Those Who Wait. An active campaign to restore the old radio telescopes began, that the faithful might send their pleas to the aliens and receive their reply, and it continues to this day. Bands of Listeners may be found almost anywhere, either searching for components to restore the "holy receivers" or on pilgrimage to such sites. The cult has already completed a few of these projects and now operate and maintain their antenna-shrines, beaming their impassioned call to anyone in the universe willing to listen, and waiting for the day an answer arrives and ends their vigil.

The affairs of this world mean little to the Listeners, unless such affairs affect their "holy" mission. Listeners possess much Ancient technology, usually astronomical or communications equipment. They also keep some weaponry for self-defense (and to protect their receivers, which they will defend to the death) and a few minor gadgets to use as trade goods and bribes to buy themselves privacy. The goals of Those Who Wait occasionally coincide with those of the Followers of the Voice, the Restorationists, and the Voyagers (issue #93); Listeners may sometimes be found in some kind of alliance, usually temporary, although a very few have endured longer. The Listeners share mutual enmity with Radioactivists wherever they find a site that is deemed "holy" by both of them, and with Archivists, who are seen as vile heretics (the feeling is mutual). Those Who Wait have nothing against such groups as the Brotherhood of Thought, the Healers, Friends of Justice, Knights of Avalon, and the Sisterhood of the Sword, so long as they do not interfere with the Listener's activities. Ω

The Role of Books

Punk elves and shared worlds



by John C. Bunnell

It's not difficult to draw a parallel between game campaigns and shared-world anthologies. Dungeon Masters and editors have similar duties: create scenery and settings, then maintain some semblance of order while players and authors do their best to bend local reality for their own purposes.

The success of either project depends on its creator's skill in keeping up that semblance of order as well as on the uniqueness of the universe portrayed. Without a rich common background and the distinctive stamp of an unusual setting, neither stories in a shared-world collection nor individual quests in an AD&D® game cam-

paign can combine to form a memorable whole.

Other factors are also involved, of course. But the arrival of three (well, two and a half) new shared-world books in recent months calls for a closer-than-usual look at what makes these anthologies tick. While each collection must be evaluated on its own merits, the increasing popularity of these collaborations makes comparison inevitable, and it's important to make those comparisons on an informed basis.

BORDERTOWN

Terri Windling and Mark Alan Arnold, creators

Signet 0-451-14527-5 \$2.95

"Punk elves" is the catch phrase coined by a *Locus* reviewer to describe the concept of this series, and it's an appropriate

one. *Bordertown* is the second book in the Borderlands series — or maybe the third if one counts the Steven Boyett novel from which the shared universe appears to have been derived.

The Borderlands after the Change are a complicated place, where magic (from the eleven lands of Faerie) works irrationally and modern technology (from the World) operates even more oddly, if at all. There are dark glasses and loud music, street gangs and switchblades, and motorcycles operated by magic. The population is almost entirely outcast in one way or the other, drawn away from Faerie or the World by temperament or need.

All this has its good and bad points. The positive aspects are mostly in creative development. Few of the contributors to *Bordertown* are established in the shared-world category, and the exceptions, Will Shetterly and Emma Bull, come from the well-crafted *Liavek* books rather than the cadre of writers which dominates most of the other shared-world series. That makes the collection fresher than most of its competition in style and in presentation, and the use of just four tales in each of the books keeps the vision from being too quickly diluted.

The negative point is the obvious one, unfortunately. At best, high fantasy and contemporary "punk" styles are a tenuous mix, and though the stories in *Bordertown* are generally well-executed (in particular, Midori Snyder's "Demon"), the sharply opposing tones are more grating than satisfying. Despite solid craftsmanship, *Bordertown*'s appeal is likely to be limited, though fans of the music that inspired the concept should be satisfied.

ANGEL WITH THE SWORD

C. J. Cherryh

D A W 0-99677-143-9 \$3.50

Technically, *Angel with the Sword* isn't a shared-world book. But a series title, *Merovingen Nights*, has been grafted onto the book in its paperback incarnation, and the publisher promises an anthology in spring 1987 in which Anne McCaffrey, Robert Asprin, and Lynn Abbey (among others) will explore C. J. Cherryh's science-fictional twist on Renaissance Venice.

Cherryh's novel is a suspense-filled tale that chronicles the fortunes of Altair Jones, sometimes canal worker and inadvertent player of dangerous political games. The atmosphere is strongly conveyed yet understated, as the story relies heavily on Jones's laconic view of herself and her city. It's a view that is severely challenged when she unexpectedly rescues high-born Thomas Mondragon from a wet and messy death in Merovingen's canals and becomes involved in Mondragon's conflicts with various power factions in Merovingen.

All this works very well as a novel, but as the prologue to a shared-universe se-

ries, it's far less satisfying. Cherryh's oblique storytelling style adds immeasurably to the tale's impact — but is badly undercut by a lengthy appendix describing the planet's culture and history in thorough detail. The additional information is of little real value to most readers, but is clearly essential to the authors who will contribute to future anthologies. Including it in the book is like giving AD&D game players access to their DM's notes before turning them loose in his world.

It's worth wondering if opening Merovingen to other writers is really a winning proposition. The contributors aren't likely to emulate Cherryh's stylistic approach — one of the novels strongest points. And the background notes reveal that the planet of Merovin is part of the universe which includes many of Cherryh's most popular works — novels her collaborators may invade looking for ideas.

On its own, *Angel with the Sword* is easily an above-average adventure with an intriguing setting. Using that setting for a shared-world series, however, is likely to weaken Cherryh's tale rather than improve it.

THE BLOOD OF TEN CHIEFS

Richard Pini, Robert Asprin, & Lynn Abbey, editors

Tor 0-812-53041-1 \$6.95

"I exploit," says *Elfquest* creator Richard Pini in his introduction to *The Blood of Ten Chiefs*. "It's an ancient and honorable tradition." Yet while many current shared-world series seem driven more by money than by a desire to spin good stories, this collection exploits mostly in a positive way: by gathering a diverse band of talented writers to fill in the lost centuries of *Elfquest's* history. As the book cover says, "A lot can happen in ten thousand years."

That lengthy time line actually has a good deal to do with the anthology's success, allowing contributors more freedom of style and subject than is usual for shared-world tales. Still evident, though, are the unique circumstances and conditions on which *Elfquest* was founded in 1977.

Those who have followed the comic books and other *Elfquest* literature since that time will have an advantage over readers new to Pini's universe, where elves are shorter, less intellectual, and far more "native" than is traditional in modern fantasy. But while the first two stories in particular may be rather obscure to newcomers, this chronicle of developing elfin civilization is just too fascinating to pass up. C.J. Cherryh and Mark C. Perry combine to produce a memorable confrontation between elf and human, Nancy Springer contributes a lighter yarn, and Piers Anthony provides a rare short story. (Other participants include *Star Trek* novelist Diane Carey and California fantasist Diana L. Paxson.)

The Blood of Ten Chiefs is a rare beast in the shared-world category — an extrapolation that is entirely logical, thoroughly and skillfully edited, yet fresh and unusual at the same time. In a way, it's as if the book's editors are acting as referees in the RPG version of *Elfquest*, helping to create a whole new subset of story possibilities. "Ten thousand years be damned — we have continuity!" proclaims Richard Pini with cheerful glee. It's a delight his readers should share in full measure.

MORLAC: THE QUEST OF THE GREEN MAGICIAN

Gary Alan Ruse

Signet 0-451-14447-3 \$3.50

The most important feature of this book isn't advertised on its cover, which easily and accurately characterizes Morlac as a traditionally rousing barbarian adventure. What readers don't learn until opening the book is that Gary Alan Ruse has reversed a modern publishing trend by providing an entire trilogy in one volume.

Ruse writes with a lively yet remarkably descriptive style that is highly readable without being unsophisticated. To put it another way, the flavor of the text makes it clear that while Morlac has far more brawn than intellect, the same isn't true of Ruse. Though the novel is unquestionably light reading, the level of craftsmanship is considerably higher than might be expected in that category.

Part of the deduction about Ruse's skills comes from the fact that each of the three "books" in the novel has a slightly different flavor. The first, in which Morlac is created by a blend of polymorphing and reincarnation, has a slightly bardic framework and emphasizes Morlac's role as a mercenary. The second is a chronicle of Morlac as wanderer, blending elements of romance, magic, and mystery. And book three finds him becoming a "freedom fighter" in an erupting war.

There are several continuing threads as well, the most prominent being Morlac's hunt for Sordros, his evil creator. There is also a romantic triangle involving a lovely sorceress and an unwilling were-woman, and one of Morlac's traveling companions is a mutant with an exceedingly handy physical abnormality. (Only those who actually read Ruse's tale will note the truly awful pun in the preceding description.)

There are, of course, vast numbers of barbarian adventures available on the shelves and racks of local bookstores. Why pick Morlac out of all of them? Two answers come to mind. The one to be shared with the cashier is that Ruse's novel provides lots of ideas easily adapted for use in gaming scenarios (which is true). But the real reason is that you just have to admire a writer with the audacity to make his central character a giant sea turtle trapped in a human body. And it doesn't hurt that Ruse provides readers with three stories for the price of one, either.

AT AMBERLEAF FAIR

Phyllis Ann Karr

Ace 0-441-52009-X \$2.95

There are a number of strikes against Phyllis Ann Karr's new novel, not the least of which is the inept poetry on its cover. But a combination of intriguing concepts and agreeable style makes *At Amberleaf Fair* worth at least a look.

Karr's central figure, Torin the toymaker, meanders between thoughts of marriage, doubts about his decision not to follow his family's magical heritage, and worries over his brother's strange illness and its connection to a new sort of scrying device. While there are no loose ends, there is a vaguely aimless quality that doesn't belong in what is at least partly a mystery story.

Luckily, weaknesses in the plot are balanced by Karr's sense of characterization. Though her prose is occasionally a shade distant, the characters are nevertheless surprisingly human and sympathetic. The low-key atmosphere is a refreshing change from universe-threatening crises or the outrageous wackiness of many humorous fantasies.

Two ideas from the novel may be of particular interest to gamers. The concept of a freelance judge/detective who resolves disputes for a fee might logically be developed into a fascinating NPC class, and Karr's system of magic — involving a good deal of transformed food, among other things — seems better developed than most. The novel's only real oddity is Torin's ability to bring some of his toys temporarily to life — a power that is too potent both for Karr's system and Torin's place therein.

In most novels, the problems inherent in Karr's narrative would be fatal to any chance of literary success. That's not quite true of *At Amberleaf Fair*. Its virtue lies in the fact that it is deliberately small in scope and narrow in focus. There aren't enough fantasy novels like that, and this one is good enough in the right ways to retain a degree of enchantment despite its flaws.

SILVERHAIR THE WANDERER

Diana L. Paxson

Tor 0-812-54860-4 \$2.95

To date, most novels about bards have been very carefully researched in an effort to carry an air of Celtic accuracy. While often entertaining, that style has its disadvantages for gamers seeking role models for campaign use. *Silverhair the Wanderer* at last offers an alternative, chronicling the adventures of a unique and magical bard in a world several steps removed from the British Isles.

The book is third in a series set on the post-Cataclysm Pacific coast, mostly in a kingdom called Westria by its inhabitants. It stands effectively by itself, though — a good thing, since the earlier books were published elsewhere and are now rather scarce. Elemental magic functions in Westria, but with this exception, the effect is as if the Society for Creative Anachronism

had moved in and taken over — a logical possibility given that author Diana L. Paxson helped found the SCA.

Formerly related to the royal house of Westria, Silverhair takes on the bardic life to track down Caolin, the sorcerous court advisor whose plots rocked the kingdom in previous books. Through Caolin, Silverhair hopes to learn the fates of his sister Faris and her son, Westria's missing queen and heir. With the status of the monarchy in doubt, various surrounding kingdoms may take advantage of the opportunity and again challenge Westria.

Paxson's novel takes Silverhair on a series of treks leading up and down the coast and deep into the Sierra Nevada mountains, and the authentic settings counterpoint quite well with the tale's magical and medieval elements. If there is any real defect in the adventure, it's that no real sense of music emerges in the prose despite Paxson's excellent descriptive talents and a solid, detailed conception of Silverhair's role as bard. He is a musician, diplomat, swordsman, and occasional spell-weaver, but somehow the music — always foremost in the character's mind — is always recorded, yet never felt.

Surprisingly, the absence of music (but not song lyrics, of which there are a fair number) almost seems to enhance the tale rather than weaken it. Perhaps the answer to that paradox lies in the nature of Silverhair's quest and in the bards own character, which Paxson draws as well as she portrays her geography. Then, too, the climax hints at another book to come. Whatever the solution, *Silverhair the Wanderer* is a well-told adventure that will be especially valuable to anyone with an interest in bards and their craft.

THE SILENT TOWER

Barbara Hambly

Del Rey 0-345-33764-6 \$3.95

The *Silent Tower* is billed as the first of two books about a conflict that should be of special interest to at least some AD&D game players: the struggle between a society's industrialization and its acceptance of magic. In Barbara Hambly's skilled hands, this is handled with subtlety and cautious understatement — and considerable daring at the same time.

Many of the external trappings recall Hambly's trilogy about the world of Darwath. Joanna Sheraton, a California computer programmer, finds herself drawn across the void into another world and must join forces with the marginally sane wizard Antryg Windrose in order to deal with her situation. There is a powerful and often vindictive church whose attitude toward magic recalls the Inquisition. And those in authority tend to waver between the church's safety and the fact of magical menace without accomplishing anything.

The similarities are great enough to seem repetitive at first, and the relationship between Joanna and Antryg, though

well-drawn, is also old ground for Hambly. This time, however, the philosophical underpinnings of the story are stronger, and do a great deal to make it readable as a new tale. One of Hambly's minor characters has been tinkering with electricity like a Renaissance Ben Franklin, and the rule that no mage is permitted to help or hinder human life with his power — though applicable only to "sanctioned" wizards — is a nice touch. There is also a warrior class with decidedly Oriental overtones which may be of interest to those still using monks in non-Oriental campaigns.

The other new element in *The Silent Tower* is high technology. This time, Hambly takes full advantage of her characters' access to modern California, and offers intriguing questions about the potential for computers to deal with magic. The tale may not be Hambly's best work — it concludes abruptly even by current standards for multi-part novels — but it has the potential to be her most ingenious. The sequel, *The Silicon Mage*, will bear close scrutiny.

RECURRING ROLES

Star Trek material is in good supply at the moment, with two books of special interest available. *Battlestations!* (Pocket, \$3.50) is Diane Carey's sequel to *Dreadnought!*, and though the pattern of events is similar, the storytelling is as good as

ever. A sailing sequence at the start is a special touch. Meanwhile, designers of *Trek-based* worlds will find useful reference material in *The Best of Trek #11* (Signet, \$2.95). Editors Walter Irwin and G. B. Love serve up material which often analyzes rather than describes, but it's still worth bearing in mind, particularly for students of Federation astronomy.

After a very long wait, Diane Duane's *So You Want to Be a Wizard* (Dell Laurel-Leaf, \$2.75) is finally available in paperback. This book introduces Nita and Kit, the heroes of the superlative *Deep Wizardry*. Though it's not quite as rich or as challenging as the latter tale, Duane's novel still stands well above many young adult fantasies as well as quite a few marketed for general audiences.

The Outcast (Tor, \$2.95) continues Louise Cooper's Time Master trilogy and sustains the usual off-kilter suspense that marked the first volume. The books still succeed in distinguishing law and chaos from good and evil, and do so with admirable consistency. Cooper is clearly a talent to watch.

Charles de Lint's new novel, *Yarrow* (Ace, \$2.95), offers an unconventional and potentially dangerous answer to the classic question about where authors (and, one imagines, DMs) get their ideas. The setting is again modern Ottawa juxtaposed with Elsewhere, and de Lint's ability to establish atmosphere remains at full strength. Ω

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FANTASY GAMES UNLIMITED

The Marvel-Pal

An X-tra X-Man™

by Jeff Grubb

Thanks to the Mutant Massacre (the Marauders™ responsible were detailed in DRAGON® issue #117), the team of mutant heroes known as the X-Men™ lost several of their members and gained four new teammates. Three of these heroes have been discussed elsewhere — Dazzler™ and Havok™ in MA1, *Children of the Atom*, and the alien Longshot™ in DRAGON issue #111. The remaining "new" X-Man had a career as a hero in Britain before she came over to the States. We now present the life and times of Betsy Braddock™, better known as Psylocke™.

PSYLOCKE™

Elizabeth "Betsy" Braddock

F	EX (20)	Health: 90
A	GD (10)	
S	EX (20)	Karma: 80
E	RM (30)	
R	GD (10)	Resources: Incredible
I	RM (30)	
P	AM (50)	Popularity: 10

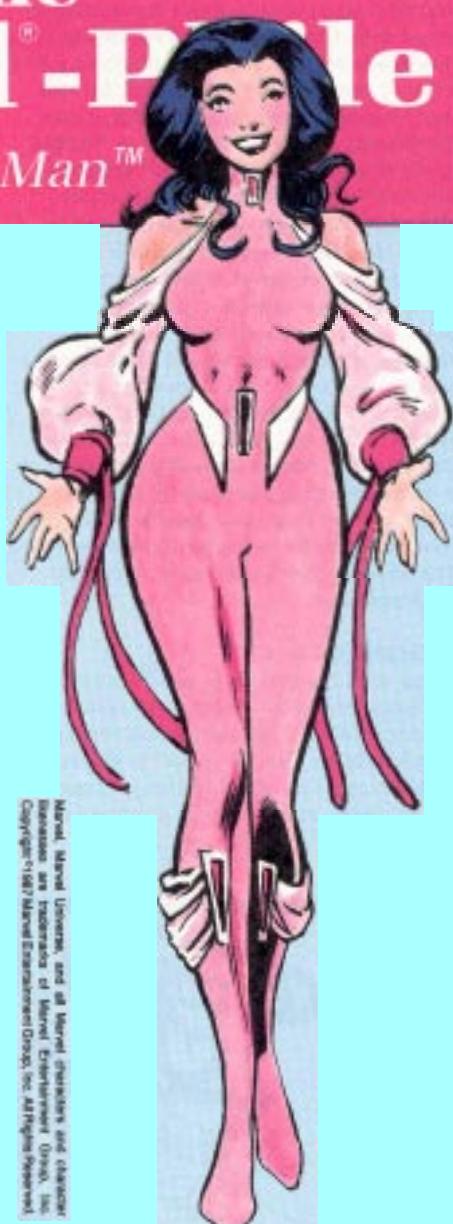
KNOWN POWERS:

Telepathy: Psylocke is a mutant with mental abilities of the Incredible rank. She has used these telepathic powers in the following manner:

- * Creating Mind Links of Incredible strength, allowing her to communicate with others up to several miles distant and read their surface thoughts (only possible with willing targets);

- * Performing Telepathic Projection (again, over a range of several miles), allowing her to telepathically "see" items in the surrounding area (the Mind Link and Telepathic Projection each manifests itself as a glowing butterfly-shaped set of eyes);
- * Perform a Mental Probe of Incredible strength, allowing Psylocke to read any deep or hidden thoughts of a live victim (the intensity of the FEAT is determined by the target's Psyche, and Psylocke cannot read the minds of those with Psyches of higher than Amazing or breach protective shields of those levels); and,

- * Fire bolts of telepathic energy with a range of two areas and Incredible strength. These bolts are of two sorts. **Psi-bolts** are force attacks, while the **Psycho-blast** is an energy attack. As the Psycho-blast has the potential for slaying a



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victim, Psylocke does not use it unless her life is threatened. She uses the Incredible column to hit with these attacks. Psylocke may be able to develop other telepathic or mental-power stunts similar to those of Marvel Girl™ and Professor X™, but she has not yet done so.

Bionic Eyes: Psylocke is blind, her eyes having been replaced by bionic implants created by the extradimensional tyrant Mojo™. These new eyes function as normal ones, except that they also reach partially into the infrared and ultraviolet spectrums, allowing her to see in the dark. Devices which may override or cloak items from machinery and scanners will not be noticed by Psylocke. Her eyes have an additional power unknown to Betsy; they are linked to Mojo's dimension and serve as cameras for Mojo, so that the adventures of the X-Men are fodder for Mojo's movies.

TALENTS: Betsy Braddock has Martial Arts A and E. She has no weapon skills.

CONTACTS: Psylocke's brother is the English hero Captain Britain™. In the past, she has served both for a British division of S.H.I.E.L.D.™ and for the British government. She currently is a member of the X-Men.

PSYLOCKE'S STORY: Elizabeth Braddock is the twin sister of Brian Braddock, better known as Captain Britain. Their father is a native of Otherworld™, an extradimensional world that houses the being known as Merlin™ and the realm of Camelot (whether this Merlin and Camelot are the same as in this world's legends has yet to be revealed).

Betsy and Brian were born to wealth and inherited Braddock Manor on their parent's death. Betsy was a fashion model (her hair is dyed purple), until her mutant powers surfaced when she was recruited into the PSI division of S.T.R.I.K.E.™, a British operation with close ties to S.H.I.E.L.D. It was then that Betsy learned most of her combat skills.

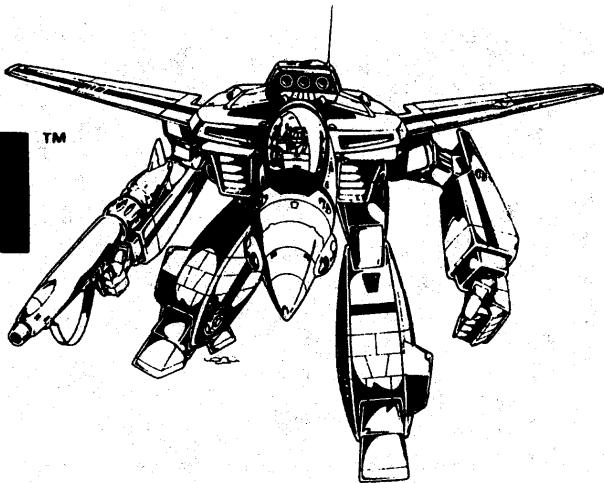
After leaving S.T.R.I.K.E., Betsy was recruited by another organization operating within the British government: the Resources Control Executive (RCX), which took over Braddock Manor as a base. RCX convinced Betsy to take up the costume and abilities of Captain Britain when Brian quit the field.

As the new Captain Britain, Betsy was moderately successful. However, in combat with Slaymaster™, an old foe of her brother, Betsy was severely beaten and blinded. Brian returned to his role as a hero and avenged his sister. Betsy retired from heroics at this time, using her telepathic powers to offset her handicap. While recuperating in Switzerland, she was ambushed by Mojo and his assassin Spiral™, who made her into their mental slave. Mojo gave her the cybernetic eyes she now has and used her powers to manipulate the minds of children through a television show called "Wildways." Doug Ramsey™, Brian Braddock, and the New Mutants™ broke Mojo's hold on Betsy, who retained the name Psylocke (given her by Mojo).

Psylocke remained at X-Men Mansion and joined the X-Men during the Mutant Massacre, when she successfully fought off the attacks of the mutant Sabertooth. She has not told anyone about the nature of her eyes and is unaware that they broadcast everything back to Mojo. Only Doug Ramsey and Warlock are aware of the artificial nature of those eyes.

Psylocke is quite beautiful, and that beauty is often mistaken for softness or weakness. In truth, she is a stern-willed individual with extensive previous training both as a hero and an agent, and is willing to place herself or others at risk for the good of all. To this degree, she can be as cold-hearted and ruthless as Wolverine™.

ROBOTECH™



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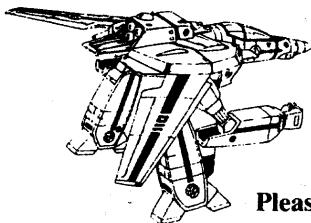
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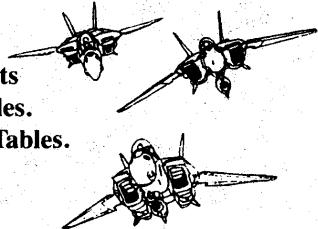
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Highlights Include:

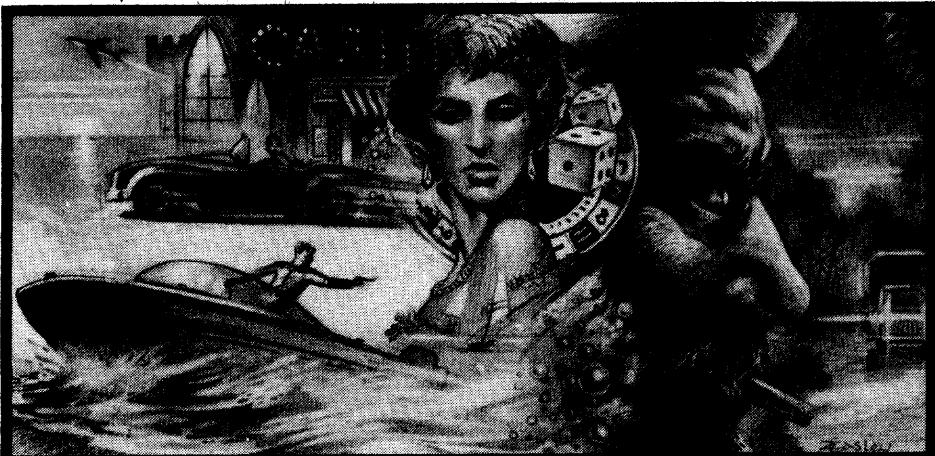
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This is Only a Test

*Training missions
for TOP SECRET® games*



by Lawrence Liao

Although the TOP SECRET® game is one of the best role-playing games on the market, Administrators will have trouble finding a section of their local bookstores stocked with 500 (or even a dozen) TOP SECRET game modules and game aids. If you're lazy like me or don't have the time to make a half-dozen game adventures, a definite problem appears. How can you fix that?

The answer seemed elementary after I saw the opening sequence of Sean Connery's last 007 film, *Never Say Never Again* — a training mission. It would be easy enough to put together a short fire-fight scenario and run each of the characters through it for an "evaluation." No laborious description, 50-character NPC lists, or complicated plot are necessary. Take a map of a room ("training zone"), a few NPCs with guns ("combat evaluators"), and some excuse to fight, and you've got everything you need to keep each of the agents busy for at least half an hour. To this end, I threw together "The Commando Raid" scenario below, and it was well received by the players. I sent all of them out of the room, bringing in each player in turn to see how he would do. Nobody dies in a training mission, since all "damage" taken is actually assessed by electronic gear (like U.S. Army battle harnesses or the infra-red-pistol games which are popular now). In the end, I awarded a number of experience points to each player's agent based on his performance. The players liked the fire fight; although the threat of "real" death was not there, the isolation of each agent made them want to do their best. The competition to see who could get the highest rating became another important facet of training missions.

Whether for individual players or the whole group, training missions can be easily devised for endless situations. Street alley duels, railroad-car shoot-outs, bar-room brawls, or O.K. Corral-type gun-fights in modern settings are possible. Anything that suits your imagination, including ideas that would be too hard to put into a "real" adventure, works for a training mission (such as fighting terrorists about to detonate a nuclear weapon). Using the listing of real missions in the rule book and the TOP SECRET Companion is a good start. You don't have to be fancy; in my experience, the simpler training missions, such as fire fights, are usually the best-received ones. But, even if you can't think of anything, your players are bound to have some fantasy scenario they'd like to try. A scenario like the Ice Miller example in the TOP SECRET rule book (pages 25-26) would not be hard to formulate; you only need statistics for three assailants and a map of an alley. Say good-bye (at least temporarily) to endless room descriptions!

Of course, if you or your players are not as eager for combat as my friends are, you could put together training missions for other types of situations. Confiscation or investigation missions would require only slightly more work than fire fights. If you can assign agent Galahad to steal a secret formula for some corrupt company — draw one room and let him start from there. You don't have to draw a whole building unless you want to. Or, if you assign agent Lancelot to tail someone through downtown Washington, D.C.; get a real street map and presto — you've got a training mission. Other examples include deactivating a bomb, getting through a heavily wired hallway, breaking into a building or room, passing a note to someone in a bar, evading pursuers, or watching a stakeout location to report on people coming and going.

Training missions can also be useful in other ways. Novice players who don't understand the game's combat system or the contact-reaction methods could be put through a training mission ahead of time (before the veteran gamers show up at your house), so they won't be crippled by inexperience when the "real" thing happens. I used a training mission to test the driving rules presented in DRAGON® issue #78 before I used them in an adventure. It's better than risking a costly mistake in administrating a scenario because of unfamiliarity. Also, training missions could be devised as dry runs to the "real thing." Of course, you wouldn't want everything to

appear the same — add a couple of guards here, delete one there, throw in that extra alarm or trap, and be creative.

Training missions are economical for the Administrator. Maps can be used over and over again. In the case of dry runs, the situations can be used almost without change. I'm lazy enough to use maps from published TOP SECRET game modules, like the suite diagram from TS 006, *Ace of Clubs*. I've also used one map for several different situations. An alley diagram can serve as a gun range, a mugger's haunt, or the scene of a high-pressure interrogation. If you're especially unindustrious, use parts of old modules again. Perhaps a shoot-out in TS 002, *Rapidstrike*, ended with the agents getting clobbered; let them try it again as a training mission. Be as cheap and as brief as possible. After all, how much time and money do you think the Agency wants to spend on building generic training sets?

Training missions should be as close to real missions as possible, but there should be some distinctions. Bullets shouldn't cause damage, but falling off a cliff in training should still hurt. Spicing up the training with the unexpected also keeps the players on their toes. For example, a fake set wall suddenly falls away when touched, or a double agent uses real ammunition in the exercise, perhaps planting it in someone else's gun.

I use the same basic format for all my training missions. This format is reproduced hereafter:

1. Objective: This explains what this mission involves, in general terms.

2. Briefing: This is an explanation of what objectives the agent should accomplish, in order of priority.

3. Equipment: Everything the agent can use in the mission is listed here. Anything else is prohibited.

4. Scenario notes: General notes, such where the agent starts, where the NPCs stand, etc., appear here.

5. Descriptions: Details of the training zone are given here.

6. Personnel: Statistics and equipment for the NPCs are noted.

7. Scoring system: I usually assign point values to specific actions, making sure the agent can't pass unless he fulfills the main objective. The score then counts as the number of experience points the agent earns from the exercise. You can also rate agents by specific objectives that are achieved. If tournament-style scoring has no appeal for you, ignore this section.

8. Evaluation scale: A table for rating the agent, running from "Excellent" down to "Failure," based on what the agent accomplishes (or his score, if you prefer that). Note that if you don't use a numeric scoring system, you can still use the point scale as a guide for the amount of experience to award.

Below are two examples of the sorts of training scenarios you can create. They are usually easy to make (two pages at most) and are good stopgaps until a "real" adventure module can be made or bought.

The Commando Raid

1. Objective: This mission evaluates the agent's performance in a combat situation, with a rating given to reflect efficiency.

2. Briefing: The agent must assault the complex and:

- A. Eliminate or kidnap the "professor;"
- B. Neutralize his guards;
- C. Escape alive and unhurt; and,
- D. Exit in minimum time.

3. Equipment: The agent can use only his personal handgun, silencer, holster, two clips of blanks (treat as standard ammunition for "damage" purposes), a .45 Thompson submachine gun with a 20-round clip, and a "fragmentation" grenade.

4. Scenario notes:

A. Use the TS 006, *Ace of Clubs*, suite diagram as the exercise area.

B. The mission begins as soon as the agent enters from a door or living-room window.

C. All guards have one extra ammunition clip.

5. Descriptions:

A. Kitchen Area: The outer door is locked and chained; the lights are on. Guard #1 is seated at the table with his back to the door. His gun, a P-08 Luger, is on the table. Guard #2 is at the refrigerator looking for food. His gun, an Uzi with a 32-round clip, is also on the table.

B. Bathroom: No one is here. The door is open, and the lights are off.

C. Dining room: No one is here. The overhead lights are off.

D. Bedroom #1: The "professor" is in bed with a gun, a .22 Beretta, under his pillow. The closet and room doors are closed. The lights are off. This room is opposite the dining area.

E. Bedroom #2: Guard #3 is lying on the bed watching TV ("David Letterman") with his gun in a shoulder holster. All doors are closed, but the lights are on.

F. Guard #4 is lying on the couch set against the wall, facing the window and reading a magazine (*Soldier of Fortune*). His weapon, an AKM assault rifle with a 20-round clip, is leaning against the coffee table.

6. Personnel:

NPC	PS	CH	WI	CO	KN	CD	OF	DC	EV	MV	HTH	SV	LL	WPN*
Guard #1	45	72	53	98	47	65	81	85	68	163	113	153	10	f
Guard #2	63	85	65	37	96	54	45	61	69	182	132	130	13	t
Guard #3	77	33	78	67	98	85	76	50	59	240	136	109	16	f
Guard #4	76	78	60	87	46	94	90	82	86	230	162	168	14	
Professor	43	90	52	26	12	60	43	58	75	155	118	133	10	

* As per the Quick Reference Codes in the TOP SECRET rule book and Companion.

7. Scoring:

Action	Value
Kidnap the "professor"	+60
Eliminate the "professor"	+45
Escape alive	+10
Escape unhurt	+10
Each guard neutralized	+10
Unusual insight or action*	+5
Each turn used	- 1
Each bullet fired	-112

* This means taking some bizarre, though successful, action to further the mission (for example, disabling one of the guards with a food processor).

8. Evaluation scale:

Rating	Qualifying action	Score
Excellent	Kidnap "professor"	110+
	Neutralize all guards	
	Escape alive in under a minute	
Good	Kill "professor" and all guards	90-109
	Escape alive	
Good	Kidnap "professor"	90-109
	Neutralize at least two guards	
	Escape alive	
Fair	Kidnap "professor" and escape	75-89
Fair	Kill "professor" and two guards	75-89
Poor	Kill or kidnap "professor" without escaping	60-74
Failure	Professor not killed or kidnapped	below 60

The Mass Melee

1. *Objective:* This scenario evaluates the agent's performance in a "gun-less" combat situation with a rating given to reflect efficiency.

2. *Briefing:* The agent must defend himself against each new set of three opponents, and:

A. Survive each set in a conscious state;

B. Neutralize the three attackers; and,
C. Spend as little time as possible on each set.

3. *Equipment:* Each agent begins with no equipment at all, but he may use any weapon that he can take away from an opponent.

4. & 5. Scenario notes and descriptions:

A. The agent may keep any weapons he wishes from previous sets.

B. Draw out a 20' radius circle as the

exercise area. Assume there is a W-high, padded wall around the area.

C. Enemy agents begin each set 15' away in a rough circle around the PC.

D. Between each one-minute set, there is a rest period during which the character may heal one Life Level of HTH damage.

E. A character who fails to neutralize all opponents before the end of a set is not eliminated. He advances to the next set.

6. Personnel:

NPC	PS	CH	WI	CO	KN	CD	OF	DC	EV	MV	HTH	SV	LL	WPN*	AOK**
1	66	53	48	64	47	82	73	58	67	196	133	125	12	ay	50
2	72	70	74	40	32	84	62	55	77	230	149	132	15	ay	50
3	67	76	55	44	79	40	42	60	58	162	125	118	13		50
4	93	43	66	98	57	63	80	70	53	222	146	123	16	hh	50
5	68	94	65	90	76	60	75	92	77	193	145	169	14	hh	50
6	96	90	67	47	44	95	71	68	92	258	188	160	17	ii x 2	50
7	94	62	47	80	33	81	80	71	71	222	155	142	15	qq	65
8	97	60	58	63	73	86	74	61	73	241	155	131	16	qq	65
9	60	91	83	54	41	82	68	72	86	225	146	158	15	qq	65
10	92	76	91	69	71	75	72	72	75	258	167	147	19		75
11	89	94	27	79	81	98	88	86	96	214	185	182	12	-	75
12	84	74	56	69	33	85	77	71	79	225	163	150	14	-	75
13	69	95	75	64	71	96	80	79	95	240	144	174	15	bd	100
14	95	78	99	59	51	94	66	68	86	289	161	154	20	bd	100
15	85	83	97	71	87	87	59	67	85	269	130	172	19	bd	100

* As per the Quick Reference Codes in the TOP SECRET rule book and Companion.

** AOK refers to the Military Science AOK.

7. Scoring:

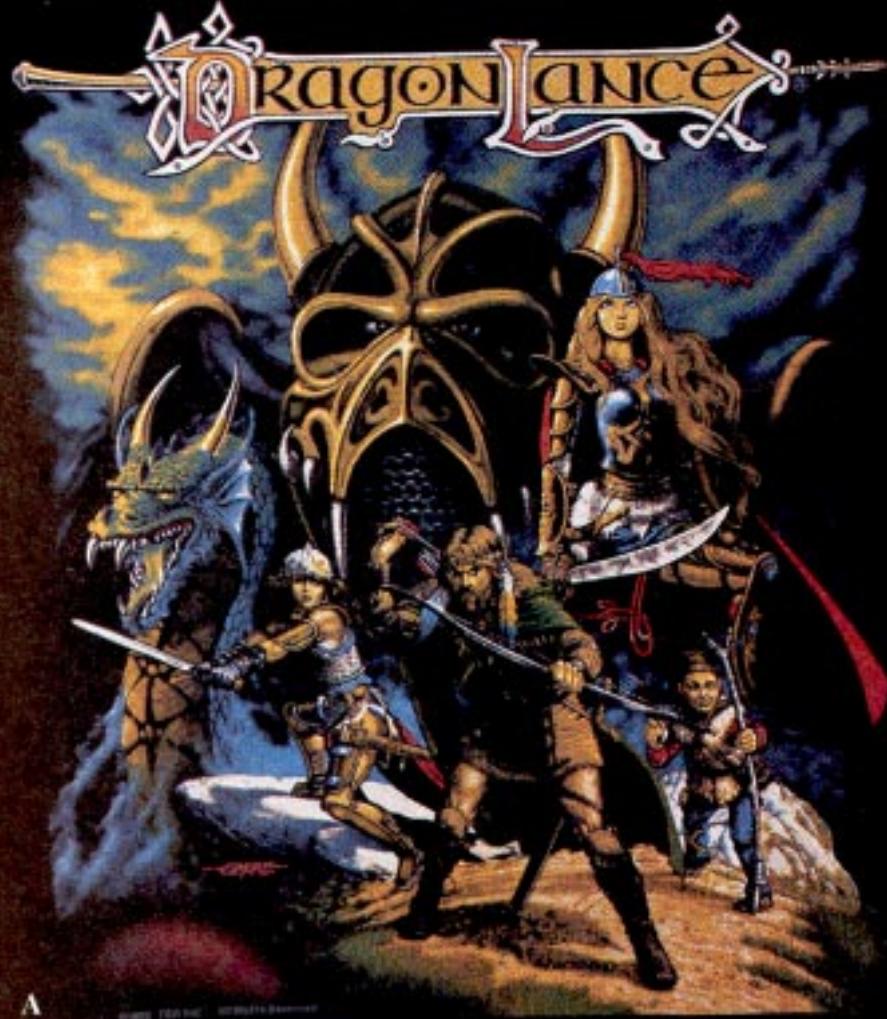
Action	Value
Each set completed	+10
Each opponent neutralized	+5
Each set completed without injury	+5
Each turn less than one minute used to dispatch a set	+ 1/2

8. Evaluation scale:

Rating	Qualifying action	Score
Excellent	Complete all sets	125+
Superior	Complete four sets	100-124
Good	Complete three sets	75-99
Fair	Complete two sets	50-74
Poor	Complete one set	25-49
Failure	Complete no sets	below 25

The Quest is Over

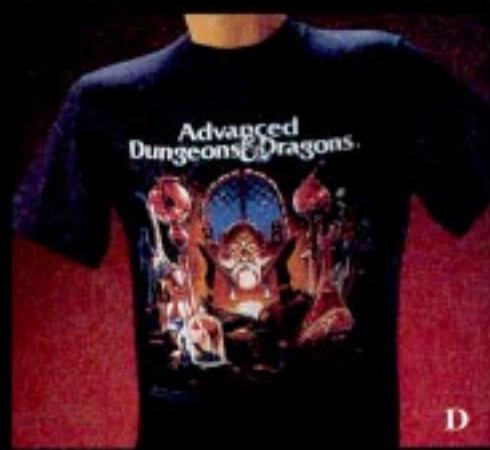
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Adult Sizes Only

DENNIS KAUTH

Dennis Kauth, one of TSR's talented graphic designers, has had an interesting life so far, and his future looks no less interesting. Born March 26, 1951, in Chicago, Dennis first recalls that he wanted to be Lloyd Bridges. "But then I grew up and discovered I was just Dennis Kauth."

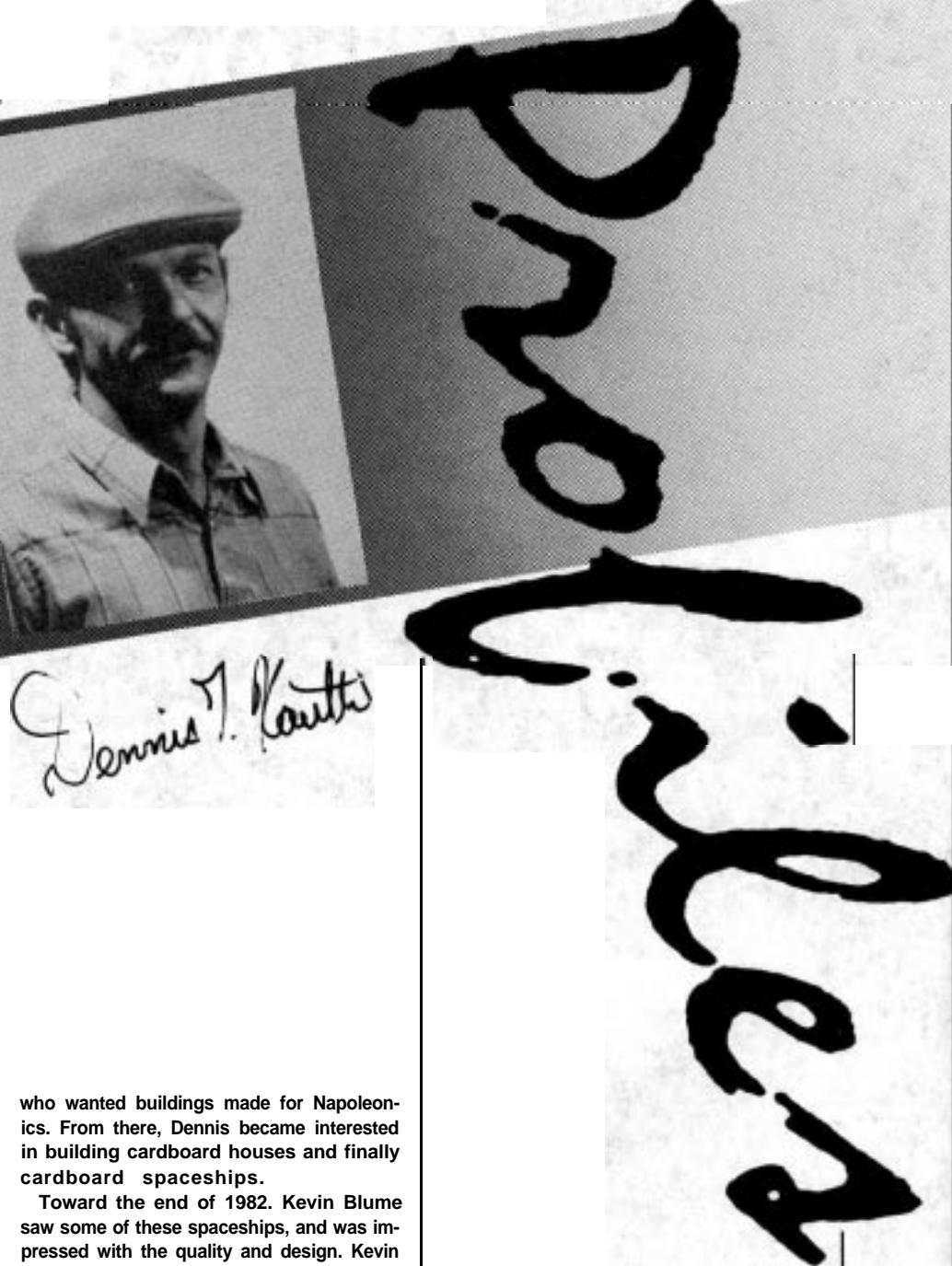
He attended William Penn Nixon Grammar School in Chicago as a child, and then he and his family moved to Glenview, Illinois when Dennis was 14 years old. He attended Main East High School, where he says his training in architecture began. "I loved art all through school, but I never thought I could become an artist. I started taking drafting in high school and ended up with seven years of training for architecture by the time I was done with college."

Dennis graduated from high school in 1969 and joined the Navy. He spent four years in the Navy with the Aviation Ordnance Team at the base in Lemoore, California. He was involved in ordnance and troubleshooting jet aircraft. After he joined the Navy, he "put in to go to Vietnam, but I was refused." Settling for regular-duty Navy was not a bad choice for Dennis, though. He had always had an interest in diving and water activities, and "this seemed like the thing to do."

In 1974, Dennis got out of the Navy and had to start looking for work. His first job was driving a truck for a motor parts house. His developing interest in building motorcycles led him to this job. Shortly after he started the job, he met his first wife at a party (they were married for four years). "Right after I met her, I applied for a job at Inland Broaching and Tool Company in Chicago. That job lasted only four months because the person who was training me died."

Dennis then tried his hand in the stainless-steel industry (which would prove to be home for him for many years). His first job in the industry was with the Stanley Knight Company as a blueprint boy. "Three months later, I was an engineer!" Dennis says with amazement. "I hung around with one of the engineers who started to teach me what I needed to know about the position. When he decided to leave the company, he recommended that I fill his position."

For eight years, Dennis worked with several different stainless steel companies as an engineer. Working with sheet metal for so many years led to a natural progression of designing fold-ups. He met a wargamer



who wanted buildings made for Napoleonics. From there, Dennis became interested in building cardboard houses and finally cardboard spaceships.

Toward the end of 1982, Kevin Blume saw some of these spaceships, and was impressed with the quality and design. Kevin recommended that Dennis apply at TSR, and in 1983, he was hired to work on 3-D fold-ups for the modules.

Now Dennis works as a graphic designer and still designs the colorful fold-up buildings, people, and creatures which appear in modules, games, and magazines.

When Dennis is not at work, he says, "I enjoy tooling around in my motor home. Since I have no permanent address, I can't tell you where I live. It's anywhere I park for the night."

Dennis also enjoys painting, sculpture, and building models and wooden airplanes. Asked if he had any advice for the readers of DRAGON® Magazine, he simply stated, "Read the directions. It's a lot easier."



Profiles



ter five years — and just after the Berlin Wall went up.

Living in Decatur, Alabama ("At that time, the largest city in the U.S. still under Prohibition,") Michael discovered that he and the South were not a good mix. "I still can't play a Civil War game to this day."

"I was an eccentric high-school student and got into much trouble. I consistently got Cs in Conduct." Having had enough of the Deep South, Michael left Decatur on high school graduation night on a bus to Charlotte, North Carolina for college. Michael realized that if he started college in the summer session, he would have a distinct advantage over the incoming freshmen in the fall. He also realized that a student could get "credit by examination" without taking the course — if you could pass the final, you got the credit. "Always read your college catalog," Michael says. "It pays." So after only 2½ years, he graduated with a bachelors degree with an English/writing major.

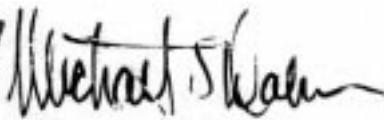
Out of school, unemployed, and broke (Michael did enjoy temporary employment during college as a faculty member who taught freshman composition and science fiction), Michael soon found himself with three jobs. He worked

ium until he discovered that, "museum work wasn't for me. You really have to love it and have the patience for it." So, in 1978, he went to a resume service for help, since he didn't know what he wanted to do next. "They took care of that for me; they hired me — as a resume writer."

Michael started his own resume business in 1979, specializing in the the arcane rituals of federal employment. He also taught workshops and seminars related to the business.

Then in 1982, when Michael turned 30, he faced a mid-life crisis. He felt it was time he figured out what to do with his life. Fate stepped in when he noticed an article in DRAGON® Magazine saying that TSR was hiring editors. He worked for a week on the editing test he received after sending in his resume and finally got a call. "I talked with Troy Denning, who was the manager of the editing department at the time. To compound my mid-life crisis, Troy wondered if I might be too old for TSR, and over-qualified." (The average age of designers and editors at the time was 25 years.)

Nevertheless, Michael was hired in December, 1983, as an editor. He moved here with his fiance, Debbie Singer, whom he had met in the resume business. Michael and Debbie were married the following Fourth of July. "I always have the day off and I can't possibly forget my anniversary," Michael says.



"The first three projects I worked on at TSR never appeared in print," he remembers. "I got a special satisfaction out of editing wargames. They were tough, but I loved the precision and detail." Michael also edited the DRAGONLANCE® series for a while, although he had the most fun editing the AD&D BATTLESYSTEM™ Fantasy Combat Supplement — "the project I am most proud of," he says. (It won the H.G. Wells Award at last year's ORIGINS.)

In 1985, Michael attended a trade show in Dallas. About. four months later he was asked to join the Marketing Department "and I ended up as Marketing Manager." In March, 1986, Michael became the Director of the Games Development. He now has the management responsibility for getting the product out.

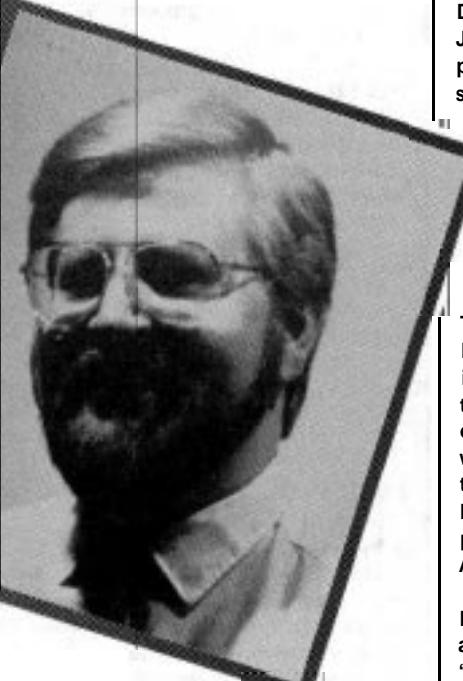
Among his design credits is the four-module AD&D-game Bloodstone Pass series that he is writing with Doug Niles, and X10, Red Arrow, Black Shield. a special D&D® BATTLESYSTEM/War Machine campaign adventure. He also co-designed the Partyzone™ KNAVE OF HEARTS™ game with his wife.

In his "copious free time," Michael enjoys collecting dumb magic tricks (which he practices on the TSR staff) and watching Fred Astaire movies.

MICHAEL DOBSON

Director of Games Development. There exists a terrific potential to heap great amounts of abuse on someone in this position, but pity and mercy were abundant when it came time to write the profile of Michael Dobson. (Michael is victim of enough abuse from the designers and editors.)

Michael was born in Charlotte, North Carolina on September 9, 1952. He moved to Germany with his family when Michael was still very young. (His father had spent the latter part of World War II in a POW camp and had adjusted to German hospitality.) The Family moved back to the states in 1960 af-



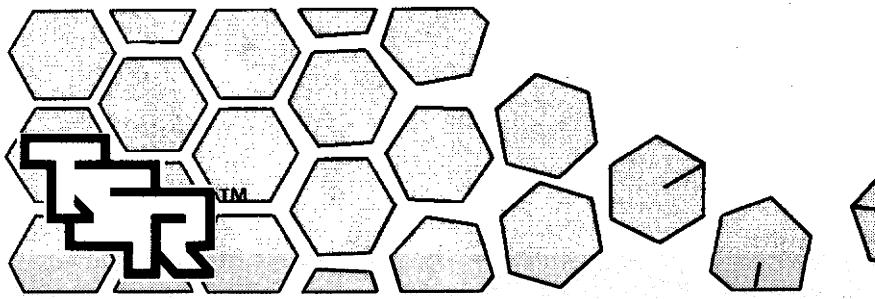
as a temporary typist, substitute teacher, and as a planetarium operator on weekends.

"I worked real hard to get a real job," Michael explains, "and I was finally hired as a research assistant in the Aeronautics Department of the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. It was a great first job!"

In 1976, Michael went back into the planetarium business with the Albert Einstein Spacearium at the Smithsonian. "I also helped set up operations for the IMAX Theater where they show "To Fly." He helped organize the business operations of the planetar-



Profiles



PREVIEWS

NEW PRODUCTS FOR APRIL 1987

DA3 City of the Gods

D&D® Game Adventure

by Dave Arneson and David Ritchie
Centuries ago, in the ancient lands of Blackmoor, a great alien city fell from the sky, revealing a strange new magic called technology. Though useful to all, the existence of the stolen science is threatened by the Gods of the City.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00
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I12 The Egg of the Phoenix

An AD&D® Game Adventure
by Frank Mentzer

This special RPGA™ Network product combines a series of previously published adventures. The Egg of the Phoenix, a Fabulous artifact, has disappeared from the town of Northending. They call the famous paladin Athelstan to their aid, but most know his services will not be enough....

Suggested Retail Price: \$10.00
Product No.: 9201

LAZER TAG™ Official Tournament Book

by James M. Ward

Now players can run their very own LAZER TAG™ tournaments with this Official Worlds of Wonder LAZER TAG™ Tournament Book from TSR, Inc. The book includes rules for tournaments using team play, so players can practice for the same games played at nationwide tournaments!

Suggested Retail Price: \$7.95
Product No.: 8053

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DRAGONLANCE® Tales, Vol. I

The Magic of Krynn

Created by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman

This first book in a series of captivating anthologies tells the untold tales of magic, magical characters, and magical happenings as they occur in the world of Krynn. This volume includes a new novella by Margaret and Tracy, in which Caramon's son picks up his uncle's ill-fated career....

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GREYHAWK® Adventures #3

Master Wolf
by Rose Estes

Among the strongest and proudest of the Wolf Nomads is the young Vintuk, destined to become a powerful member of his tribe. But his world is suddenly shattered by a personal tragedy that launches a chain of events, taking him far from home and into the midst of an evil scheme that threatens to destroy him!

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Product No.: 8242

ENDLESS QUEST® Book #36

Song of the Dark Druid
by Josepha Sherman

The evil wizard, Malgarath, has stolen the fabled Song of Gold. Once he transforms its magical powers to serve the forces of darkness, it will slowly drain the joy, hope, and even the very life from the land. Can the hero, Ardan, stop the forces of Malgarath?

Suggested Retail Price: \$2.25
Product No.: 8536

MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Gamebook

#4

Doctor Strange™ in Through Six Dimensions

by Allen Varney

Doctor Strange's own Sanctum Sanctorum™ is invaded, and Earth is now a battleground for warring aliens! Somehow, Doctor Strange must halt the dimensional war that threatens the planet and the dimension he is sworn to protect.

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Product No.: 8024

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NEW PRODUCTS FOR MAY 1987

CM8 The Endless Stair

D&D® Game Adventure

by Ed Greenwood

The investigation of a wizard's death leads the adventurers to the ancient tomb of a mighty archmage. They must defeat enemy wizards who possess great power and survive the tomb's perilous traps to climb the Endless Stair. Only then can they learn the hidden secrets of the powerful archmage.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00
Product No.: 9192

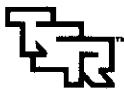
GAZ1 The Grand Duchy of Karameikos

A D&D® Gazetteer

by Aaron Allston

This is the first in a series of gazetteers which expand the players' knowledge of the D&D® game world. This special module offers highly detailed descriptions of the cities, people, governments, and customs of the area, in addition to short, ready-to-play adventures, and a large, full-color map.

Suggested Retail Price: \$10.00
Product No.: 9193



P R E V I E W S

REF4 Book of Lairs

An AD&D® game anthology
by the TSR Staff

This anthology of one- and two-page lair adventures for all characters can be inserted into existing campaigns and used to introduce new players to the game a must for all Dungeon Masters who design their own adventures.

Suggested Retail Price: \$12.00
Product No.: 9198

MX1 Nightmares of Futures Past A MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ adventure

by Mary Kirchoff and Steve Winter

The future is now, and it brings death and despair. The nightmare of Mutant Internment Camps, patrolled by mutant-hunting robots empowered to detect, hunt down, and destroy those with exceptional abilities, is grim reality. It is the day after tomorrow, and worst of all, it is YOUR home town.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00
Product No.: 6873

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GW8 Gamma Base A GAMMA WORLD® Game Adventure

by Kim Eastland

A new GAMMA WORLD® adventure using the new revised rules! The brave heroes discover an ancient military base filled with useful and valuable artifacts. When they try to claim the base for themselves, a desperate struggle ensues.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00
Product No.: 7511

AMAZING™ Science Fiction Anthology

The War Years 1936-1945
Edited by Martin H. Greenberg

This anthology of classic science fiction from the 1936-1945 issues of AMAZING® Stories includes works by Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, Edmond Hamilton, and Harry Haase.

Suggested Retail Price: \$3.95
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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 100 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;
6. Address 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 up to 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 August 1987 issue is the last Monday of June 1987. Plan ahead!

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.

guest of honor, along with Somtow Sucharitkul as toastmaster and Don C. Thompson as fan guest of honor. This science-fiction convention features author's readings, panel discussions, lectures, an art show and auction, movies, a 22-hour con suite, a masquerade contest, and much more. Memberships are \$17 until Feb. 1st and \$20 at the door. For more details, send a SASE to: KING KON 7, PO. Box 16597, Colorado Springs CO 80935, or call (303) 520-1241.

MARCH FANTASY REVEL, March 13-15

This convention will be held at the Downtown Ramada Inn in Milwaukee, Wis. It features several RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournaments, including one for *Oriental Adventures*. Other board and role-playing games are offered. Special guests Harold Johnson, Jim Ward, and Frank Mentzer will be present. Free movies, a large dealer area, a used-game auction, door prizes, a miniatures-painting contest, and a 24-hour game room are provided. Reservations should be made by March 1st; guests must be identified as a "GAMER" to receive special room rates at the Ramada Inn (call the inn at (414) 272-8410). All attendees receive a discount coupon for a meal at the inn. Registration fees are \$4 per day and \$8 for the weekend if preregistered; \$5 per day and \$10 for the weekend if registered after March 1 or at the site. Call Keith Polster at (414) 338-8498 or write to him at 1812 West Morgan Drive, West Bend, WI 53095 (with SASE enclosed) for information on judging, playing, and dealer space.

TOTAL CONFUSION, March 13-15

This role-playing and wargaming convention will be held at the Yankee Drummer Inn in Auburn, Mass., and is sponsored by That's Entertainment of Worcester, Mass. Events include AD&D®, TWILIGHT 2000™, Star Fleet Battles, CHAMPION™, and CALL OF CTHULHU® game tournaments, in addition to many others. There will be a dealers' room available as well. Preregistration is \$5 per day if paid before Feb. 20; after that, all registrations are \$6 per day. For further information, contact: That's Entertainment, 151 Chandler Street, Worcester MA 01609; telephone (617) 755-4207.

DRAGONQUEST V, March 14-15

The Knights of Enchantment are holding this convention in the Student Union of the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyo. Many events are scheduled, including tournaments in AD&D®, TRAVELLER®, STAR TREK®: The RPG, Danger International, CHAMPION™, CAR WARS®, and Star Fleet Battles games. Various smaller activities (such as a program on Japanese animation and a miniatures contest) are also scheduled. Costs per game (at least two rounds in each event, except Star Fleet Battles) are \$3 per person or \$15 per six-person team until March 12. Thereafter, costs will be \$4 per person and \$20 per team. For more information, or for registration materials, send a SASE to: Knights of Enchantment, PO. Box 3625, University Station, Laramie WY 82071, or call (307) 755-3075.

HOUSTON FANTASY FAIR, March 20-22

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Houston Marriott Astrodome, 2100 S. Braeswood. This event includes appearances by dozens of comic-book artists, writers, editors, and publishers, as well as a number of film personalities. 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 through March 1 and \$25 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382, or call (214) 349-3367.

SIMCON IX, March 20-22

This convention will once again be held at the University of Rochester's River Campus. Events include role-playing tournaments, Star Fleet Battles, miniatures events, demonstrations, movies, and a dealers' room. There will also be a costume party. Registration fees are \$7 before March 5 and \$10 at the door. For more information, write to: SIMCON IX, PO. Box 29142, River Station, Rochester NY 14627.

UMF-CON, March 21

This one-day convention takes place at the Student Center of the University of Maine in Farmington. Offered events include AD&D®, TOP SECRET®, RISK®, and MONOPOLY game competitions, as well as a variety of other role-playing and board games. Registration for the convention is \$5; each game has a \$2 entry fee. For more information, write to: Becky Parker, Secretary, Table Gaming Club, c/o Student Life Office, Student Center, South Street, Farmington ME 04938.

CONTEST IV, March 26-29

This four-day gaming convention will be held at the Hilton Inn in Tulsa, Okla. Featured events include role-playing, board, and miniatures gaming, a figure-painting contest video movies, a dealers' room, and a computer room. Preregistered memberships are \$6 until March 1 and \$8 at the door. For more information, contact: CONTEST IV, PO. Box 4726, Tulsa OK 74159-0726.

MAGNUM OPUS CON 2, March 27-29

This fantasy and science-fiction convention, which is sponsored by the Middle Georgia Society for Fantasy and Science Fiction, will be held at the Columbus Iron Works and Convention Center in Columbus, Ga. Events include a gaming tournament, a miniatures-painting workshop and contest, movies, masquerades, open gaming, an art show and auction, and a variety of other activities. For more information, contact: MGC(SF)², 4315 Pio Nono Ave., Macon GA 31206.

STELLARCON XII, March 27-29

This science-fiction and fantasy gaming convention will be held at the Elliot University Center on the UNCG campus in Greensboro, N.C. Larry Niven is the guest of honor, with other guests including Tracy and Laura Hickman, Allen Wold, and James Roberts. Featured events include a costume contest, cabaret-style entertainment, trivia competition, movies, an amateur film competition, and of course, tournament and open gaming. Registration is \$12 until March 1 and \$15 thereafter. For further details, contact: Daniel Richardson, 2527 Branchwater Road, Pleasant Garden NC 27313.

★ indicates an Alaskan convention.

* indicates a Canadian convention.

KING KON 7, March 13-15

Celebrating its seventh year of success, KING KON 7 will be held this year at the Embassy Suites at 7290 Commerce Center Drive in Colorado Springs, Colo. Robert Vardeman is the

TRI-STATE CON '87, March 27-29

Cincinnati's first regional convention will be held at the Tangeman Student Center on the University of Cincinnati campus. Events will include games and tournaments of all types, an auction, and a dealers' area. Registration is \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door, according to the individual days of attendance. For more information, write: Lonnie Barnett, 5661 McCarthy Court, West Chester OH 45069, or call (513) 777-4419.

ALASCON VIII, March 28-29

This fantasy and science-fiction gaming convention will again take place at the University of Alaska campus in Fairbanks. Role-playing games, miniatures-painting competitions, and AD&D® game tournaments are sponsored. For more information, contact: ALASCON VIII, Box 80925, Fairbanks AK 99708.

APRICON 8, March 28

This science-fiction convention is sponsored by the Columbia University Science Fiction Gaming Society, and will be held in Ferris Booth Hall in conjunction with WizardCon '87. Starting at 10 A.M. and running until midnight, this convention features panels, lectures, discussions, movies, trivia contests, and Japanese animation. General convention registration fees are \$2 in advance and \$5 at the door. Preregistrations must be made before March 20. For more details, write: APRICON 8, 317 Ferris Booth Hall, Columbia University, New York NY 10027, or call (212) 280-3611.

COASTCON X, March 28-30

This science-fiction and gaming convention will take place at the Gulf Coast Convention Center in Biloxi, Miss. Events include movies, gaming, tournaments, an art show and art auction, a costume party, and a scavenger hunt. Guests include L. Sprague and Catherine de Camp, Real Musgrave, Dave Dorman, and a surprise game designer from Iron Crown Enterprises. Registration is \$20 at the door. For more details, contact: COASTCON, Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

NOVA 12, March 28-29

This Detroit-area science-fiction and gaming conference will be held at the Oakland Center of Oakland University in Rochester, Mich. Guests of honor include Hugo-Award winners Timothy Zahn and George Laskowski, and FASA BATTLETECH™ game writer, Blaine Pardoe. Events include a wide variety of role-playing and board games (CALL OF CTHULHU®, TWILIGHT 2000™, and D&D® games, and much more), as well as lectures, panels, SF and fantasy films, SCA demonstrations, a costume competition, and a whole lot of fun. Hours for NOVA 12 are from 10 A.M. to midnight on Saturday and from 10 A.M. to 8 P.M. on Sunday. Admission is \$3 for a single day and \$5 for both; Oakland University students are admitted free of charge. For further details, contact: NOVA 12, P.O. Box 61, Madison Heights MI 48071-0061, or call (313) 370-2687.

POINTCON X, March 28-29

The West Point Military Affairs Club is proud to sponsor this convention, which will be held at the Eisenhower Hall on the West Point Academy campus. The entrance fee is \$4 in advance or \$5 at the door. This fee allows registrants entry into any event at the convention. All types of games will be offered, including ancient, Napoleonic, and microarmor miniatures competitions,

role-playing games, science-fiction and fantasy boardgames, and a number of open gaming competitions as well. A dealers' room will also be available to registrants. For more information, write to: W. Dale Conwell, P.O. Box 4251, USCC West Point NY 10997, or call him at (914) 938-3285.

WIZARDCON '87, March 28

This gaming convention (which is held in conjunction with APRICON 8) is sponsored by the Columbia University Games Club and will be held at the Ferris Booth Hall on the Columbia University campus. Opening at 10 A.M., WIZARDCON '87 runs until midnight that same day. Convention events include numerous three-round role-playing events, a DIPLOMACY® tournament, and a number of other games. Registration for this event is \$2 in advance or \$5 at the door; all D&D® game tournament events cost an additional \$1.50 per round. Preregistrations must be made before March 20. For more details, write to: WIZARDCON '87, 6C 13 Hartley Hall, Columbia University, New York NY 10027, or call (212) 280-3611.

AGGIECON 18, April 2-5

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held in the Memorial Student Center at Texas A&M University. Ben Bova is the guest of honor. Events include gaming, panels, readings, movies, dances, an art show and auction, a dealers' room, a masquerade, and much more. Full convention rates are \$10 through March 1, and \$13 thereafter. For more information, contact: AGGIECON 18, Box J-1, Memorial Student Center, College Station TX 77844, or call (409) 845-1515.

CONQUEST VI, April 4-5

This wargaming convention will be held at the Student Union on the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing, Mich. Featured events will include role-playing games, boardgames, and miniatures events. Also features will be an AD&D® RPGA™ Network tournament, a game auction, a dealers' room, a miniatures-painting contest, movies, and a lot more. For more information, write to: CONQUEST, 2300 N. Grand River Avenue, Lansing MI 48906.

GAMES PLUS DAY, April 4

This gaming event will be held at the Mount Prospect Holiday Inn. Events include AD&D® and D&D® games, BATTLETECH™ competitions, and a STAR TREK® Combat Simulator. Other features include a game auction and a dealers' room. Registration fees are \$5. For more details, contact: Games Plus, 20 W. Busse Avenue, Mount Prospect IL 60056, or call Joseph Orlowski at (312) 577-9656.

MICROCON '87, April 4-5

Sponsored by the Southwest Texas State University Science Fiction/Fantasy Society, this gaming convention will be held at Flowers Hall on the SWSTU campus in San Marcos, Tex. Scheduled activities include game tournaments, a movie room, dealers' room, game room, and a Star Trek trivia contest. The convention runs from 10 A.M. to 8 P.M. on Saturday and from 1 P.M. to 7 P.M. on Sunday. Admission is \$2 for preregistration or \$4 at the door. This fee covers admission for both days. There is also an additional fee for each game; this averages to about \$2 per game. For more information regarding this convention, contact: MICROCON 87, 233 Springtown Way, San Marcos TX 78666, or call (512) 353-4501.

GAME FAIRE '87, April 10-12

This gaming convention will be held at the Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane Falls, Wash. Sponsored events include AD&D® game tournaments, chess matches, CAR WARS® games, micro-armor, board, and role-playing competitions, as well as miniatures painting, diorama, and costume contests. Other events include live SCA fighting demonstrations, panel discussions, dealers' tables, and a huge game auction. Registration for GAME FAIRE '87 is \$10 for a pre-paid weekend pass, \$12 for a weekend pass at the door, \$5 for Friday or Sunday only, and \$6 for Saturday only. All profits go to the Wishing Star Foundation. For more details, contact: Paul Wilson, Merlyn's, West 621 Mallon, Spokane WA 99201, or call (509) 325-9114.

MUNCHCON VI, April 10-11

The Marshall University Science Fiction Society is planning its sixth science-fiction convention, MUNCHCON VI, which will be held in Corby Hall on the Marshall University campus in Huntington, W.Va. This year's events include role-playing and board gaming, an art show, movies, seminars, and a hucksters' room. For more information, contact: Mary Sheffer, MUNCHCON VI Public Relations, c/o Marshall University Science Fiction Society, Memorial Student Center, Marshall University, Huntington WV 25701.

CAPCON X, April 17-19

The Ohio State University Miniatures and Gaming Association (OSUMGA) is proud to announce the 10th annual CAPCON, which will be held in both ballrooms of the Ohio Union, 1739 N. High Street, Columbus, Ohio. CAPCON X needs referees, game masters, and judges for a number of events; individuals submitting their events prior to March 1 receive a refund on the price of admission. Admission for CAPCON X is \$3 for each day. The convention is open from 5 P.M. to 11:30 P.M. Friday, from 9 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. Saturday, and from 12:30 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. on Sunday. Events sponsored include a variety of board, role-playing, and miniatures games, a number of tournament events, and a miniatures-painting contest. For more information, write to: OSUMGA/CAPCON, Box 21, The Ohio Union, 1739 N. High Street, Columbus OH 43210, or call Mark Loughman at (614) 263-9057.

GAME-A-THON 4, April 24-25

This 24-hour gaming event will be held at the Town Center Hall in Santa Fe Springs, Calif. All types of role-playing, board, computer, and miniatures games are offered, as well as a dealers' area and movie room. Preregistration is \$4 until April 10. For details and dealers' information, contact: GAME-A-THON 4, Santa Fe Springs Gamers' Association, PO. Box 2434, Santa Fe Springs CA 90670.

LITTLE WARS, April 24-26

This gaming convention will be held at the Triton College Student Building in River Grove, Ill. Focusing on miniatures events only, this gaming convention offers hundreds of historical, fantasy, and science-fiction miniatures competitions. Registration fees are \$6. For more information, send a SASE to: Todd Fisher, 6010 N. Marmora Avenue, Chicago IL 60646.

LAF-CON II, April 25

Sponsored by the Lafayette Area Gamers, this convention will be held at the Family Inn in West Lafayette, Ind. Events include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament (open to

nonmembers as well), a variety of fantasy role-playing games, wargames, miniatures events, and a possible special guest or two. For further details, write to: LAF-CON II, c/o L.A.G., Box 51, Lafayette IN 47902, or call Stan Mitchell at (317) 523-2551.

SCRYCON '87, April 25;

This is the fifth year able adventurers have sallied forth to find the remaining pieces of the fabled Crystal Monolith in this annual AD&D® game tournament. Presented by the Seekers of the Crystal Monolith Gaming Club, this convention will offer a variety of events ranging from TALISMAN to Toon. Also featured will be a miniatures-painting contest, an art show, and the Club's popular used games sales table. This one-day event will be held in scenic Red Hook, N.Y. (60 miles south of Albany). For more information, send a SASE to: J. Kesselman, SCRYCON '87, 7E Baldwin Lane, Lake Katrine NY 12449.

WERECON IX, April 25-26

This role-playing game convention, sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Department, will be held at the Lighthouse Center in Detroit, Mich. Erick Wujcik (TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES and Revised RECON games) is the featured game master. A variety of role-playing games, tournaments, and naval miniatures events will be featured. There is no charge for admission to this event (although tournament fees range from \$1 to \$2). For further details, contact: Erick Wujcik, PO. Box 1623, Detroit MI 48231, or call (313) 833-3016.

AMIGOCON II, May 1-3

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Sunland Park in El Paso, Tex. Stephen R. Donaldson will be the guest of honor, with Real Musgrave as artist guest of honor. Events include all forms of gaming, an art show, a masquerade, and a dealers' room. Registration is \$12 for the weekend if paid prior to April 15, or \$15 thereafter; single-day registrations are \$7.50. For more information, contact: AMIGOCON II, PO. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923.

THE WIZARD'S CHALLENGE '87, May 8-10 *

This fifth annual gaming convention takes place at the Holiday Inn in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Scheduled activities include an AD&D® game tournament, Star Fleet Battles tournament, game demonstrations, and miniatures displays. The registrations fee is \$5 for the weekend. For details, contact: The Wizard's Corner, 801C Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA, S7N 1B5.

KEYCON '87, May 15-17 *

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Delta Winnipeg at 288 Portage Avenue in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Guests of honor will be Keith Laumer, Ken Macklin, and Mike Glicksohn. Events include filk-singing, videos, an ice-cream social, an art show, an auction, a dealers' room, gaming, parties, and much more. Membership rates are \$18 until April 26 and \$24 at the door. For more information, write to: KEYCON '87, P.O. Box 3178, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA, R3C 4E6.

MISCON II, May 15-17

This science-fiction, fantasy, gaming convention will be held at the Quality Inn in Missoula, Mont. Guests of honor are Steve Jackson, Bob Eggleton, Mike and Beth Finkbiner, and Marion

Zimmer Bradley. Events include an RPGA™ Network tournament, other role-playing games and board games, videos, a masquerade, a dance, an art show, panels, and a writers' workshop. Registration is \$15 until April 15 and \$18 thereafter. For further details, contact: MISCON II, c/o WMSFC, PO. Box 9363, Missoula MT 59807.

TECHNICON 4, May 15-17

Sponsored by the Virginia Tech Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, this gaming convention will be held at the Blacksburg Econo-Travel in Blacksburg, Va. Guests of honor include Margaret Weis, Terry Adams, and Lisa Cantrell. The convention features other guest speakers, an extensive gaming tournament, video rooms, an art show, computer games, a masquerade, and a dealers' room. Membership is \$10 before May 1 (\$6 for students) and \$13 thereafter (\$9 for students). For more information, contact: TECHNICON 4, PO. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24060.

BAYCON '87, May 22-25

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Red Lion Inn in San Jose, Calif., over Memorial Day weekend. Guests of honor include Barry Longyear, Mike Glyer, Marta Randall, and one to be announced. Advance four-day memberships are \$25 until April 30. Thereafter, memberships are \$35 for the weekend. Single-day memberships are available at the door for \$15 per day. For more information, send a SASE to: BAYCON '87, PO. Box 70393, Sunnyvale CA 94086, or call (408) 446-5141.

GAMEX 3, May 22-25

Brought to you by STRATEGICON, the people who also brought you ORIGINS '86, this gaming convention will be held at the Pasadena Hilton Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family boardgame tournaments will be offered, as well as various seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitors' area. For more information, contact: GAMEX 3, c/o DTI, PO. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or call (213) 420-3675.

NOT *A *CON, May 22-25

This is the first eat-in, sleep-in, gamers' holiday. Role-playing gaming, miniatures competitions, and a host of other events are scheduled to be run by the best game referees in the Indiana tri-state area. For more details, write to: NOT*A*CON, 3328 Broadway Boulevard, Fort Wayne IN 46807.

RAGGCON, May 24-25

Sponsored by the Rockford Area Gamers' Guild, this gaming convention will be held on the Rockford College campus. Events include a game auction, an RPGATM Network AD&D® tournament, and a number of other tournaments. Prizes will be offered in a number of these tournaments. Registration costs are \$5 for the day and \$8 for the entire weekend; a \$35 fee will cover all accommodations, meals, and registration costs. For more information, send a SASE to: RAGG, 2736 City View Court, #301, Rockford IL 61103, or call (815) 282-1278.

DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, June 5-7

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Dallas Hyatt Regency, 300 Reunion at I-35. This event includes appearances by dozens of comic-book artists, writers, editors, and publishers, as well as a number of film personalities. 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 through May 15 and \$25 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382, or call (214) 349-3367.

NEO-VENTION VI, June 5-7

This gaming convention will be held at the Student Union of Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. Sponsored events include RPGA™ Network events, miniatures displays and gaming, an art show, and numerous other attractions. For more information, send a SASE to: NEO-GS, PO. Box 412, Cuyahoga Falls OH 44222-0412.

BATCON VI, June 19-21

Sponsored by the Southeastern Indiana Gamers' Association and Role-Players' Workshop, this gaming convention will be held at the Sherman House Inn in Batesville, Ind. Events include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, an AD&D® game open tournament, a TOP SECRET® game tournament, and many other gaming contests. Also, there will be a miniatures-painting contest and a schedule of films. Shawn McKee, designer of Hack-n-Slash, will be this year's guest of honor. For more details and registration information, write to: SEIGA, P.O. Box 266, Batesville IN 47006-0266.

GLATHRICON '87, June 19-21

This gaming extravaganza will be held at the Executive Inn in Evansville, Ind. Guest of honor is E. Gary Gygax, with Frank Mentzer and Penny Petticord as additional guests of honor. Ray VanTilburg is the artist guest of honor, and Jay Tummelson is the game master guest of honor. RPGA™ Network tournaments include the AD&D® Grand Masters (a national first), the AD&D® Masters, the Joe Martin AD&D® Tournament to Benefit the American Cancer Society (another national first), a variety of AD&D®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES® Masters and regular, TOP SECRET®, and GAMMA WORLD® game events. Other features will include a miniatures-painting competition, a banquet, and masquerade. Membership is \$12 until April 30 and \$15 thereafter. Memberships may be limited, so early registration is advised. For more information, contact: The Evansville Gaming Guild, PO. Box 15414, Evansville IN 47716, or call (812) 474-0461.

HAYSCON III, June 26-27

The Pegasus Extension cordially invites all fantasy and science-fiction gamers to participate in their third annual convention. This event takes place in the Memorial Union of the Fort Hays State University campus in Hays, Kans. Featured activities include all types of role-playing games, a miniatures competition, a game auction, and dealers' booths. Preregistration fees are \$10. For inquiries on registration or on game mastering for HAYSCON III, send a SASE to: HAYSCON III, The Pegasus Extension, 1718 Felton Drive, Hays KS 67601.

AUSTIN FANTASY FAIR, July 3-5

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Austin Marriott, 6121 I-35 at U.S. 290. Tickets for this three-day event are \$20 through June 15 and \$25 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382, or call (214) 349-3367.

SNARF QUEST

#44 BY ELMORE

©1987 ELMORE

I'VE NEVER HEARD OF A LEECH THAT COULD COMMUNICATE TELEPATHICALLY!

WELL, I CAN.

THEN LET'S CHAT AWHILE.

SO, YOU KNOW SNARF. WERE YOU THE LEECH RIDING THE GAGGLEZOOMER THAT RAN OVER ME IN THE VILLAGE OF QUESSA?

YEP, THAT WAS ME.

...AND YOU ARE AN EVIL WIZARD!

HEY-HEY! I'M A WIZARD, THAT'S FOR SURE, BUT...

EVIL? THAT'S JUST AN UGLY RUMOR.

SNARF CAME INTO MY HOME, HE ROBBED ME, SHOT A HOLE IN MY FOOT, AND BLEW UP MY HOUSE. NOW, IS THAT A NEIGHBORLY THING TO DO?

NOPE.

30 MINUTES LATER.

...ESCAPED WITH MY LIFE! SO, SEE, I'M A PRETTY GOOD GUY. MAYBE SNARF IS THE EVIL ONE.

WELL, YOU MIGHT NOT BE EVIL, BUT SNARF ISN'T EVIL EITHER.

SAY, SNARF AND I SHOULD JUST GET TOGETHER AND DISCUSS OUR DIFFERENCES. I'M SURE WE COULD WORK IT OUT... DON'T YOU THINK SO?

YEAH, I THINK YOU COULD. I BET I COULD EVEN HELP YOU FIND OL'SNARF.

BONK

NOW, WHAT'S THIS KNOWLEDGE STUFF THAT YOU WERE BABBLING ABOUT AWHILE AGO?

I HAVE ALL THE KNOWLEDGE OF AVEARE. HE IS A ROBOT, AND I KNOW WHAT A ROBOT IS! I KNOW THAT SNARF'S SECRET WEAPON IS A PISTOL THAT SHOOTS BULLETS, AND I KNOW HOW TO MAKE THEM, I ALSO...

NOW, JUST WAIT A MINUTE, THAT PISTOL IS MINE. SNARF STOLE IT FROM ME!

WOW, THIS LEECH IS REAL SMART... HUMMM... I COULD USE HIM.

TELL ME MORE, SIR.

OKAY.

SO, THE LEECH, EXCITED OVER HIS NEWLY FOUND KNOWLEDGE, SPILLS HIS LIL'GUTS TO THE EVIL SUTHAZE.

...IS THAT RIGHT? I BET WE COULD WORK TOGETHER FOR... EHH... FOR THE GOOD OF ALL BEINGS.

YEAH, AN' I KNOW HOW TO MAKE ALL KINDS OF THINGS. I CAN MAKE MOTORCYCLES AND...

REALLY!

HE'S OUTTA HIS LIL' GOURD.

NOW, BACK TO SNARF'S SITUATION.
ANOTHER WEEK HAS GONE BY...

I CAN'T EVEN GO FOR A WALK
WITHOUT EVERYBODY AN' DERE
GRANDMA TAGGIN' ALONG!

HERE, NOLMER, TAKE DIS
50 POUND CROWN AN'
DESE GOONS BACK TO DA
MANSION... I'M GONNA HEAD
OVER TO DA ZEETVILLE BAR
AN' LOUNGE FOR A LIL'
REST AN' RELAXATION.
GOT DAT?

YES, YER
MAJESTY.

HI GUYS!

SNARF! HEY, YA
FINALLY GOT SOME
FREE TIME, EH!

NOW, (HIC) LOOK WHO JUS' GRACED US
(HIC) WIF HIS PRESENTS... ARE YOU(HIC)
OUT SLUMMIN', SIRE?

DON'T PAY ANY
ATTENTION TO
TELERIE, SNARF.
SHE'S HAD ONE
TOO MANY.

HEY SNARF, SHE BE
MAD AT YOU... DATS
WHAT ME THINKS.

HIC!

TELERIE, DON'T
BE MAD!

I STAY SO
BUSY DOIN'
KING STUFF,
I DON'T HAVE
TIME TO EAT!

I DON'T WANNA (HIC) HEAR
ANY OF YER (HIC)... YER LAME
EXCUSES EITHER.

LIKE, I NEED
DIS, MAN...
I GOT ENOUGH
PROBLEMS...

SNARF, AVEARE
TOOK ETHEAH
BACK HOME
YESTERDAY...
IN DAT SHIP
MACHINE.

ME DIDN'T GO WIF HER 'CAUSE ME
WANTS TO LEARN SOME MORE STUFF
FROM AVEARE AN' EFFIM. DEY IS
REAL, REAL SMART.

WELL, SNARF, I'M GONNA HEAD OUT
TOMORROW. GOTTA FIND OL' EVIL
SUTHAZE AN' TRY T'GET HIM
TO TURN ME BACK TO MY
HUMAN FORM...

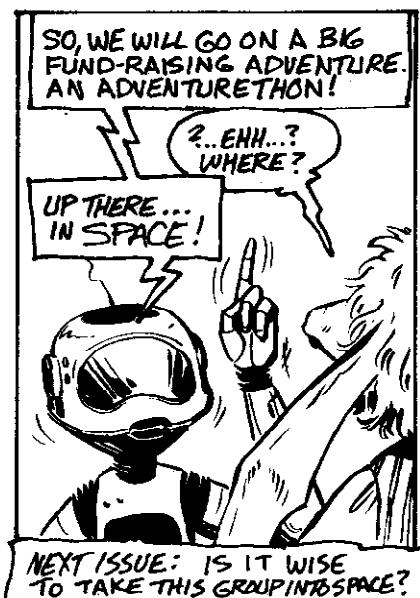
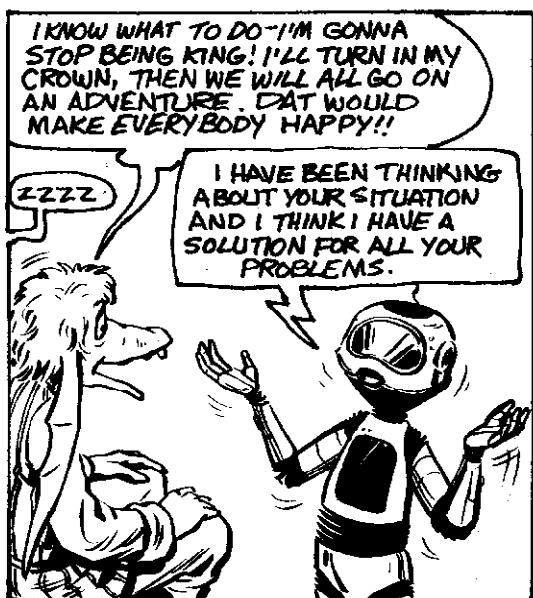
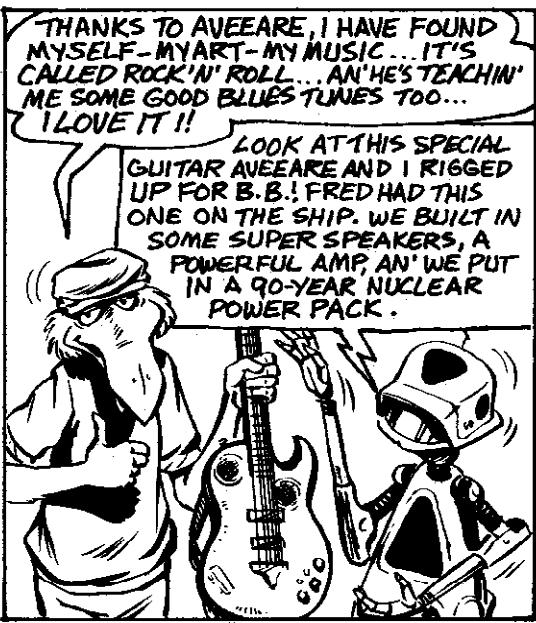
OH MAN!! EVER'THING IS FALLIN'
APART... I WANTED TO SPEND
SOME TIME WITH ALL MY FRIENDS.

NO! NOT YOU TOO... PLEASE,
DON'T GO - PLEASE! TELERIE, I'VE
BEEN WANTIN' TO TELL YOU JUS'
HOW MUCH I... L-L~L... AHEM...
HOW MUCH I L~

SNARF!
I'VE BEEN
HUNTING
FOR YOU.

COME ON, GEEZLE, LET'S GO GRAB
A MEAL AN' LET THESE TWO TALK.

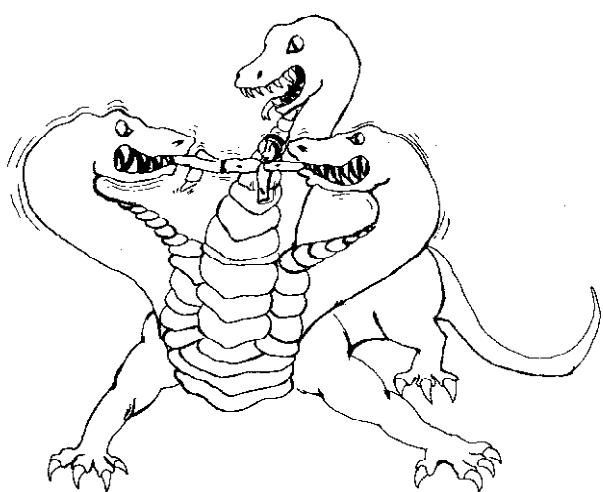
AHH, GO BE (HIC) KING.
I'M LEAVIN' TOO. (HIC) I'M
GONNA HEAD SOUTH AN'
(HIC) GO ON AN (HIC)
ADVENTURE (HIC) ALONE!



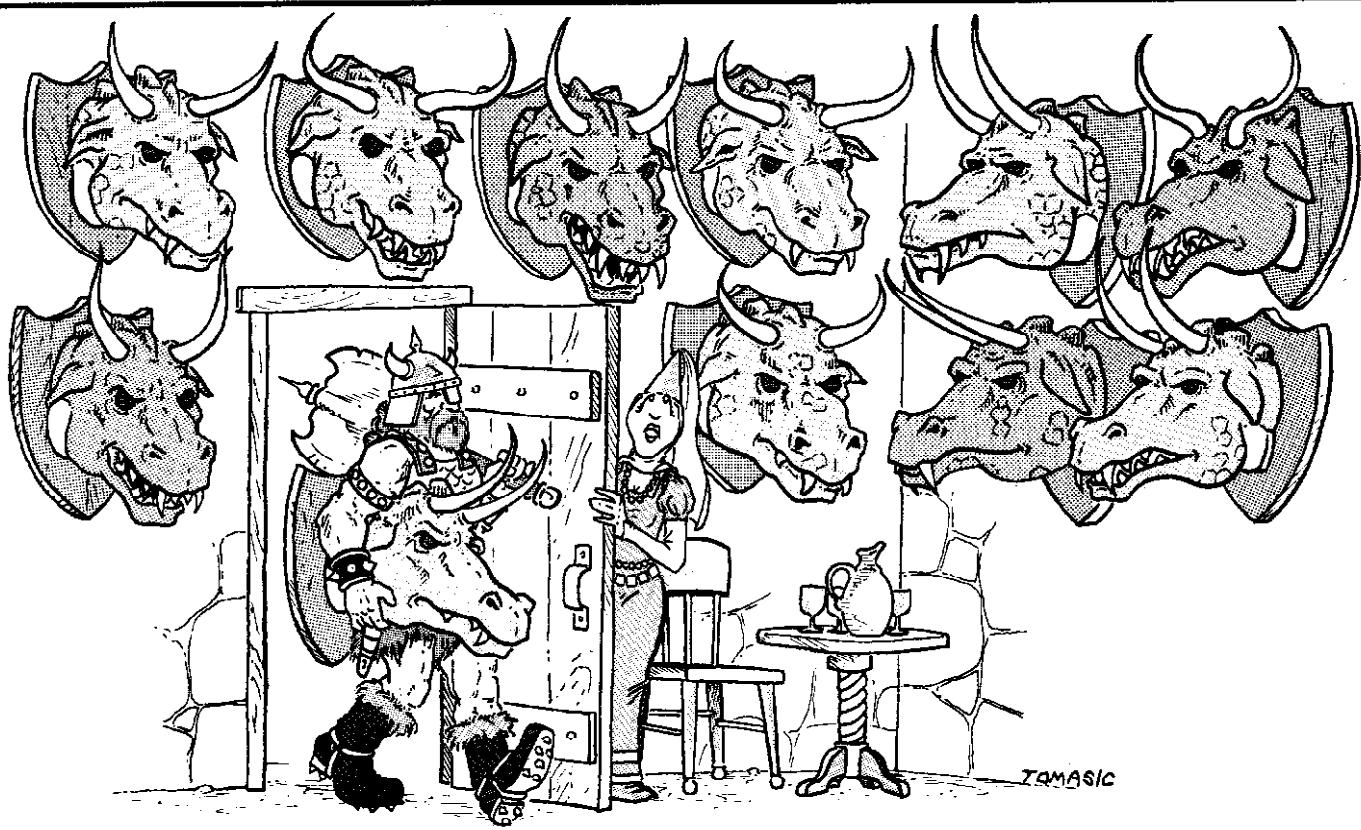
DRA�ONMIRTH

L

"WILL YOU GUYS HURRY UP AND
MAKE A WISH!"



MEUER



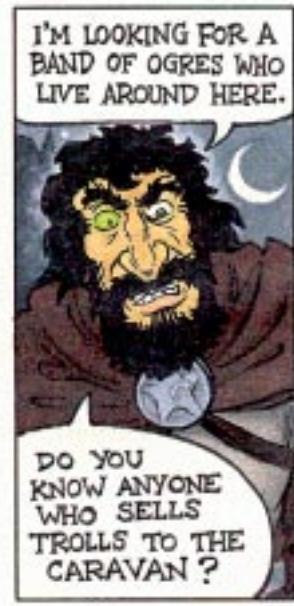
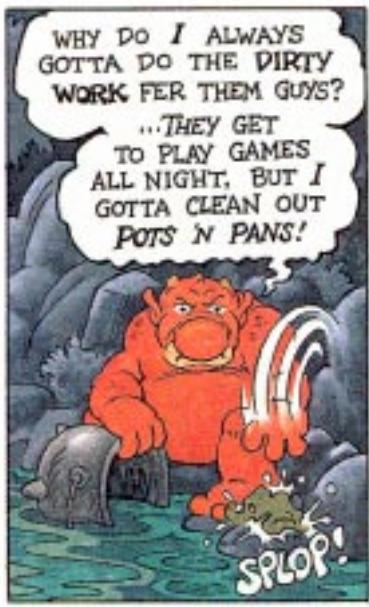
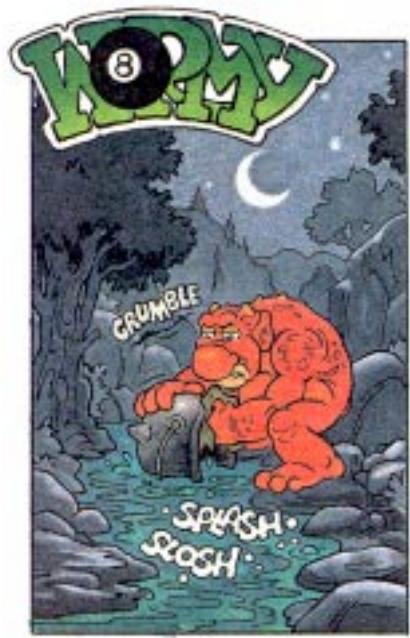
TOMASIC

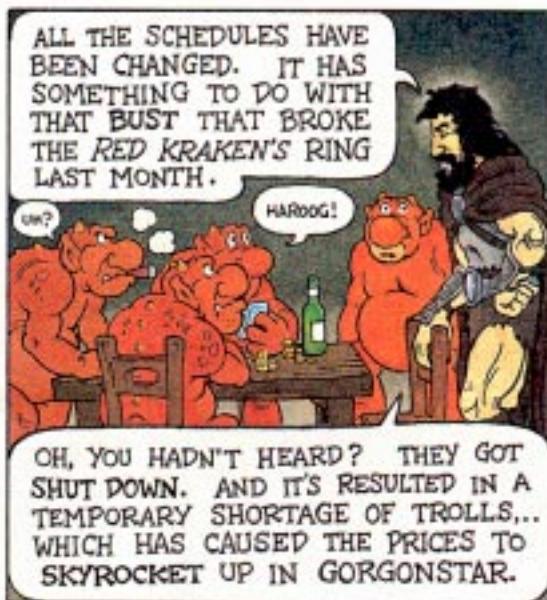
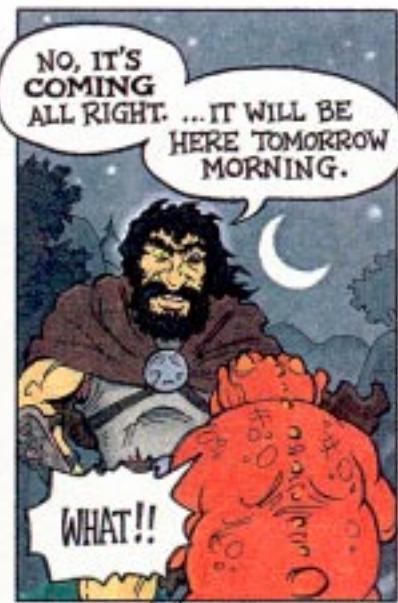
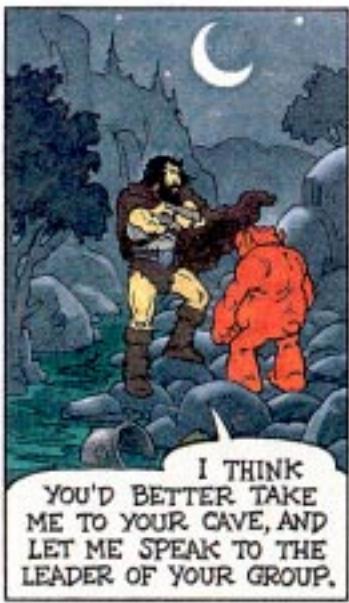
"DON'T YOU EVER MISS?"

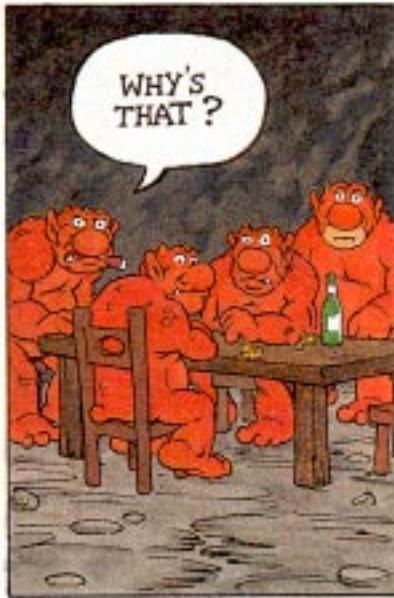
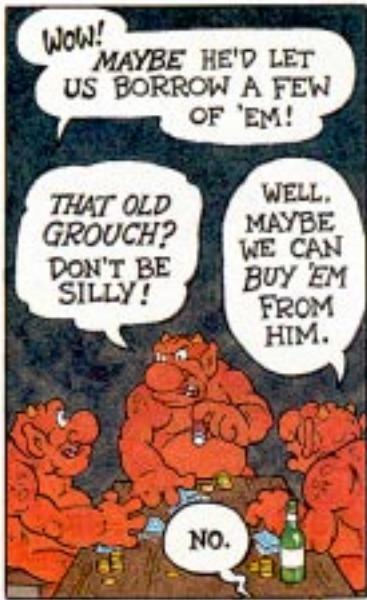
"HEY! GREAT COSTUME, BEAR-FANG!"



"... AND IT'LL STILL SLICE A TOMATO!"







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