



THE KAPPA OF PACHEE BRIDGE

BY JAY BATISTA

A little village with
a turtle-shelled
problem.

Artwork by Jim Holloway
Cartography by Diesel

Jay Batista manages an engineering staff that designs and markets broadcasting equipment. He has a masters degree, has taught at three universities and spent nine years as chief engineer and station manager at radio stations around the Midwest. Jay credits his friends in the "Oxford Guild," a group of gamers who live in and around Oxford, Ohio, with being the harshest critics and most enthusiastic supporters of his writing efforts. He is married, has a two-year-old daughter, and is currently working on a science-fiction novel.

The Kappa of Pachee Bridge is an AD&D® game *Oriental Adventures* module designed for 3-5 players of any Oriental class, from 2nd-5th level. Whether a group of religious pilgrims or a samurai with bushi attendants, any strangers passing through Pachee are stopped by the frantic rice farmers, pleading for aid.

This encounter is designed to fit into any Oriental campaign and draws upon Japanese folk legends about the nature of lake kappa, considered here to be a subspecies of common kappa (*Oriental Adventures*, page 124). The village of Pachee is a remote and usually quiet spot where travelers rarely pause, a collection of 35 rice farmers and their extended families, with fishermen, hunters, and herdsmen, a smith, two carpenters, and a potter. It is named for Pachee-ko, a deep, stream-fed lake west of the village. The waters of Pachee-ko irrigate all the rice paddies and yield the fish that feed the townspeople.

Adventure Background

As the PCs approach the village from the southeast along the main road, farmers begin to come in from the fields and follow them. Soon, 30-40 rustics are swarming around the PCs at the village gate. From out of the crowd of townspeople steps a man dressed in leather who stands forward and bows to the approaching PCs. His bow is copied by the entire group of villagers, who have encircled the PCs at a respectful distance of 20'. The people as well as the gate are a bit shabby, but the streets are clean and the main road is cobbled. The houses are all single-story bamboo and stone constructions.

The smith begs you to hear and aid them. If allowed to speak, this is what he says:

"I am the first citizen of Pachee, Ho Lung Pei. The Boy of the Bridge has taken to stealing children again, although he has not done this since my father's time. Once a horse would satisfy his hunger, but now five children are gone, and Tbi Po says his brother Chao is missing. The merchant Yorta is also long overdue. We need some brave warriors to assist us and defeat the evil kappa that lives in Pachee-ko."

Two other citizens step forward and are presented as the sage Tzu and Mo Li Toa, the son of Ling Toa, a fisherman. The old man Tzu speaks first:

"I have come to warn you — this monster cannot be slain by swords and has lived in the lake since my father's father's time. It holds ancient and evil wisdom in many arts. Its knowledge of medicine is so excellent, it can completely recover from any dismemberment or wound that doesn't kill it outright."

The second man tells this story:

"My father was returning from a trip north to sell smoked carp. It was late in the evening, and it had begun to rain. He was hurrying through the forest when he almost stumbled over a little boy crying in the path. The boy was missing an arm, and he told my father that it was tangled deep in a nearby briar patch. My amazed father drew his knife and hacked away at the brambles until he found a scrawny, white arm tangled in the weeds. The maimed child begged to be carried back to Pachee, and my father was more than willing, but when they reached Pachee-ko, the boy grabbed the arm and dove into the lake! It was then that my father knew he had been carrying a kappa."

"The next night, the kappa visited my father and showed him his arm, reattached and working properly. As a reward for aiding him, the kappa lent my father a magic bowl for our family ceremonies. This bowl causes any food placed in it to change into the finest quality fare, rivaling a king's feast. It has been lent to my family five times and faithfully returned to Pachee-ko at dawn the

following day. We fear the wrath of the kappa if we keep it."

Ho Lung Pei continues:

"I ask that you honorable gentlefolk dwell upon our terrible plight as you travel. You will cross the bridge at Pachee-ko. When you do, that is the time for action. Your destiny lies along this very road. If you decide to help our humble city, I pledge all our resources to your disposal. Ask for anything we have and it is yours."

For the Dungeon Master

These three NPCs know nothing more, although others in the crowd have valuable knowledge. Any PC who decides to question the townspeople should roll 1d100. Use the following table to determine the information gained.

Roll Information

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 01-15 | "Take melons and cucumbers as gifts." |
| 16-29 | "If you kill him, he will put a terrible curse on you." |
| 30-44 | "He once defeated a hero of our ancestors!" |
| 45-64 | "He's a vampire!" (false) |
| 65-74 | "He can grow five times his size." (false) |
| 75-84 | "He's been around for years." |
| 85-94 | "He ate my cousin." |
| 95-00 | "He killed my father and took a family heirloom, a jade signet ring." (See Concluding the Adventure.) |

Everyone in the village has seen the kappa once or twice, in the form of a small boy either swimming in the middle of the lake or peeking over the irrigation gates that flood the paddies. Villagers always fish in groups of three to discourage the kappa from mischief, but sometimes he ties their lines together or hooks them to a sunken log. Some know of the kappa's curse but don't bother to mention it (see the section on the kappa).

The villagers of Pachee follow the PCs to the edge of town, pleading for help and offering various livestock and food as reward. They have crude nets and ropes, and will loan them to the PCs if requested. Long bamboo spears

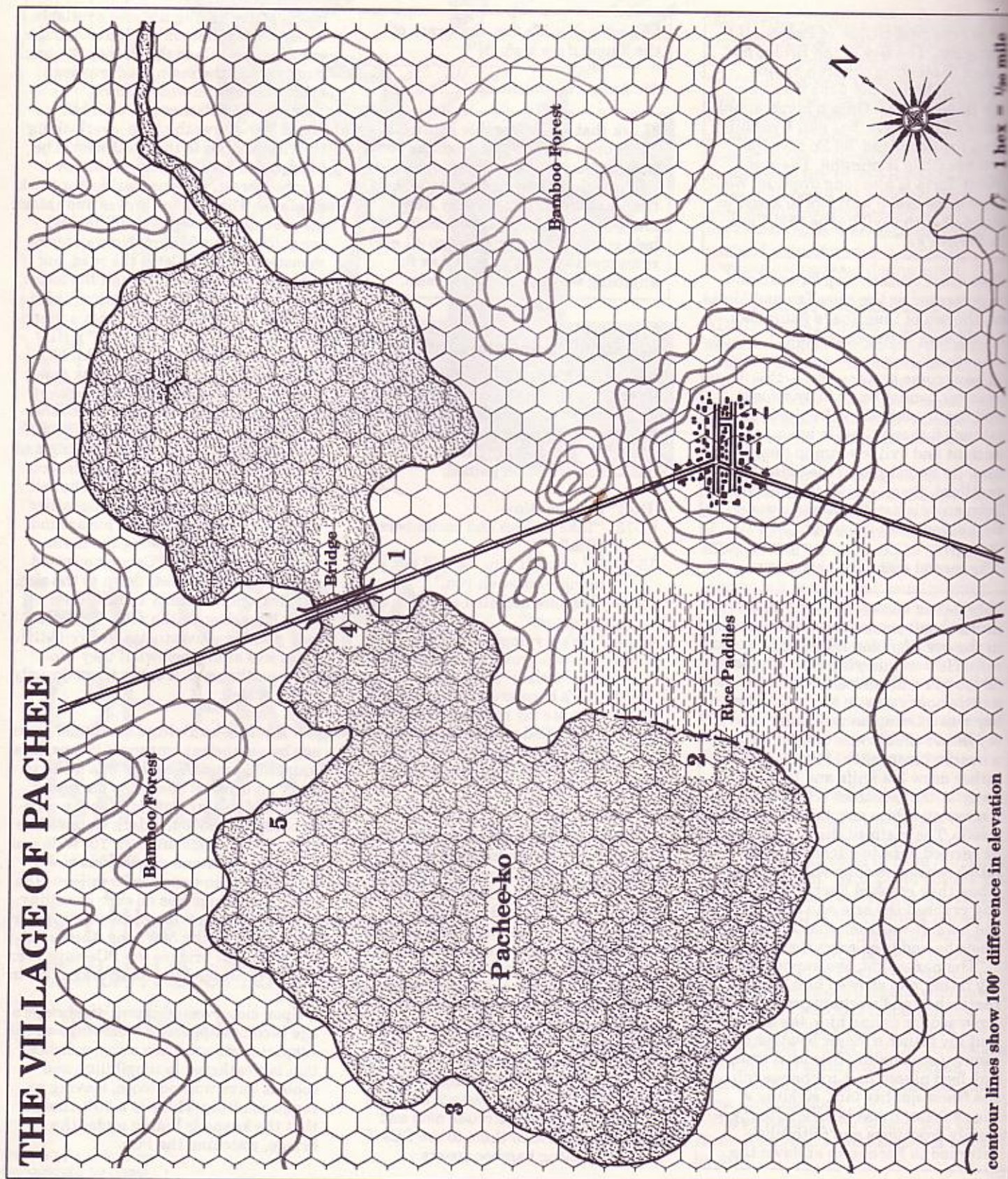
designed for fishing are also available. None of the villagers are brave enough to escort the PCs to the Pachee Bridge, but they say the main road crosses it about a half-mile west of town.

The town of Pachee sits on a hill about 300' above the lake, overlooking the rice paddies to the southwest. The village and lake are surrounded by a bamboo forest, not impassable but thick in places. The bamboo groves and thickets provide a haven for wildlife, and songbirds abound there. No wandering monsters bother PCs on the road, but if they decide to sneak through the forest or leave the road for any reason, there is a 25% chance that they meet a group of 1-3 badgers (AC 4; MV 6" (3"); HD 1+2; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; AL N). These animals are frightened by men and run away unless charmed or captured. They have no knowledge of the kappa.

The lake is more than a mile long and harbors fish, turtles, frogs, and insects. Wild ducks and cranes nest in the tall reeds along the shore, and dragonflies buzz and snap through the air around the PCs' heads. Following the main road northwest, the PCs pass a rutted service road that leads down to the rice paddies where women and children work knee-deep in the mud. The PCs may decide to investigate the irrigation gates (see area 2 below). If they continue on the road, it takes them directly to the bridge.

1. Pachee-ko Bridge. Built 400 years ago by an ancient emperor's troops, this squat and massive bridge was made to carry an army. It spans the narrowest portion of the lake, its low, heavy arches barely 6' above the dark waters. The bridge's 10 pylons are each 10' wide and support huge stone crossbeams hewn from mountain quarries 70 miles to the west. The bridge has no curb or railing; it is 20' wide, leaving plenty of room for safety. Measuring 500' long, this is one of the longest bridges the PCs have ever seen. The water beneath averages 20' in depth.

Upon closer examination, the bridge's age becomes apparent — carvings on the support posts are worn away, a dedication is weathered to illegibility, and cobbles have worked loose, leaving a rough roadway. There is a 30% chance that the kappa is hiding under the bridge, watching the PCs.



2. Irrigation Gates. Six wooden gates can be opened to allow the lake to flood the rice paddies. Each gate is massive, requiring two men to operate. Pulling on huge rings set in the top lifts the gate at notched intervals, and a release mechanism drops the doors like a guillotine. The gates are set in a stone-and-mud wall that holds back the swollen lake waters. On the other side of the wall is deep, clear water, free of the reeds and moss that clog other parts of the shore.

A giant frog (AC 7; MV 3"/9"; HD 1; hp 3; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA 18" attack leap, +4 to hit with sticky tongue; AL N) lives in the mud of the rice fields, and the farmers warn you that he is their good luck charm. A *Speak with Animals* spell will allow the PCs to converse with the frog. He can tell them of the kappa's appetite for frogs and utter distaste for dry land. He can also tell them the location of the secret entrance (point 5 on the map) to the kappa's cave on the other side of the lake. This frog has lived to sleep through "five cold times in the black mud of the rice paddies" in spite of the kappa's best efforts to catch him. He will not willingly allow himself to be used as bait for the kappa.

There is a 5% chance that the kappa is eavesdropping from the deep water on the other side of the gates. If noticed, he quickly swims away.

3. The Kappa's Sunning Spot. Surrounded by thick reeds and marsh grass as tall as a man is an overturned stump which the kappa uses as a sunning perch. There is a 15% chance that the kappa is straddling the old trunk, resting or asleep, but holding his head erect to keep water in his bowl-shaped skull (see the section on the kappa). The kappa may be surprised on a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6.

4. The Kappa's Lair. Fifty feet south of the center of the bridge, the lake begins to get deeper, its bottom sloping down at a sharp angle. At the lip of this drop-off, a pile of stones hides the entrance to the kappa's lair from anyone on the bridge. The lair is completely submerged and can be reached by a tunnel from the secret entrance at point 5 on the map. The lair is a small cavern, barely 20' across, with a low ceiling that forces man-sized creatures to stoop. There is no air here, so PCs must have

incredible lung capacity or a magical spell in order to investigate. There is no light, either; a method of illumination useful underwater is required. Bones are scattered everywhere, and a large stone in the center of the cave covers the kappa's treasure. A PC must have 18 or better strength to lift the stone, or PCs can cooperate to lift it. The contents of this trove are detailed below.

Other than the treasure, the lair holds nothing of value. There is a 60% chance that the kappa is in his lair when the PCs arrive, and a 40% chance that he is out hunting.

The Kappa

A kappa looks like a small boy with a turtle shell on his back, until you get close enough to see the ancient eyes, pointed teeth, and peculiar concave skull. This particular kappa is named **Hoj Ta** (AC 3/-2; MV 6"/18"; HD 4; hp 17; #AT 2; Dmg 5-10/5-10; SA martial arts, curse; SD regeneration; AL CE). He has spent the last 346 years here in Pachee-ko, a nowhere place with scrawny children. For thousands of years, Hoj carried the Celestial Emperor's entourage on his back, until his final trip when, picking up the royal concubines from the baths, he greased his shell so that the girls slipped off into the mud, then jumped in with them! The Emperor might have been soft on him if the girls hadn't had so much fun. Hoj was sent to the earthly planes for 360 years of punishment; he has 14 years to go, and has slipped into his old habit of eating tasty (if nearly meatless) young humans.

Hoj is of average intelligence but often acts like a little boy. He is fascinated by travelers and watches the PCs from under the bridge or the bottom of the lake. Upon sighting a powerful party, Hoj swims away and hides in the depths. He is not a vampiric kappa, so his nature is more chaotic than evil — but he is still unpleasant.

This kappa has a most important weapon: his *death curse*. If he is killed, his spirit casts a curse upon those who fought him in his last battle. Up to four opponents may be so cursed. Each person must save vs. death magic exactly four rounds after the kappa is slain. Failure indicates that the person has a permanent -4 penalty to all "to hit" and saving-throw rolls, until such time as a *remove curse* from a shukenja of

10th level or greater is cast upon the affected person. Additionally, everyone within 30' of the cursed person receives a -2 on all "to hit" and saving throw rolls, for as long as they remain within that radius. The Celestial Empire does look after its own. In a bad situation, the kappa won't hesitate to tell his opponents about the curse; whether they believe him is another matter.

Kappa also regenerate 1 hp per round through their knowledge of mind-controlled medicine. While they can't regrow a severed limb, they can rejoin one, even months later. Lake kappa need this power more than other sorts of kappa, as their limbs are more fragile. Anyone striking at a lake kappa with a bladed weapon of quality or a magical bladed weapon has a chance to cut off one of the kappa's limbs. A "to hit" roll of 19 or better indicates that this has occurred. Roll 1d6 to determine which limb was lost (1-2: right arm; 3-4: left arm; 5: right leg; 6: left leg). The lake kappa cannot lose its head in this manner because of the presence of the shell and its habit of pulling its head in during a fight. Hoj Ta, the kappa in this adventure, once had the bad fortune to anger a ronin with a katana of quality (thus leading to the story told of it by one of the villagers), but the kappa isn't likely to mention this to the PCs.

Hoj approaches any solitary traveler and offers to finger wrestle. He invites that person to come to the edge of the water and link smallest fingers. Each then attempts to pull the other across the shoreline. The kappa uses his superior strength (18/00) to try to pull the PC under the water. To simulate the finger-wrestling match, have each participant roll his or her *bend bars/lift gates* roll; if both succeed or both fail, nothing happens in that round. Failure to make the roll when the opponent makes his roll indicates the opponent wins the match. Success for the kappa indicates he has pulled the PC underwater. Unless aided or able to breathe water, the PC drowns at the end of the next round (giving the PC one chance to escape).

As long as the bowl in his head is filled with water, the kappa is a powerful adversary, even on dry land. His tactics are simple: first trick his opponent, then dazzle him with brilliant fighting technique, then claw away. Hoj fights using the kung fu style (#AT 2, Dmg 1-6/1-6, principle attack: hand

lock and strike). On a PC's "to hit" roll that misses by more than 5 points, Hoj has a 60% chance to catch, or strike and break, his opponent's weapon. When cornered, Hoj fights like a tiger. His claws extend like those of a cat, and he has mastered rolling maneuvers to keep his turtle back facing his opponent.

But, when his head-bowl is emptied, his strength drops to 10, and his limbs may be severed on "to hit" rolls of 16 or better. A maimed kappa will do anything to get his limb back, and this is the best way to defeat and control Hoj.

Hoj can be defeated in battle, netted or speared in the water and hauled ashore, or tricked into coming onto land. Nonsense and foolishness seem to work best with the boyish kappa. A man selling a dead horse might interest him, or two men stuck together at the shoulders and acting like simpletons may draw him out of the lake. A minstrel, shukenja, or wu jen may charm him out. He cannot be tricked into spilling his bowl while bowing, however. That happened 133 years ago, and he doesn't make the same mistake twice.

Once the kappa is captured, negotiations must take place. Hoj brings out only enough treasure to seal the bargain, depending on the severity of the situation. If the players defeated him in battle and hold one of his limbs, Hoj brings out all his treasure. If he was tricked out of the water and the PCs hold a limb, he only brings up the first treasure group and swears there is no more. If he was defeated but the PCs do not have his limb, he offers no treasure but makes one promise that he must keep. In negotiating with the PCs, Hoj lies as much as possible and makes suggestions like, "I'll only eat strangers," or "How about if I only eat children? Nobody will miss them," or "Just a few horses now and then?" He is a nasty and insolent brat and acts it! If he mentions the *death curse*, he invokes the name of the Celestial Emperor, so the PCs will know he is probably not lying.

A samurai can deal for a future favor. For example, in exchange for his arm, the kappa may promise that he will never again eat human flesh and he will help the samurai once in the future. Or, a successful group may demand all the kappa's treasure and make him promise to eat only fish for the rest of his days. Hoj is a sly and cunning bargainer, even in defeat, since

he knows only fools would kill him. The DM should not let Hoj give in too easily, but should hem and haw just as the kappa would. His promises, however, will always be kept.

The Kappa's Treasures

There are two groups of treasure that Hoj has accumulated over the years:

Group One contains four cash strings of fifty tael each, three bags of gems (10 ch'ien each), a cursed lance -2, a domaru and matching haidate in good condition, and three silver plates (15 ch'ien each).

Group Two contains the kappa's most prized possessions: a jade and gold signet ring (worth 50 ch'ien, see *Concluding the Adventure*), a magical enameled war mask that lowers the morale of all enemies facing the wearer by 15% (value 100 ch'ien), a short bow +1 made of a horse bone (150 ch'ien), 20 bone arrows with hollow tips (+2 to damage due to shatter, duct to add poison if desired, worth 5 ch'ien each), a bowl of quality and ornate cover (changes all food placed inside to the finest quality

fare by means of a *purify food and drink* cast once per day; value 200 ch'ien), and a wagon that once belonged to a passing merchant.

Concluding the Adventure

Honor points are gained through the following actions:

- +1 point: Defeating the kappa in battle;
- +1 point: Showing the villagers either treasure or a limb as proof of defeating the kappa; and,
- +1 point: Returning the jade signet ring to its rightful owner.

No honor is gained for tricking the kappa or bartering with him. Beatings and harsh treatment do not bring honor. To trick and kill the kappa is dishonorable as well as dangerous.

The people of Pachee offer successful PCs a feast of humble fare, but in generous proportions, and minstrels are called in to entertain. The villagers invite the PCs to spend the night and promise that the town will be eternally grateful, their homes and hearths always open for these heroes.

WHOA

(continued from page 1)

While we try to give you enough information in each adventure to run the module without extensive page flipping, we assume that DMs are familiar with the game system and have access to a bare minimum of the source books. For AD&D game adventures, we assume you have the *Dungeon Masters Guide* and *Players Handbook*, as well as *Monster Manual*, *Monster Manual II*, and *FIEND FOLIO*® Tome. We give statistics for all monsters and NPCs, but the conscientious DM should look up the full description of a monster in the appropriate book. When we print an Oriental module, we assume you have a copy of *Oriental Adventures*. For D&D game modules, you should have all sets up to and including the level of the adventure.

While we try to group all pertinent information where it is most useful, we also assume that the DM will read the *entire* module before attempting to run it. This may mean detailing the contents of some rooms, researching the background of an obscure monster, or deciding how an NPC will react under likely conditions. We know that these short scenarios are often useful when dropped into an ongoing campaign, so we try to make the locales as generic as possible. It's up to the DM to work them seamlessly into his or her campaign world.

We also assume that quite a few of you reading DUNGEON Adventures are not DMs or will not be running all the adventures. We try to pick adventures that are fun to read as well as to play, so that even if you can only use mid-level AD&D game scenarios, the rest of the magazine is entertaining. A room layout or monster from an otherwise "useless" (to your campaign) module may be modified for use in a dungeon of your own devising. Indeed, a module of the "wrong" level, or even the "wrong" game system, can be adapted by the clever DM whose fancy is taken by the premise and plot.

So, enjoy visiting our "dungeon," whether you are a DM looking for ideas or a player/reader trying to stay one step ahead. And let us know what you would like to see in future issues.—BY