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APRIL 1988, #132

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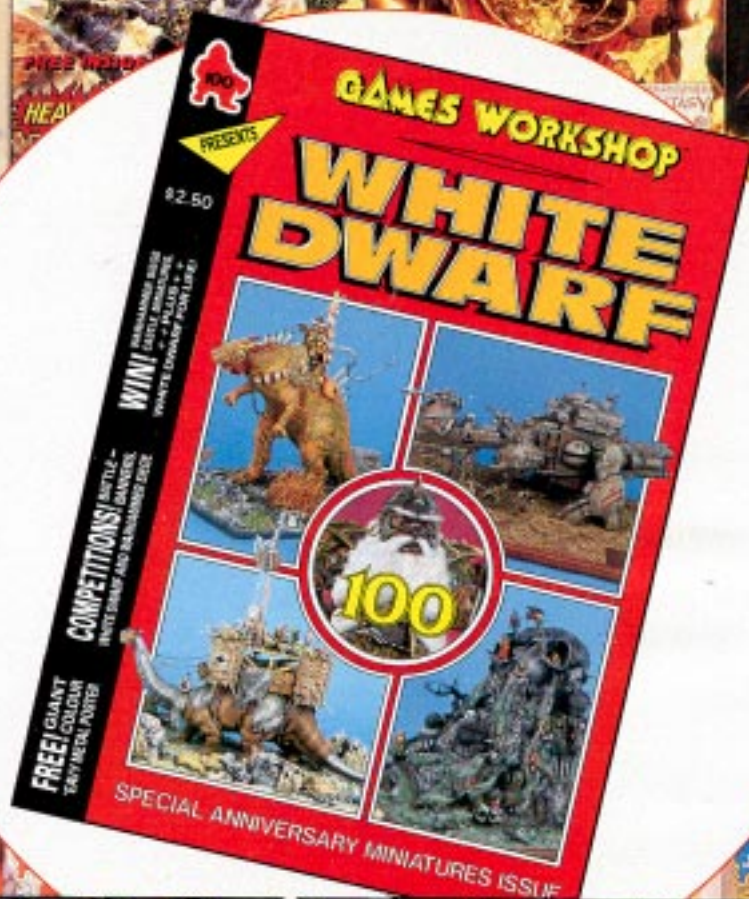


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# Dragon<sup>®</sup>

MAGAZINE

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## COVER

Prospecting for gold is not all that it's cracked up to be, as Snarf and his planet-hopping friends discover in this month's "SnarfQuest" adventure. Larry Elmore's "Fool's Gold" cover painting is now available as an art print; see page 96 for details.

# LETTERS

## Two problems

Dear Dragon:

I am devoted to DRAGON Magazine, and my collection extends back to #68. Issue #128 had two major problems I felt had to be pointed out.

The first concerned the KINGS TABLE game. It is an extremely interesting game, and I intend to play all versions of it. Unfortunately, the rules neglected to cover one basic point: what happens to a piece when it is captured? Is it removed from the board? Is it unable to move until one of its captors moves away? Perhaps I missed something, but I believe this point was never explained.

The second problem occurred in Dennis McLaughlin's article "Chopper Power!" Included in this article was a description of the 2 3/4" rocket. From the description, I can only conclude that the author thought the 2 3/4" referred to the rocket's length (this would explain their \$10 per rocket price, and the maximum range of 150'). In actual fact, the 2 3/4" is the measure of the rocket's diameter; the rockets are nearly 5' in length! This changes a few things about them: the rockets cost several hundred dollars each, and their range is approximately one mile. And in terms of damage, any human caught within 10' of an exploding rocket is killed outright. As well, the weapon's PV (Penetration Value) skyrockets (no pun intended), because these rockets were designed to destroy all forms of armored vehicles (including tanks, if they hit where the armor is weak).

I have not included more exact statistics for the 2 3/4" rocket because I would never allow such a deadly weapon in my own TOP SECRET® campaign. If Admins wish to use it, they must make up their own stats for it. As a final note, Admins may use the stats of the weapon given in Mr. McLaughlin's article simply by treating it as a grenade launcher.

Gord Coleman  
Nepean, Ont.

*Pieces that are captured in the KING'S TABLE game are removed from play.*

*We are not able to speak on the subject of helicopter rockets, but your suggestions are noted. We wish an agent facing such firepower the best of luck in the afterlife.*

## It won't happen

Dear Dragon:

I'm worried. I've been playing the AD&D® game for eight years now and have enjoyed every aspect of it, up to and including DRAGON Magazine. The reason for my unnerved state is concern for the popularity now and in the future of the AD&D game.

I live in Canada, and during the past few years I've found it next to impossible to find active gamers. I hope (knock on wood) that the day never comes when I go to pick up the latest edition of DRAGON Magazine and find to my

overwhelming horror that it's been cancelled, due to insufficient sales.

Please, say it won't happen.

Marc Webber  
Belleville, Ont.

*As for finding new gamers, see the last letter on page 3 of issue #130. You might also consider joining a play-by-mail game; see the first letter in the "Letters" column for issue #126 for more information. We reviewed a good PBM game in issue #131 as well (the Alamaze game).*

## Back to Brak

Dear Dragon:

Concerning the article, "The Last Word," by Gregg Sharp in DRAGON® issue #129, one of the quotes ("Brak? That's a stupid name for a barbarian.") hits hilariously close to home. Brack, our resident Stupid Barbarian, is distressed to see his name misspelled in print, however.

Three and a half years ago, the character Brack was born into the world of Harn, and soon became known as "you stupid barbarian" for fairly obvious reasons.

We players had always assumed our Brack was unique. We are therefore *most* interested in discovering the origins of this other "Brak."

Sandie Weissman  
Murray W. Weissman  
Sheila M. Humphrey  
Diane L. Fryberger-Smith  
G. William "Brack" Smith IV  
Glenside PA

*I suspect that the Brak to which Gregg Sharp's excellent article alludes is the hero of a series of sword-and-sorcery stories by novelist John Jakes, originally appearing in the late 1960s. They are worth reading, if you can find them. The Brak of those stories, however, was not stupid at all; insulting his name within his hearing could be considered stupid, though, as he was cut from Conan's mold.*

## Errers

Our staff was out to lunch, and at some point while waiting for our food to arrive, I announced that I wanted to write an editorial on the stress and strain that the magazine staff experiences in its work. Eileen thought that was a great idea.

"We could use a funny editorial," she said, or words to that effect.

Well, ha ha. Most of you aren't aware that the magazine editors here have a little ritual we perform every time a new box of freshly printed magazines comes in. The ritual is called What's Wrong With This Issue, and we play it very seriously and with large, felt-tipped, error-marking pens with fluorescent yellow ink that would startle an airline pilot at a one-mile range. We pride ourselves on our ability to catch any errors in each issue before it gets printed — but some slip through anyway. Nevertheless, I think that most people notice something wrong with an issue only if it involves an immediate gaming concern. ("You left the duration off of the 'summon froghemoth' spell, and you didn't give the giant cave hamsters a movement rate.")

For example, we recently had five issues in a row which had slightly different masthead set-ups in the upper left-hand part of page 2. We never noticed them until we happened to note a small error on the one prepared for issue #131. Then we backtracked — and the changed mastheads immediately appeared. No one wrote to comment on them.

Last year, we failed to notice that the date on the bottom of each page of the January 1987 issue was for January 1986. Only two readers wrote to us about it.

We changed some advertisements around in issue #130 and had to drop an article (Matt Battison's "Illusory Solutions") at the last minute. However, I forgot to remove a reference to that article from another article in that issue (see if you can find it). I found the error only seconds after opening my own copy of issue #130. I considered wearing a paper sack over my head for life — but few people wrote in about it.

We won't talk about the unusual subscription cards in issue #129, which didn't seem to cause a problem with most subscribers.

We all make mistakes, but few of us make mistakes seen by a quarter  
(continued on page 88)

**FREE INSIDE:**

**THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER™  
Game Poster**

**1988 GEN CON®/ORIGINS™  
Game Fair Information**

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# FORUM

This is a belated response to E.R. Friedlander's piece in the "Forum" of issue #125, in which he "debunks" that folkloric concept of hypnosis raising blisters by simple suggestion. I would like to commend him on the responsible way in which he investigated the claim before making up his mind. Of interest to him and to any other readers who would like to see what science has to say about this claim and a multitude of others (Bermuda Triangle, dowsing, lunar effect, Jupiter effect, astrology, ESP and so on), I can only warmly recommend the following publication (subscription address):

The Skeptical Inquirer  
Box 229  
Buffalo, NY 14215-0229

It is published by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), which boasts as members such luminaries as Martin Gardner, James Randi, Isaac Asimov, L. Sprague de Camp, Murray Gell-Mann, Stephen Jay Gould, and Douglas Hofstadter. Quarterly, it investigates just about any paranormal topic with sometimes shocking results (fraud is rife in some paranormal fields), and the letters column is a very lively one indeed. The annual subscription is just \$20 and is worth it several times over.

Daniel U. Thibault  
St. Nicolas, Quebec.

After seeing my article "Dead on Target" in issue #126, I'd like to add these comments:

*Ineffective weapons:* The main point of the article was that undead are immune to pain and organ damage; thus, the only weapons that can really harm them are those that are capable of doing heavy damage to their body structure. There are several weapons that are too small and light to do any effective damage. Thus, the DM can rule that arrows, blowgun needles, caltrops, daggers, darts, knives, quarrels, and sling stones and bullets are all ineffective against undead.

*Stabbing weapons:* The remaining stabbing weapons that affect undead are still nearly

useless against them. A simple rule would be to allow stabbing weapons to do 1 hp damage (no bonuses allowed) to all types of ordinary undead.

*Silver and magical weapons:* Several undead can be hit only by silver or magical weapons. I suggest that silver weapons of all types do their normal assigned damage to undead vulnerable to them, while magical weapons have the limits as noted in the article. There is something special about silver that does great harm to certain undead. This is one case where silver and magical weapons are treated differently. Otherwise, the article's rules would have no effect on certain undead.

*Vampires:* These have a special vulnerability to wood through the heart. When using weapons with a wooden haft, there is an obvious potential for a one-shot kill on a vampire. Optionally, the DM can allow wooden-hafted stabbing weapons (arrows, spears, quarrels, etc.) to have a small chance to do so. On a natural roll of 20, there is a 2% chance per level of the attacker that the weapon penetrated the vampire's heart. If this happens, there is again a 2% chance per level of the attacker that the wood haft of the weapon penetrated clear through the heart, immobilizing the vampire (not slaying it; see the *Monster Manual*). It may not seem fair to be able to take out such powerful monsters in one shot, but the chance is small, and the vampire should have a special vulnerability to make up for its powers.

David Howery  
Dillon MI

This letter is in response to Len Carpenter's letter in issue #126, which discussed and clarified certain details about his article, "Surely You Joust," in issue #118. Since Len has reopened discussion on that article, I would like to give my own comments on it. Specifically, I have a few suggestions for Scud the Invincible on how to deal with Allycia, the half-elven cavalier.

First of all, Scud, there are much more profitable things for a man of your skills to be doing than guarding a silly bridge. If, however, you

like this sort of thing, then why are you going about it in such a silly way? *Never* challenge a cavalier to a joust! Get off of your horse and issue a challenge to single combat. Only a very dishonorable cavalier would then attack you while mounted. At its roots, the AD&D game is based on mathematical probabilities. Only a fool would ever intentionally enter a fight where those probabilities are against him!

If you *must* joust with a cavalier, Scud, then for gosh sakes, get a *longer* lance so you can strike first! All honorable cavaliers would be horrified at such a cowardly weapon, but that's their problem.

Second, Scud, you should be screaming bloody murder at your DM for giving Allycia a +1 to her jousting ability for being female. Supposedly, she has a better chance to unbalance you because more of her body weight is distributed below her waistline. While this ruling appears to be a logical one, it has absolutely no basis in any known reality. If anything, your human male body weight should give you a massive *advantage* over a puny, female half-elf. Yes, "many noble women of the time were competent jousters" — against other women! (How many is "many"? Two? Twelve?) Call me a chauvinist if you like, but to argue any other way requires some pretty humorous contortions of logic, history, and plainly observable fact.

If you do decide to joust with a cavalier, and you do get dumped on the grass (which you deserve for your stupid arrogance), you are most certainly *not* finished yet. If Allycia's lance does not break, and she intends to use it on you, simply step up next to her. It is very difficult to use a 16' lance on someone who is only 3' away from you. If Allycia charges you with her lance, simply step back into the trees where her horse cannot go, or just run around some obstruction, keeping it between you and her to foil her charge. If Allycia then drops her lance and whips out a sword, argue that this will require a round of action, giving you a free swing!

Let us suppose that the battle is now between sword and battle axe. Question: What is the armor class of a cavalier with a shield, full plate armor, and an 18 dexterity? Answer: Who cares? What is the armor class of her horse? Don't let Allycia sit up there and hack at you with all of her bonuses. Your first action should be to splatter Allycia's horse, forcing her to fight on foot. This doesn't sound quite fair. It isn't! It was, however, a standard battle tactic in the Middle Ages. It was a decisive tactic in the battles of the Hundred Years' War, in which unarmored archers defeated the flower of French chivalry. Unromantic as it is, this tactic

(continued on page 34)

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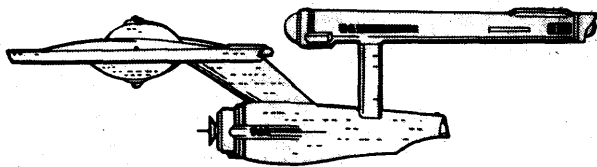
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# Bazaar of the Bizarre



Illustration by Jim Holloway

## *Black & Decker would be proud*

*In honor of April's spirit of fun, we present an item that was originally set for AC11 The Book of Wondrous Inventions.*

### **Chainsword +3**

The *chainsword* is a huge, unique, two-handed sword that has the special purpose of slaying treants. This weapon was created by a very secretive wizard named Jufe Bairo, who did the work under the commission of an evil warrior named Regenetir. Apparently, Regenetir has a great hatred of treants; the source of his anger is unknown (the bards didn't do a very good job of recording this story).

Regenetir, though certainly over 50 now, still actively hunts for treants. Recently, in fact, Regenetir came upon a treant and several druids at a place where many forest paths meet. A slaughter ensued. Because of the human casualties, the incident has become very famous and is called the Nexus Chainsword Massacre.

The *chainsword* itself is somewhat unu-

sual, though it lacks decoration. About the edge of the blade is a series of small metal teeth set on a metal loop, like the band on a modern chain saw. An additional handle is mounted on the side of the weapon to aid in balancing it while the *chainsword's* toothed band is running. The weapon is 6' long and weighs 250 gp. When it was created, it cost 12,500 gp and took 55 days of labor. The construction of the *chainsword*, in addition to its +3 enchantment, also required the research and development of a new spell that Jufe called *motion*. This research cost an additional 5,000 gp and took an undetermined amount of time.

Any being struck by the *chainsword* while it is "turned off" takes damage as normal for a *two-handed sword* +3. If the toothed band is activated with the command word ("Gettuml!"), an additional 1-6 hp damage is done by the rotating teeth. If used against an opponent wearing armor, the opponent's armor must save vs. crushing blow or be reduced one step in value;

magical armor failing this save is made nonmagical. If a treant is struck by this weapon, the rotating teeth are automatically activated, and the treant must save vs. petrification or be sawed in half and slain. Only treants are subject to this destructive effect. If the toothed band is activated, the user must hold the weapon by the hilt and by the secondary handle on the sword's blade in order to control it. Special attacks made without the use of the secondary handle are at -2 to hit.

Details of the *motion* spell propelling the *chainsword* have been kept secret by Jufe, though spies have found it is a fifth-level spell which creates instantaneous velocity to affect the movement of an object. If cast on the wheels of a wagon, for example, the *motion* spell would allow the wheels to move independently of outside forces (such as horses, downhill slopes, etc.). Without *permanency*, the *motion* spell lasts only one turn per level of the caster, but during that time it may be turned on and off at the caster's command. This spell was cast upon the toothed band of the *chainsword* and made permanent. When the *chainsword* is activated by command or by striking a treant, the *motion* spell causes the toothed band to rotate at a tremendous speed and with great noise. The toothed band wraps around the blade of the sword and through a hollow spot at the top of the hilt, allowing it to rotate in a continuous loop. The user, of course, loses all chances to surprise foes.

Certain imperfections found in the *chainsword's* operation may plague the wielder. First, when the weapon is cutting through a treant, the *chainsword* has a 10% chance to become jammed in place. The *motion* spell continues to operate, but since the toothed band can no longer move, the entire sword is swung about. A strength check must be made on 1d20 to hold onto the sword and withdraw the blade. If the roll fails, the *chainsword* tears itself from the user's grasp and is stuck, requiring a *bend bars/lift gates* roll to free it. If the user manages to hold the jammed weapon, the sword makes a saving throw vs. crushing blow (as hard metal +3); failure indicates that the toothed band snaps, is flung from the weapon, and is either lost in the surrounding area or hurled at the wielder for 2-16 hp damage (50% chance for either result).

An adventure involving this weapon could result when the toothed band is hurled from the weapon and lost in the underbrush of the surrounding area; the PCs might be hired by Regenetir himself to find the item, which may now be in the possession of a monster. Angry druids may hire the PCs to track down Regenetir and destroy the device. Finally, other NPCs may hire the PCs to "acquire" the weapon or the *motion* spell for their own use and study. Details of the spell should be worked out by the DM.

**XP Value:** 1,500

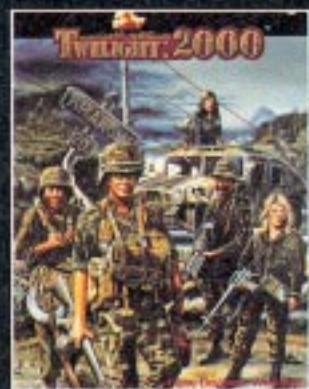
**GP Value:** 12,500

Ω



# TWILIGHT: 2000

The Weapons of the World are at Your Disposal



The *Small Arms Guide* is a sourcebook for *Twilight: 2000* which contains a consolidated listing of every personal firearm in the basic game, as well as additional material of interest to both players and referees. In response to player requests, the single entry for the generic pistols (such as the 9mmP Auto) of the basic rules has now been expanded to include every major handgun type in use by the year 2000, ranging from the German Luger and "Broomhandle" Mauser pistols of the early 1900s to the advanced materials and technology of the Austrian Glock 17. Increased coverage of both military and civilian rifles is also presented in the *Small Arms Guide*. Submachinegun coverage now includes all major types, from the Tommygun of the 1920s to modern suppressed designs, such as the H&K MP5 and Ingram MAC-10.

Each weapon entry contains an illustration of that particular firearm and full details for the incorporation of the weapon into the game. \$7.00.



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# Role-playing Reviews

No one takes them completely seriously. Sure, tension and excitement are important elements, but sniggering and laughing are a big part of the fun. Here are some of the humorous RPGs available. Who knows? You might even enjoy them.

**PARANOIA™ game** (second edition)  
“The Roleplaying Game of a Darkly Humorous Future”  
West End Games \$16.95  
*Game design:* Dan Gelber, Greg Costikyan, and Eric Goldberg  
*Development:* Greg Costikyan and Ken Rolston  
*Editing:* Paul Murphy  
*Art direction:* Stephen Crane



You'll find this game interesting. You never get to do anything you want. You get killed as soon as you open your mouth. It's full of treachery, back-stabbing, and impossible missions, and there's no room for heroism.

The PARANOIA game first appeared in 1984; it promised hilarious fun and a combat system that didn't get bogged down in tedious mechanics. It soon found a following among gamers looking for something different in their role-playing adventures. Still, a close inspection of the combat system revealed that it was slow moving and cumbersome. The mechanics were hard to grasp in places, making it difficult to get into the freewheeling fun.

Now, all that's changed. The PARANOIA game has been treated to a revamp, and this time the rules are slick. All that tricky stuff which made the combat system such a pain to run has been shelved off into optional rules. If you want the extra complications, you're welcome to them, or you can do what most people did anyway and simply ignore them.

**The setting:** The setting makes PARANOIA games fun and provides the rationale for giving the players a hard but amusing time. Imagine a world run by an all-powerful, crazed computer that doesn't have access to all of its memory and is constantly being reprogrammed by people as crazy as it is. On top of this, these vaunted High Programmers all have their own interests and personal ram chips to grind. As a result, you have a mixed-up machine struggling to keep its charges happy — and happiness is mandatory. It is treasonous not to be happy, treasonous not to be loyal, treasonous to be a mutant, treasonous to belong to a secret society, and treasonous not to report treason.

And if you're not happy, there's something wrong with you. But that's no problem. The Computer is your friend; trust The Computer. You see it works so hard for you, always seeking out those Commie mutant traitors who attempt to end this blissful utopia. Sounds good, eh?

Pity that you're a mutant and a secret society member, then, isn't it? If anyone else were to find out, you'd be terminated. Then again, you're one of the lucky ones.

## Playing it for laughs

“Hey! What's all this about humor in role-playing? I mean, battling hordes of orcs, slaying rampaging dragons, and staking out vampire's castles is serious stuff. There ain't much to laugh at — you can get sliced, diced, frazzled, and drained of levels. Where's the fun in losing your favorite character? It's taken ages to reach this level. See this here? I tell ya, this character's got a better personality than I have. And you're trying to tell me that role-playing is humorous? No way. Period.”

Come on, loosen up; have a little fun. You've had lots of fun from adventures. You enjoy frying trolls, chopping orcs, and going weak at the knees every time a level-

drainer pops out of the woodwork. You've had plenty of laughs talking to weird and dumb NPCs. So what's wrong with a game that emphasizes humor above all the other elements?

“Um . . . nothing. But, I need the challenge of serious adventures, epic struggles, heroic actions. The feeling that my character is a hero and not some figure of fun.”

You can get all that from humorous games. And what's wrong with funny characters? Some of yours are real nerds.

“Hey, what are you getting at? That I've got no sense of humor?”

Nope. I'm just pointing out that all role-playing games are inherently humorous.

That's right, citizen: be proud. Your friend The Computer has chosen you to be a Troubleshooter. You get neat equipment to use and have access to the wonderful devices created by those ever-so-nice people down at Research and Design. And if that's not enough, you are trusted to go on missions.

Okay, so these missions tend to be suicidal, you're badly informed, you suspect that your fellow Troubleshooters are all Commie mutant traitors, and one of them is an obvious Internal Security plant, but if you can get them before they can get you, The Computer will reward you. Then again, it may terminate you. So be happy. Smile. You're lucky. Honest.

**Presentation:** Whether you buy the PARANOIA game in its hardbound incarnation or as a boxed set, the presentation is impressive. Jim Holloway, the master of the fun-filled illustration, has done an excellent job of capturing the game's flavor, and the accompanying captions are tremendous. Depending on your packaging preference, both rules sets have a lot to recommend them. The book has everything in one place, but lacks the 16-page *The Compleat Troubleshooter* booklet and 1d20. This latter booklet looks at how to fulfill your role in a party of Troubleshooters. While not essential, it makes for a fun read.

This game's tone is one of — you guessed it — paranoia. Everyone is out to get you: one of those Commie mutant traitors in your group, The Computer, the High Programmers, the lunatics at R&D, the butcher, the baker, the glowlightmakers. . . . To pull this off, it's got to be fun; otherwise, you're liable to go mad. Making the campaign fun is the aim of the game. Don't expect to survive; just survive as long as you can, and take somebody else with you when you go.

Fun oozes out of the rules; everything is geared to having a manic time in a totally oppressive society. The inhabitants of Alpha Complex are graded into clearance levels. At the bottom are the infrared drones; low in intelligence and drugged out of their minds to keep them happy, the infrareds do all the hard work. Above them are the higher clearance citizens who have a bit more freedom, but only a tiny bit. Often, information vital to their mission is not given out. ("I'm sorry, citizen, but that data is not available at your security clearance.")

PARANOIA games excel in Catch-22 situations. The Computer wants you to succeed at your mission, so it provides you with valuable experimental equipment. Designed by loonies for the use of loonies, this stuff is often useless and highly dangerous, but it's got to be tested, and if you don't test it, you're being treasonous. It's a no-win scenario. In other games, the players would be up in arms, refusing to play and lynching the GM. Yet in PARANOIA games, these hopeless situations have the players grinning inanely, while at the same

time trying not to seem amused under the ever-watchful eye of Internal Security and The Computer.

Consider this extract from *Into the Outdoors With Gun and Camera* — the introductory adventure:

"Greetings, Citizen. Your services are required. Report to briefing room IOGC. Refer to appended map."

Sounds simple, except that the map is the size of a postage stamp and impossible to read. As the mission is secret, you can't ask anyone where the room is, unless you want to get terminated. In addition, you're expected soon, so don't hang around long.

Imagine any frustrating bureaucratic experience you've been through and rejoice that it was not from the PARANOIA world, for it would have been far, far worse if it were. Uncaring bureaucrats, overly zealous administrators, incriminating paperwork, and constant shuffling of forms: This is a bureaucratic nightmare in which fun is the objective, and you're in for plenty of it.

The PARANOIA game is a role-playing farce. Everyone knows that he's going to get it sooner or later. The fun comes from trying to avoid getting stapled, fried, dissected, or simply blown to bits. To avoid these pitfalls, you've got to think fast, plant incriminating evidence on other player characters, grovel to your superiors, avoid giving suspicious answers to probing questions, and take extremely good care of the equipment The Computer has thoughtfully provided.

**Character creation:** This aspect of the game is pretty straightforward. To begin, you just grab a character sheet and roll 1d20 for each ability. This generates a character's base skill levels as well as basic attributes. Next, add to the skill values by spending 30 points. Roll for service group, mutant power, and secret society, and you're ready to go.

As you can see, this is simple stuff — so simple you don't even need to do it. Chances are the GM will whip out some ready-to-play characters, complete with lots of interesting background information. Adventure design is an art in PARANOIA games — an art which calls for the characters to match the adventure offered. That way, the GM can insure that the best (in other words, worst) mix of characters is available.

So, what do you do? Everyone suspects you and is just itching for a chance to prove that you are a traitor. You've got to keep your nose clean while following any instructions from your secret society and fulfilling the mission. If *they* get you, well, it's no problem: you have five other identical clones in wait who have been carefully created and nurtured by The Computer. These clones are perfect — the computer says so. So it doesn't matter that your clones have the same secret society and mutant ability as your first character. Your

new clone is innocent until proven guilty.

**Mechanics:** As befits a game in which the situations are all-important, the rules for PARANOIA games are simple and fast. Skills are rated on a 1-20 scale. To use a skill, roll 1d20; if you get the skill number or under, you succeed.

However, game mechanics are a tool and not an end in themselves. Players and GMs are encouraged to let face-to-face role-playing take precedence over mechanical dice rolls. It's more fun to play out attempts at bootlicking a superior than it is to rely on the luck of a die roll.

**GM's tips:** To get GMs in the mood, the designers have included loads of excellent tips on how to present encounters and NPCs at their best. With clear guidelines on how to use the game's colorful and fun background, the PARANOIA game gains the best enjoyment for everyone concerned.

Ample information is also provided to make it easy for the GM to maintain the fast action and farcical entertainment. No GM reading this is left in any doubt as to how to run a PARANOIA adventure; all the ingredients needed to design thrilling adventures are covered in loving detail. Bucketsful of examples show how to maximize the humor inherent in any situation without it becoming labored. All in all, this is state-of-the-art design when it comes to helping and inspiring GMs.

**Introductory adventure:** *Into the Outdoors with Gun and Camera* shows what the PARANOIA game is all about. Players get bullied, hosed, bounced around, and submerged. In exchange, they get to blast the local wildlife and take advantage of the excellent role-playing opportunities available. This creates fun for everyone concerned, and the staging tips make this a delight to read.

While basically linear, the adventure provides players with a fair degree of freedom. Many encounters have a number of possible outcome endings, depending on the players' actions. Yet, no matter what the outcome of an encounter, the GM is provided with oodles of options on how to link one encounter with another in a smooth and satisfying way.

**Evaluation:** Is the PARANOIA game flawless? Well, not quite. It doesn't lend itself easily to long-term campaign play. This game is best treated as a succession of short adventure sessions in which players get to enjoy themselves doing all those despicable things that would spoil a more "serious" game. Some players may not like the idea of between-character treachery, but this is such an integral part of the PARANOIA game's atmosphere that it's worth abandoning a few scruples in exchange for an evening's fun.

As a tongue-in-cheek science-fiction game, this one is hard to beat. Give it a go; you won't be disappointed. And remember: The Computer is your friend. This is available from: West End Games, 251 West 30th Street, New York NY 10001, USA.

## GHOSTBUSTERS™ game

"A Frightfully Cheerful Roleplaying Game"  
West End Games \$16.95

Design: Sandy Peterson, Lynn Willis, and  
Greg Stafford

Development: Ken Rolston and Martin  
Wixted

Editing and development: Paul Murphy  
and Greg Costikyan

Graphic design: Richard Johnson, Kevin  
Wilkins, and Stephen Crane

Need an elegant rules system? Then get in touch with the guys at Chaosium. Once Chaosium has turned out the rules, hand the product over to West End's crack development team. The result will be a game which admirably captures the flavor of the *Ghostbusters* movie.

Forget the mind-blasting horrors of Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® and Pacesetter's CHILL™ games. The creatures from beyond space and time in the GHOSTBUSTERS game are here to have fun, not to turn the heroes into gibbering, drooling wrecks. The Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man may be pretty scary, but that big, silly grin shows he's really here to have a good time. And if he steps on a building or two in his attempt to get the Ghostbusters, so what? A transdimensional being has to have a few kicks. Similarly, the little spud ghost in the hotel doesn't mean any harm; he's just hungry. Who can blame him for sliming pesky Ghostbusters when they interrupt his lunch? No, Ghostbusting isn't dangerous; it's fun — which is what the movie clearly showed.

So, how do you turn a successful comedy movie into a satisfying and fun role-playing game? Well, for a start, you don't worry too much about inconvenient things like characters getting killed, and you skip the difficult stuff like rules. This is a fast-action game that encourages good role-playing and the destruction of large chunks of real estate with proton packs.

**The setting:** Real life, yeah, that's the setting. So you know all about it already. No need to bury yourself in pages of back-

ground before you're ready to play. To keep the players busy, there are more spooks, Sumerian demons, and extraterrestrials around than you'd normally expect, but the rest that you see is simply the modern world and all it entails.

**Presentation:** This is nice, real nice. Inside the box is a Training Manual, an Operations Manual (with three complete, ready-to-run adventures), a booklet of Reference Files, lots of character and equipment cards, five dice, and the nifty Ghost Die. The Reference Files include three pages of rules for the players (really all they need to know), a typical 10-minute sample of play, some maps, and a bunch of player handouts. The rules booklets are laid out nicely and are easy to read, with plenty of anecdotes to get the flavor across. With its high-quality components and breezy writing style, the GHOSTBUSTERS game is very accessible.

**Character creation:** Players can take on the roles of the Ghostbusters from the movie or create their own roles. Creating characters is easy. Characters have four traits — Brains, Muscles, Moves, and Cool — which are used to determine actions such as shooting, climbing, fast talking, creating a super new scientific gadget, parapsychology, occult, peeling bananas, etc. A player gets 12 points to divide among each character's four traits. He may then pick one talent for each of the traits. Talents make you better than usual at some skill, like chemistry or browbeating. Each talent is three points higher than the governing trait; thus, Muscles of 4 gives a Run talent of 7. When brawling, gobbling food, ripping things open, intimidating some sap, or jumping, you use your Muscles trait of 4. When running, you move with a Run value of 7. This system covers everything you're ever going to do. If you want to fire a proton pack, a Moves roll is required; if you're playing the stock market, you'd better have a high Cool. Maybe you're trying to remember some piece of soap-opera history; use your Brains — that's what they're for.

**Mechanics:** To put a skill into action,

roll as many six-sided dice as your trait score, total the results, and tell the Ghostmaster (GM). You try to roll high numbers for the difficult tasks (say, a 30) and as low as 5 for the easy stuff. If this sounds familiar, it should; it's basically the same system as used in STAR WARS®: The RPG (see the review in issue #131). The difference is that you can only do one action per round in the GHOSTBUSTERS game, and ghosts have a tendency to pop up every now and then on the Ghost Die. See, each time you roll the dice, one of them is the special Ghost Die. This is marked from 1 to 5, with the *Ghostbuster* logo on the sixth face. If the Ghost Die produces a number, add it to the other dice. If it comes up Mr. Ghost (the logo), something bad has happened. How bad the event is depends on whether you made your roll or not. If you made it, some niggling inconvenience plagues you for a while; if you didn't make the roll, something unpleasantly funny happens. This is open to GM interpretation as befits the action and the mood. Just be content that whatever happens is going to be funny. You're not going to die, but you could end up looking pretty stupid or being dumped into even worse trouble.

Oh, you also have Brownie Points; use these to increase a trait or talent when in a tight spot, or spend them to avoid getting smeared by some soul-sucking demon. The GM dishes these out at the end of each session, so use them while you can, unless you're into collecting them, in which case you cash them in 30 at a time to increase one of your traits.

And don't forget: Ghostbusters are real people too. They've got personal goals, and achieving these gains them extra Brownie Points, which are well worth going for. So what if some goals are a bit inconvenient at times? You've got to go for them when you get the chance. Whether you're motivated by sex, money, fame, or the advancement of soulless science, there's always more to life than simply zapping spooks.

There you have it: the basic GHOSTBUSTERS game rules, the rules on ghosts and other assorted spooks, plus the info on how the Ghostbuster equipment works. There are no difficult charts to pore over, no tricky movement distances to keep in mind, and no complicated weapons charts. These rules may not be everyone's idea of a role-playing game, but this is not a normal game. Lighthearted adventure is the order of the day, and the rules are more than adequate at providing it. Get into the *spirit*, and you'll enjoy it when the ghost pops up on the die and spoils your best-laid plans.

**GM's tips:** From designing and staging your own adventures to getting the most fun out of any situation, the GM tips are excellent. Well-written with profuse examples, these tips will leave no Ghostmaster short of ideas.

Want to set the players's group up in your hometown as a franchise of Ghostbusters, Inc? No problem; in fact, it should

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painfully he unsteadily draws his sword to await his enemy....

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be fairly easy. As GM, you know the local streets, so use them as the setting for your adventures. Feature the locals in your games and lampoon all those people you don't really like.

**Introductory adventures:** Open the box, separate the cards, and give each player a character from the movie or have them design their own. Hand over the equipment cards and let the players pick three each — proton packs, PKE meters, ghost traps, ECTO-1, or the beach kit (which triples fun at the beach). Then, it's off on the first mission, "30th and Lexington." Your goal: defeat a possessed car and collect your check. This mission has some nice NPCs with which to plague the players, and some colorful staging to make the plot zip along nicely. In case you thought being a Ghostbuster involves splitting up so you can do more damage, think again. People own the stuff you slag, so unless you want a hefty bill for damages, use your brains.

This short adventure is followed by "The Couch Potato," a detective story with plenty of supernatural goings-on. This adventure is elegantly staged with lots of wonderful NPCs, including Rolston, the couch potato himself. If you're in the mood, this one features a touching ending; if blasting everything in sight is your idea of fun, you can always do that instead.

Next, it's off to deal with the side effects of soulless science in "The Horror of BioMedChemTech™." Your goal is to defeat the garboids (intelligent trash cans on legs) and end a horrendous threat to Western civilization. This adventure even describes life in a garboid for any Ghostbuster unfortunate enough to be dragged inside one, so watch out! Numerous adventure outlines then follow, enough to keep even the most fervent group busy for quite a while.

**TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE™  
game**

"The Very Weird Roleplaying Game"  
R. Talsorian Games \$10.00  
Design: Mike Pondsmith  
Development: Mike Jones and Dave Friedland  
Editing: Mike Jones, Lisa Pondsmith, Linda Bryant, and Steve Hall  
Art direction: Mike Pondsmith and Max Pagemaker

You want to have fun? Grab a copy of the TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE game and enter the wild and wacky world of teens and aliens everywhere.

**The setting:** For maximum impact, a TFOS campaign can easily be set in your

**Evaluation:** Fast, dramatic fun that drips slime at every turn helps the GHOSTBUSTERS game take the humor of the movie to new heights. The Ghost Dice is a nice touch; it keeps the players on their toes and allows GMs to improvise plausible (or not so plausible) results on a whim. The GHOSTBUSTERS game offers a neat, simple design which provides hours of cheerful fun. This is available from: West End Games, 251 West 30th Street, New York NY 10001, USA.

hometown — but with a few differences. You see, things have changed a bit since the last time you hit the streets. The extraterrestrials have landed and enrolled their kids in our schools. They shop in our malls and eat our fast food (seems there's just no accounting for taste). So, come on! Put on the shades and polish the saucer; tonight we're going to party!

**Presentation:** Armed with the latest in desktop publishing, R. Talsorian Games has come up with a visual package which leaves no doubt as to what this game is all about. Enclosed in soft covers, the rulebook comes complete with two "cute" (i.e., minutely small) six-sided dice, a page of fake money (stuff it through a photocopier and become rich beyond your wildest dreams), gadget and vote cards, and the obligatory character sheet.

TFOS is a wild, free-flowing game which borrows liberally from the world of cartoons and superhero comics. Flying saucers whiz down the freeways, and walking shag-carpet-aliens ask you for a date. But watch out — too much high-spirited fun and you'll be yanked up in front of the Vice Principal: 8' tall, 400 pounds, with a bullet-shaped head and no neck. He's mean, radiates terror, and . . . I'm sure you can imagine the rest.

But rejoice; nobody ever gets killed in this game. You get bonked instead — and no, that doesn't mean what some of you Brits think. Getting bonked is like getting hit, zapped, shredded, or dropped from a great height, not . . . well, you know what I mean, so stop sniggering.

You see, you've got this bonk index which shows how many hits you can take; when you run out of hits, you're out of the action for as long as it takes to recover. If everyone gets bonked at the same time, no problem. The referee moves the action on until everyone is up and running again. With no fear of death, you're free to engage in any kind of terminal madness that grabs your fancy. Just in case you thought this was going to be all fun, you've got kid brothers and sisters trying to make your life hell, and parents and teachers to keep you in line.

**Character creation:** As a teenager, you need to know how smart you are, how good your body is, your relationship with your parents, your luck, driving rating, looks, cool, and your bonk index. Roll 1d6 for each of these; move a few

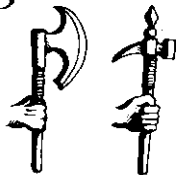
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points around, and there you are. Now, roll another 1d6 and spend these points on some knacks. For instance, you might want to have the knack of *Look Cool in Sunglasses* for two points and *Get a Date* for one point. Knacks make you better at something, much like Talents do in the *GHOSTBUSTERS* game. To use a knack, roll 1d6, add your Cool (in the case of the sunglasses), then add your knack. The higher the total, the more successful you are. However, being too good can be a recipe for disaster. You see, too much of anything has a tendency to backfire. What happens is just too good to live with; like, you look so cool that the girl you've been trying to ask out for weeks faints each time she sees you. She's impressed, sure, but it's not a lot of fun picking her up from the floor each time she looks at you.

All this is pretty tame. Let's get on to the weird stuff. In this game, you can be a Human, Near Human, Not Very Human, or Real Weirdie. Humans — well, you know what they are. (If not, at least you've heard of them, right?) Near Humans are almost human; you can spot these by their tails, horns, funny ears, etc. Not Very Humans are humanoid, but only pass for humans on very dark nights. Real Weirdies are like the Creature from the Black Lagoon, Great Cthulhu, the Blob — they cause traffic jams and eat your cats.

Each alien gets up to three super powers — stuff like being able to fly, breathe fire, teleport, change into a huge monster, or the ability to contact anyone in the universe by dialing an imaginary telephone. To keep the human kids from feeling left out, they get to be filthy rich, incredibly cute, or even have the ability to lose it completely, going wacko when they get bonked too often.

We all know that teenagers are not just a bunch of statistics and powers; they have opinions and goals, too (or, if you prefer, peculiarities). Each teenager gets three of these — whether it's being insanely jealous, too trusting, having a tendency to eat cars, or just being schizoid — teenagers know who they are and what they want.

**Mechanics:** With all that covered, we can get down to how the game works. To perform an action, a player rolls 1d6 and adds any relevant ability score and knack. The referee also rolls a die and adds the difficulty rating of the action or the relevant statistic of the NPC. Difficulty ratings are assigned according to how hard the feat is. For example, the difficulty rating for standing on your head will be low (say a 1), but if you want to stand on your head while cooking a cordon bleu dinner, this rating climbs to 10 or thereabouts. Armed with the difficulty rating and the die roll, the GM compares his result to yours to see how well you do, meaning you'll either fail, do all right, or do too well, suffering from all attendant problems.

With this system, you can do anything: get a date, go shopping, drive in the interstellar demolition derby, or pass your

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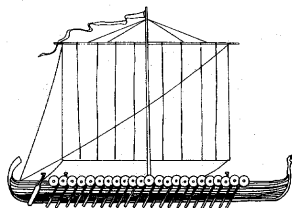
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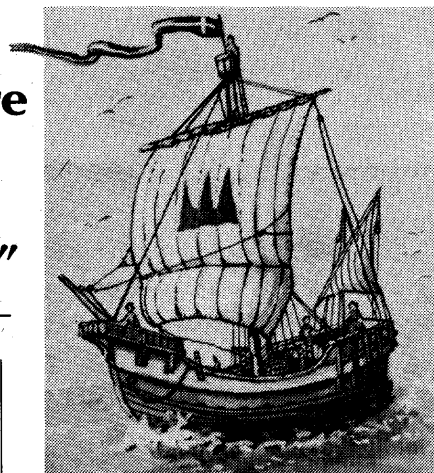
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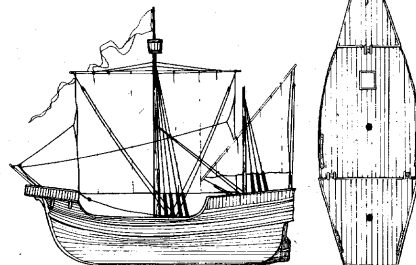


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exams. (If only life were that simple.) However, instead of letting role-playing take precedence over dice rolls, players are encouraged to play out the results of the dice rolls, which can lead to some very funny situations.

Most weapons do a fixed amount of bonk, but every now and then the referee can either apply an arbitrary number or the players can vote on the amount of bonk. Voting is mainly used when a character is the victim of a verbal put-down or snappy comeback. The players grab the voting cards (thoughtfully provided at the back of the book) and hold up any amount they think appropriate. The number which gets the most votes is the amount of bonk applied.

There are no tricky problems when you shoot at someone with your goop gun or zap gun and miss. Somebody always gets hit — in this case, the person with the lowest luck roll. How about if someone comes in toting heavy weapons, machine guns, knives, and other nasty stuff? No problem; make a Cool roll. If you make it, you're unshakable. Sure, the guns, knives, and grenades make a mess of your wardrobe, but you're okay. If you fail, your nerve breaks and you run for cover. This is nice and safe, and nobody gets killed — just embarrassed and out of cash for the wrecked clothes.

**GM's tips:** GM's tips are a strong point in humor games, and TFOS is no exception. If your players are unhappy for some reason, you always have the final say. ("It's my game, and you'll do it my way or I'll go home.")

Seriously, though, there's plenty of advice on how to really bring this mayhem to life. Stand on your chair, scream at your players, throw things, get them involved, keep the pace fast, pull out all the jokes you know, and above all, be stupid; it's only a game, and your players are here to have fun.

The prerolled NPCs are brilliant, completely over-the-top, yet recognizable as the fiends that plague teenagers' lives. In a pinch, pull out one of these; it'll get the players back in line.

If you want to write your own adventures, you're shown how to do this, too, from short episodes to extended movies. Twenty adventure outlines provide plenty of ideas, so there's a good basis from which to start.

**Introductory adventure:** This scenario is very, very short, but it shows the type of adventure that teenagers can get caught up in. The adventure is nicely staged in places, but is more of an outline in others, and it would have benefited from more colorful descriptions and some subplots. But, as an introductory adventure, it does the job.

**Evaluation:** TFOS is not for the inhibited or anyone overly fond of rules. As a dramatic, freewheeling game, it catches the zaniness of cartoon shows and places it in the 1980s. This is a hilarious game which deserves a look by all humor fans. It is available from: R. Talsorian Games Inc., Box 2288, Aptos CA 95001-2288, USA.

### Short and sweet

*The Kingdom of Ierendi*, Ann Gray McCready. TSR, \$7.95. Tired of battling hordes of orcs? Feel like a vacation? Then why not come to the Kingdom of Ierendi for a well-earned break? Bask in the warm sun, relax in the company of the friendly natives, or spend a pleasurable day exploring a wilderness preserve. This, the fourth in the series of Gazetteers detailing the D&D® game world, is a colorful tour of the paradise of the Ierendi Isles. Complete with history, politics, and economics, this gazetteer also includes a simple board game for resolving large naval conflicts. Plot outlines for all levels of play are sprinkled liberally throughout the text, making the Isles an ideal playground for any party. Whether you're looking for a new setting or simply skimming for new ideas, Ierendi has lots to recommend it.

PARANOIA Excessory Pack, Various authors. West End Games, \$9.95. This is a collection of useful bits and pieces for any PARANOIA game GM. This "excessory" pack contains:

- a three-panel screen for covering up

sneaky and despicable things the GM devises;


- three sheets of Cardboard Commies (cut-out miniatures) to rip up and litter the table with when the going gets tough;
- three molded plastic strips for making the Cardboard Commies stand up straight;
- twelve character sheets (no big deal, I can use a photocopier); and,
- nine forms in triplicate (white, yellow, and blue); complete with carbon paper and lots of deeply probing and contradictory questions. Watch the Troubleshooters sweat as they hand these in, particularly the "R&D Experimental Equipment Testing Report Form":

Present yellow copy to de-briefing officer. Send yellow copy to ZIN Sector: Department of Experimental Equipment Evaluation. Maintain yellow copy for your own records.

*Fieldtrip*, by Dave Friedland. R. Talsorian Games Inc., \$8.00. Tonight's TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE feature: 36 pages of weirdness as the teens of Valleyview High (accompanied by their Alien Control Officer, the History of Relaxation teacher, and a terrorist bus driver) go on a field trip. With this kind of supervision, you can bet that this is no ordinary outing. So, pile onto Deathbus 13 and let's get underway to meet the Demon Motor Cyclists from beyond space and time, the Pirates from Bostonia, the Hollywood Soviets, and a cast of thousands. Complete with excellent staging tips and enough plot shifts to keep the most avid roller-coaster fan happy, *Fieldtrip* maintains a rapid breakneck pace throughout. Outings into the country will never be the same again. This supplement is perfect for launching an extended TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE game campaign.

THE FURY OF DRACULA, by Stephen Hand, Games Workshop Ltd., \$26.00. Almost a decade after he was defeated, Dracula, the Lord of Vampires, is back. In this board game for two to four players, one player takes on the role of Dracula and attempts to tour Europe with six vampires. Arrayed against him are three intrepid vampire hunters. Featuring teamwork and the tracking of a hidden foe, the FURY OF DRACULA game takes some of the best elements of role-playing games and neatly transposes them into an intriguing and fun board game. The Dracula player sets up his forces behind a screen and proceeds to secretly move around Europe, dropping off vampires, bats, wolves, and other nasties. The team of hunters must discover Dracula's trail and destroy him before it's too late. Steeped in Gothic atmosphere and tinged with the unexpected, the FURY OF DRACULA game deserves to be in every gamer's collection. This is available from: Games Workshop US, 8920 Route 108, Columbia MD 21045.

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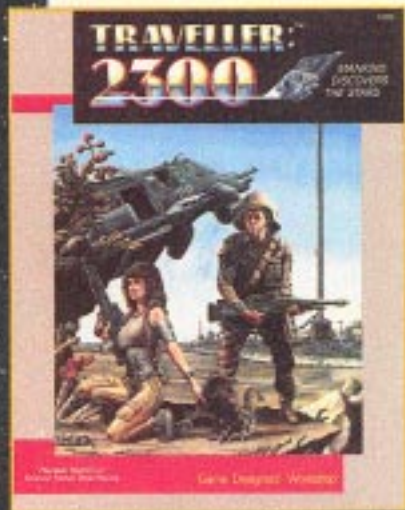


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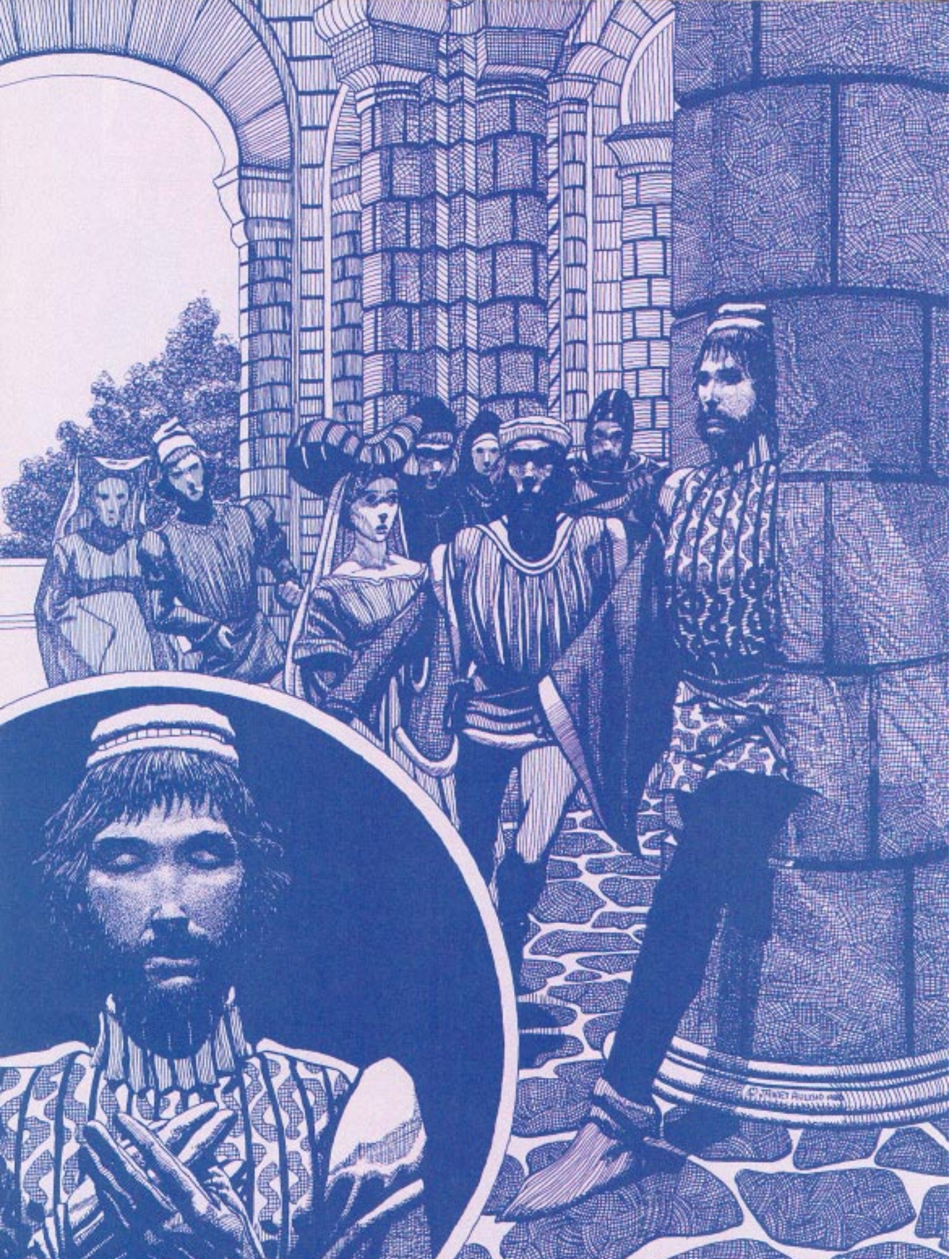
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# Beyond the Gate of Dreams

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## *A peculiar sort of prophet: the dreamer NPC*

The dreamer semiclass is a group made up of human, elven, and half-elven beings who have the ability to manipulate their subconscious minds. With practice and experience, they can exercise considerable control over their own minds and bodies and, to a lesser extent, over the minds and bodies of others. At higher levels of skill, they are also able to project their minds to communicate with others as well as to manifest themselves elsewhere in intangible form, and they can even glimpse the possible future. It is up to the DM to decide whether or not dreamers in his campaign would be appropriate as player characters.

Dreamer skills are similar to psionics (though psionic and dreamer powers never occur in the same person), and their presence is determined in a similar manner. For any human, elven, or half-elven character possessing an unmodified score of 15 or higher in intelligence, wisdom, or charisma, the base chance of possessing dreamer powers is 2% for elves and 1% for humans and half-elves. This base chance is modified as follows: For every point in any of the three abilities above 16, a percentage point is gained; for every point below 12, half a point is lost; the total chance is then rounded up and may never be below 1%. For example: Grondel the Possible Prophet has these scores: intelligence 10, wisdom 13, and charisma 18. Being human, he has a base 1% chance, modified upward by 2% for his charisma and down by 1% for his intelligence. Thus, he has dreamer potential on a roll of 01-02 on 1d100.

The dreamer is a semiclass because its members may use these powers independently of another class or with another class; either way, the dreamer does not act

like a conventional class or subclass. With combinations of classes, it does not act like normal dual- or multiclassed characters. Even among elves and half-elves, a dreamer may have only one other class.

Human NPCs with dreamer as their sole class have 2-7 hp and fight only as zero-level fighters. Elven and half-elven characters who do not choose a second class have 1-10 hp and fight as 1st-level fighters; since elves and half-elves cannot be zero-level (except as cavaliers), they are effectively dreamer/fighters incapable of progressing beyond 1st-level fighting skill, but they are otherwise treated as humans without a second class. Regarding the Dreamer Advancement and Abilities Table, "Cumulative XP" applies to those with dreamer as their sole class. Experience is acquired and accumulated just as with other classes, but dreamers do not improve in hit points or attacks; when their accumulated experience has reached the required amount, they are allowed to develop the skills of that level. The saving throws of dreamers without another class are made as clerics of equal level. They may use any armor and weapons; elves and half-elves have weapons of proficiency as per 1st-level fighters and cannot acquire any more; humans are equally inept (i.e., as zero-level fighters) with all weapons. Dreamers without another class begin with two nonweapon proficiency slots and gain another every two levels (see the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pages 23-29).

Dual-classed dreamers primarily operate according to their nondreamer class, having the hit points, attacks, armor and weapons limitations, saving throws, and special abilities thereof. They also have the abilities of 1st-level dreamers and realize

that they can develop more dreamer skills. Upon receiving experience at the end of an adventure, they decide whether to put all of it in their primary class or improve their dreamer abilities. If the first option is chosen, then the experience is added to the primary class's total, possibly permitting training and advancement in that class. If the second option is chosen, the "XP Cost" (on the Dreamer Advancement and Abilities Table) of the next dreamer level is deducted from the amount accumulated in the adventure and, if necessary, from the primary class's total, as long as the primary class's total does not then go below the minimum for the level the character is at in the primary class (or below zero in any case). If not enough experience points are available to allow this subtraction, the recent experience is simply added to the total of the primary class. If the experience-point cost is met, the dreamer may advance to the next level after training, and the experience points are erased.

Training is essentially the same for dreamers with or without another class. Those who have another class must train for that class first if a level is to be gained in it as well.

For advancement as dreamers, a certain number of weeks of training is required according to the skills to be learned (refer to the Dreamer Advancement and Abilities Table and the ability descriptions that follow). This time must be spent in developing the talents by resting, meditating, lucid dreaming (see ability explanations), and experimenting. No adventuring is allowed.

*For example:* Ikelam the Visionary is a magic-user/dreamer (levels 7 and 5, respectively) with 67,000 experience points. After returning from an adventure to the Lost Caves of Tulud, she acquires another 7,000 xp and decides to even out her enchanting and dreaming skills. The experience-point cost for a 6th-level dreamer is 10,000; that requires the 7,000 new points and also reduces her primary (magic-user) experience to 64,000. She is now ready to train, and decides to learn *lesser prophecy* first, which takes three weeks. Desiring a change of scenery, she then takes a few weeks off to visit her hometown of Mulwen. On the way, she destroys a band of highwaymen. Ikelam receives no experience, however, because she hasn't finished her training. After another five weeks of learning, she masters *regenerative sleep* and is established as 7th-level magic-user/6th-level dreamer.

There are no set level titles for dreamers, but persons of this sort often adopt an addendum to their name to reflect their special nature. Common titles taken are Augur, Clairvoyant, Dreamer, Medium, Mystic, Prophet, Seer, Soothsayer, Tephramancer, and Visionary.

Most sages surmise that the dreamer ability was originally granted by one or more deities, and it is not unknown for

characters to be granted one or more dreamer skills by a deity. The power is usually permanent, but may not be passed on to subsequent generations. Such bestowals may be a reward, a punishment, or (rarely) a whim. It is common for there to be a stipulation on the power(s): perhaps it only works at certain times (such as the new moon), with certain preparations (such as after the killing of an albino rat), or anything the DM can think of to make it fun (such as a character cursed to *feign death* whenever alone in the company of a member of the opposite sex; or, in order to utilize the power, the character must eat a certain quantity of a certain food, such as four oranges). An example from Greek mythology of one cursed with prophetic ability was Cassandra, who could see the future; the catch was that no one would believe her. This ability bestowal may open new horizons for DM fun (bounded by careful discretion) and NPC role-playing.

## Dreamer abilities

### Awareness sleep

Level 3, two weeks of training

This state is a special combination of *light*, *normal*, and *deep sleep*. The dreamer is awakened as per *deep sleep*, regains hit points as with *normal sleep*, but remains sensitive to the environment; the subconscious carefully collects and records all sensory information except sight. Thus, once the dreamer awakens after a designated time, he clearly remembers the sounds, odors, temperatures, and any movement of himself as if he had been awake with his eyes closed. It takes an hour to enter *awareness sleep* and another hour to emerge from it; sensory data from these transitional times cannot be clearly recalled. If forcefully awakened before the designated time, the sensory information is lost (unless the dreamer also has *sleep control*, as noted below). *Awareness sleep* can be sustained for up to 24 hours (including the two hours required for entrance and emergence).

### Deep sleep

Level 2, one week of training

A dreamer in this state will only awaken from a strong, radical stimulus — such as having a bucket of cold water poured on his head. Otherwise, sleep continues until a designated time (as with *normal sleep*). A dreamer in *deep sleep* regains hit points at the rate of 1 hp every four hours, and he may sustain this state for up to 20 hours at one time.

### Detect lie

Level 4, two weeks of training

In range and effect, this power is similar to the fourth-level clerical spell of the same name, though it is not reversible. The dreamer attunes himself to the subconscious of the subject to detect if a

statement is a falsehood compared to what the subject actually knows or thinks he knows (i.e., only intentional untruths can be noted). It may be used once every six hours.

### Detect mind

Level 3, one week of training

This power detects minds (defined here as a consciousness having semi- or better intelligence) within a range of 30' per level of the dreamer. The dreamer may concentrate specifically on a single object, creature, or area — for example, *detect mind* would reveal the presence of a mind in an object used as a *magic jar*, or that a being was comatose or under the effects of a *feign death* spell. Note that the body of a creature using an *astral spell* or *astral projection*, or that of a *projected* dreamer, does *not* have a mind within it. The power may be used once every four hours for as long as it is concentrated on.

### Empathic sleep

Level 3, two weeks of training

This state is similar to *awareness sleep*, but it is receptive to the minds of others and is attuned to the emotional environment as opposed to the physical one. Specific thoughts cannot be detected, but general feelings (antipathy, respect, happiness, frustration, etc.) and a general identification of individuals (by personality, not appearance) is possible. *Empathic sleep* may be sustained for up to 10 hours (including two hours total for entrance and emergence; the time is predesignated). After eight hours in this state, the dreamer also heals 1 hp. A dreamer in *empathic sleep* can be awakened and lose (that is, never consciously know) information as per *awareness sleep*.

### Feign death

Level 4, two weeks of training

This is the same as the third-level magic-user spell of the same name, except that it can only be used by the dreamer himself. It may be used once a day.

### Illusion

Level 8, four weeks of training

This power is basically treated as a *spectral forces* spell. The dreamer directly places images and other sensory data in the subject's mind, overriding those actually perceived by the subject's senses. The dreamer may project the *illusion* into the minds of up to two beings for each of the caster's experience levels. Subjects must be within 60' of the dreamer. An *illusion* can be created once per day and lasts as long as the dreamer concentrates on it.

### Lesser prophecy

Level 6, three weeks of training

From a state of *light sleep*, a dreamer may receive a *lesser prophecy* at most once in every 12-hour period. It may be utilized to derive the effects of one of the following spells: *augury* (second-level

clerical spell), *divination* (fourth-level clerical spell), *portent* (first-level clerical spell), or *predict weather* (first-level druidic spell). Range, duration, and effect are as per the spell chosen, but no material components are required in any case.

### Light sleep

Level 2, one week of training

A dreamer is likely to use this ability most often during adventuring. The dreamer will doze until awakened by a noticeable environmental change (sunrise or sunset, getting rained on, a change in temperature, etc.) or by an irregular noise or silence, and is much more sensitive than normal sleeping beings. For example, a thief who fails to move silently is still unlikely to wake up most creatures, but a dreamer in *light sleep* will awaken immediately. The character may designate when to wake up, as with *normal sleep*. Hit points are regained at the rate of 1 hp per 10 hours of *light sleep*. It can be sustained for up to 10 hours plus the level of the dreamer.

### Lucid dreaming

Level 1, no training required

This is simply a state in *normal sleep* wherein the dreams are controlled by the dreamer. *Lucid dreaming* is not unique to dreamers, but through it the dreamers realize and develop their powers.

### Mass suggestion

Level 9, four weeks of training

*Mass suggestion* can affect more than one subject, as per the sixth-level illusionist spell of the same name. The dreamer may utilize it once per day (see *suggestion*).

### Normal sleep

Level 1, no training required

This is like any normal person's sleep. Dreaming is normal for the most part and of no particular significance. Hit points are regained at the rate of one every eight hours of *normal sleep*. Dreamers are able to sustain *normal sleep* for up to 15 hours plus a number of hours equal to the level of the dreamer. They may either be awakened like anyone else, or may decide exactly when they want to wake up before they go to sleep.

### Penetrate disguise

Level 4, three weeks of training

With this power, the dreamer is able to detect the presence of material or magical disguise. This is done by finding out what the subject knows he actually is. A discrepancy between this and what the dreamer sees indicates something amiss. For example, an assassin may be disguised as a noblewoman or may have been *polymorphed* into a frog, but the assassin's subconscious knows what she actually is. The subject is allowed a saving throw vs. spells to block the dreamer from viewing his mind. Note that a character afflicted by

certain forms of insanity (schizoid, megalomaniacal, delusional, schizophrenic, hallucinatory, or hebephrenic) can give the dreamer confusing signals. A hebephrenic person, for example, would subconsciously perceive himself as being a child, though the person may be 40 years old. Unless the dreamer knows the nature of the character's malady, the condition might be mistaken for a disguise. Penetrate disguise may be used once every eight hours.

### Projection

Level 9, five weeks of training

This ability allows the dreamer to create a visible but noncorporeal projection of himself. The dreamer controls the projection as if it were his body, although it does not have physical limitations; like certain undead, it can walk through solid objects, over water, or whatever. Normal weapons will not harm the projection, but being struck by an enchanted weapon instantly forces the dreamer's mind back to his body. The projection gives the dreamer a full sensory range in the area it is sent to.

The dreamer's projection may exist on the Prime Material plane, or may directly enter the plane of Shadow, Astral plane, or Ethereal plane. Through the Ether, the Positive and Negative Material, Elemental, Para-elemental, and Quasi-elemental planes may be accessed. Movement to

these planes is virtually instantaneous, since it is the mind that is traveling.

On the Astral plane, however, a mind adopts a physical form with a *silver cord*. Movement and so forth is as if the dreamer were utilizing the clerical *astral spell* (refer to the *Manual of the Planes* for details). An outer-plane destination may be reached, and upon entering another plane the mind returns to having a visible, noncorporeal form.

To create a *projection*, the dreamer first enters deep sleep, then slips into a semicomatose state (cf. *astral spell*) as his mind leaves the body and is projected elsewhere. The *projection* may be maintained as long as the dreamer desires, until forced back to the body (by being struck as if AC 0 by a magical weapon, or by a *dispel magic* spell cast within range of the *projection* and successful vs. the dreamer's level), or until the comatose body is disturbed (as if to be awakened from *deep sleep*). This power may be used no more than once per week.

### Prophecy

Level 10, special training time

This ability is properly known as *tephramancy*, which is the ability to predict the future through dreams. It is the most difficult dreamer skill and potentially the most powerful; certainly it is the best known. Lesser dreamer abilities, such as

the three modes of sleeping, work within the dimension of the dreamer's mind; median skills, from *detect mind* to *mass suggestion*, open the dreamer to the minds of others; higher still is *projection*, which allows the dreamer's mind to actually manifest in physical dimensions, albeit noncorporeally. *Tephramancy* is the greatest discipline: It opens the dreamer's subconscious to the dimension of *time*, effectively encompassing all of existence.

It becomes apparent that *prophecy* is difficult to set strict rules for, and what follows are little more than guidelines. The greatest responsibility lies with the DM, who must be exceptionally cautious. Always carefully consider short-term and long-term influences on the characters and campaign.

For effective use of this, it is necessary to arbitrarily define some aspects of the AD&D® game universe. The past is considered set and unchangeable. The future is a myriad of possibilities and likelihoods. The present is where the action is. The possibilities of the future are converted to the concreteness of the past.

After amassing 100,000 experience points (or accumulating 294,000 as a sole class), the dreamer may begin training for *prophecy*. After two weeks of work, the dreamer will have a percentage chance of acquiring the ability equal to the sum of his intelligence and wisdom. If aided by a

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mentor who already has *prophecy*, 10% is added to the chance. If the roll fails, the dreamer may continue to train, and each week thereafter the chance increases 3% and the dice are rolled again. This reflects the difficulty of developing the talent, and that some dreamers are simply able to develop it faster.

In preparation for utilizing this power, each dreamer has a unique series of actions to perform. One may need to burn and inhale the smoke of a certain rare incense or herb. Another may need to surround herself with rose-scented candles while meditating. The DM is to devise the requirements for each dreamer achieving this skill. Generally, preparations take around half an hour. The dreamer then enters *deep sleep* (in a carefully prepared and comfortable area) for three hours.

Tephramancy makes the dreamer's subconscious virtually omniscient in viewing the past and present (notably excepting objects and persons magically hidden) and the possibilities of the future. From all of this, the subconscious mind compiles the most likely future, and delivers it to the tephramancer in the form of a dream of the predicted series of events. This allows characters to influence their fates.

For example, Tharset the All-Seeing is concerned about his friend, the Arch-Mage Carsyll, who is going to travel through a nasty patch of wilderness. In his prophetic dream, he sees Carsyll ambushed by a small army of orcs. Carsyll slays them, but is so weakened that he falls prey to a demon lord with a grudge against him. From this, Tharset can warn Carsyll, who may not have realized the demon's grudge; Carsyll can travel with more careful preparations in anticipation of the ambush, put off departure for a day, or take a different route. Of course, any of those choices may contain a fate just as bad.

One nasty thing is bound to come up at some point: two dreamers prophesying about the same event. In the previous example, suppose the demon itself employed a dreamer. Theoretically, the

second dreamer would have seen that Tharset would warn Carsyll, and the demon would then take the route that Carsyll would then be prophesied to take, but Tharset would see this and warn Carsyll, and so the vicious circle continues. In a case of two dreamers viewing the same person, area, or series of possible events within 12 hours of each other, the one with more experience would receive the prophecy and the other would not (which tells the less experienced tephramancer that someone else is interested in the same thing). In cases of more time difference, the later prophecy is received, and might in effect nullify the first prediction. The DM ought to consider the attendant rivalry among high-level dreamers.

Tephramancy may be employed only once per day. The DM should make the materials for it quite expensive, therefore, to prevent overuse. If the DM feels a dreamer is abusing his powers, it is possible to cause an occasional inaccurate prophecy, provide a foe with a *peript of protection from prophecy* (see below), or (in extreme circumstances) revoke the power for a time. If there is protest, it isn't too difficult to find reasons, even if it is that "the gods are offended by the misuse of your talents" — possibly a divinity or servant could even tell the dreamer personally (by dream, of course) that his *prophecy* power is suspended.

#### Read alignment

Level 5, two weeks of training

The subject of this power is allowed a saving throw; if the save fails, the dreamer is able to access the subject's subconscious to reveal the subject's code of values and morals — that is, alignment. *Read alignment* only works on creatures of semi- or greater intelligence (those driven by more than mere instinct) and may be used once in every 12-hour period. Note that this power may reveal much more than a simple alignment; potential (though not actual) treachery or faithfulness can also be determined, as could other factors at the DM's option.

#### Regenerative sleep

Level 6, five weeks of training

In this state, the dreamer's brain "closes down" and enters a suspended state. All mental activity is subconscious and entirely directed toward commands for cell regrowth, as directed during at least three hours of trancelike meditation (somewhere between consciousness and lucid dreaming), without interruption, immediately before entering *regenerative sleep*. As such, there is little or no noticeable brain activity, although there is heightened cell activity for regrowth (2 hp regained per hour). Breathing is deep and steady, and heart rate is accelerated.

After up to eight hours of *regenerative sleep*, the character returns to consciousness and feels extremely hungry. He is then able — and will need — to eat a full day's quota of food (three full meals), feeling as though it were one meal. The dreamer can reenter *regenerative sleep* again after three hours of meditation if he wishes to.

No more than five sequential periods of *regenerative sleep* may be safely performed. At that point, the character must spend at least three days in normal activity and sleep to restore depleted stores of essential nutrients and thus allow the cells to readapt to normality. If *regenerative sleep* is continued without the three-day recovery time, healing gains are reduced by half. Furthermore, there is a 10% cumulative chance for each additional *regenerative sleep* period of the regrowth going out of control. After the dreamer's maximum number of hit points is reached, tissues will continue to grow, becoming tumors. At this point, 1 hp per day is lost as the tumors destroy the body's functioning. Only a *cure disease*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *wish*, or *alter reality* spell will reverse this condition; other curative spells will not heal lost, hit points or stop the degenerative condition.

#### Sleep control

Level 7, one week of training

This is not a new skill as such, but an improved proficiency in previously acquired dreamer abilities. It allows the dreamer to do the following:

1. While asleep, the dreamer may change his basic sleeping mode (*normal*, *light*, *deep*), as decided beforehand. For example, the dreamer may choose to spend four hours in *deep sleep* and then change to *light* for six more.
2. In *awareness* and *empathic sleep*, the dreamer can retain a small amount of conscious control, so that he is aware of the information being gathered and stored; he may choose to cause himself to awaken from those modes on the basis of the data (such as detecting antipathy in *empathic sleep*). If he emerges from either sort, of his own will or not, a dreamer who has acquired *sleep control* will not forget the information gathered. When this semiconsciousness is utilized, hit

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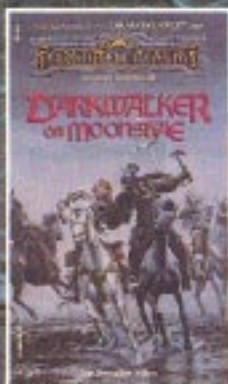
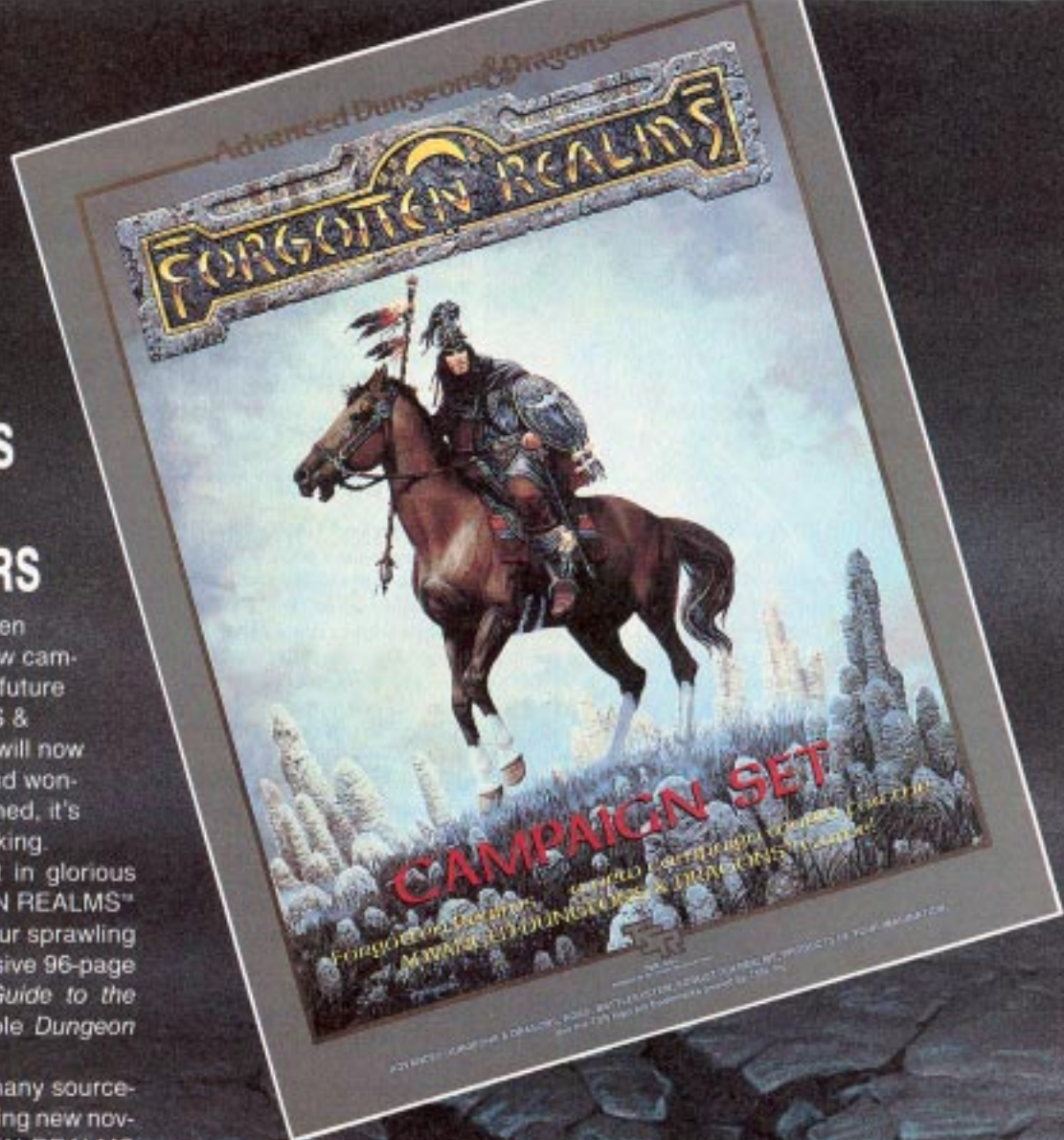
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# ONE GIANT STEP FOR DRAGONKIND

## Dreamer Advancement and Abilities Table

Level	Cumulative XP (as sole class)	XP cost (as second class)	Abilities gained (weeks of training)
1	0	0	Lucid dreaming (0) and normal sleep (0)
2	500	500	Deep sleep (1) and light sleep (1)
3	1,500	1,000	Awareness sleep (2), detect mind (1), and empathic sleep (2)
4	4,000	2,500	Detect lie (2), feign death (2), and penetrate disguise (3)
5	9,000	5,000	Sleeper communication (3) and read alignment (2)
6	19,000	10,000	Lesser prophecy (3) and regenerative sleep (5)
7	44,000	25,000	Sleep control (1) and sleep suggestion (3)
8	94,000	50,000	Illusion (4), telepathy (3), and suggestion (3)
9	194,000	100,000	Mass suggestion (4) and projection (5)
10	294,000	100,000	Prophecy (special)

points are healed at the rate of 1 hp every 12 hours.

3. In *regenerative sleep*, the dreamer can pay some attention to the healing if he goes beyond the dangerous time, which reduces the cumulative chance of uncontrolled growth to 5% per regeneration period, but at the same time prevents limb regeneration (i.e., 1 hp per hour healing is the only effect).

### Sleep suggestion

Level 7, three weeks of training

This is similar to *sleeper communication* but is effective only at half the range (that is, five miles per level of the dreamer). The subject must be asleep. Except for the duration (one hour per level of the dreamer), it is the same as the third-level magic-user spell *suggestion*, and may be used once every 24 hours.

### Sleeper communication

Level 5, three weeks training

From *deep sleep*, the dreamer may utilize this ability to communicate with the consciousness of another sleeping creature. If the contacted being is having normal or lucid dreams, the dreamer appears in the dream and can communicate in it. If the contacted being is not dreaming (arbitrarily an 80% chance if not known), then the contact has a 10% chance of awakening him, terminating sleep. In the communication, which is made through

dreams, the sender and receiver may appear in any form they wish while communicating. Both will clearly remember the communication when they awaken. *Sleeper communication* has a range of 10 miles per level of the dreamer and may be sustained for a time proportional to the level of the dreamer and inversely proportional to the distance; in other words, the duration in minutes equals the level of the dreamer times 100, divided by the number of miles between the contacting minds.

For example, a 7th-level dreamer communicating with a being 50 miles away could do so for 14 minutes. A dreamer may only attempt communication once every eight hours, but has no such limit on receiving communication.

More than one dreamer can contact a mind at the same time. A favorite tactic of high-level dreamers is to communicate inside the mind of a third party, either to allow longer communication time or to permit communication despite considerable distance. The third party usually wakes up thinking that he has had an illogical dream or that he was being contacted by gods or spirits.

### Suggestion

Level 8, three weeks of training

This power is an improvement on *sleep suggestion*, but neither the dreamer nor the subject need be asleep. The *suggestion* does not need to be spoken; it is telepathi-

cally placed in the subject's subconscious. In range, duration, and general effect, it is otherwise the same as the third-level magic-user spell of the same name. Dreamers below 10th level may use *suggestion* once per day; 10th-level dreamers may use it twice in a day.

### Telepathy

Level 8, three weeks training

This is an improved form of *sleeper communication* and is treated as that power except that neither the dreamer nor subject needs to be asleep. It otherwise has the same limits on range and usage.

### Dreamer magical items

The following six enchanted devices imitate, protect against, or enhance dreamer abilities. The DM is encouraged to use different forms than those listed (such as a *ring of communication*) for variety.

### Coronet of communication

This thin circlet of precious metal affords the wearer the dreamer abilities of *sleeper communication*, *suggestion*, and *telepathy*, each once per day.

**XP Value:** 2,000

**GP Sale Value:** 20,000

### Crystal of awareness

A rock-crystal shard of this nature enables the user to perform the following dreamer skills: *awareness sleep*, *detect mind*, *detect lie*, *empathic sleep*, *penetrate disguise*, *read alignment*, and *sleep control*. These powers may each be used once per day, except *awareness* and *empathic sleep*, which may be used once per week. If the user is a dreamer, this ring also confers the ability to remember sensory information going into and out of *awareness* and *empathic sleep*.

**XP Value:** 2,500

**GP Sale Value:** 20,000

### Jewel of projection

By staring at this magnificent gem and entering a trance, the user is able to create a *projection* of himself. It is otherwise

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identical to the dreamer power, and may be used once per week.

**XP Value:** 4,000

**GP Sale Value:** 35,000

#### Periapt of prophecy protection

This small device renders the bearer invisible to attempts of *prophecy*: any prophecies in which the bearer would be involved are constructed as if the bearer did not exist. The *periapt* also prevents *sleep communication*, *sleep suggestions*, *suggestion*, and *telepathy*, and makes the individual immune to *mass suggestion*.

**XP Value:** 1,500

**GP Sale Value:** 10,000

#### Potion of regeneration

A sip of this fluid gives the taster a tingling feeling. Imbibing the whole dose causes the drinker to enter *regenerative sleep* immediately, for eight hours.

**XP Value:** 500

**GP Sale Value:** 4,000

#### Talisman of dreams

This item, which can take any of several forms (usually a small object or piece of jewelry adorned by curious runes) gives the bearer the power of *prophecy*. Any dreamer will recognize it for what it is, and will be able to use it fully. A non-dreamer can be taught how to use it by a

6th- or higher-level dreamer. This takes two months minus one day per point of intelligence and wisdom of the learner; otherwise, the tephramancy will occur at random, allowing a 5% chance anytime the bearer is asleep of prophetic dreams of anything important to happen soon. Controlled or randomly, this foresight can operate once per week.

**XP Value:** 4,500

**GP Sale Value:** 45,000

#### The dreamer in the campaign

Obviously, a dreamer has skills that can be used in dungeon and wilderness adventures, but a more important and unique niche can be developed in the larger campaign setting. Two ideas follow, mostly applying to NPCs; these are generally usable when the dreamer reaches 10th level and either plans to retire from play or seeks new horizons.

*The Royal Prophet:* As the Magician is an important court functionary, even more prominent can be the Personal Soothsayer of the monarch or noble — especially if the dreamer has spell-casting talents.

Several scenarios can come from this. It is not entirely disagreeable to hold such a position (it is possible to be as high as upper-upper class in service of a great monarch), and to do so could be the goal of a dreamer of humble origins.

Of course, not everyone likes court intrigue, but perhaps the one whose court it is wants the dreamer's services even if they have to be obtained by force. Forewarned by his tephramancy, the dreamer could seek the protection of PCs (possibly paying in services), or be a player character trying to avoid "employment" or escape from forced servitude.

*The Oracle:* This position especially appeals to cleric/dreamers. A respected and famous prophet can establish himself somewhere (perhaps a temple, holy shrine, ancient ruin, or any out-of-the-way place; the more famous and respected the prophet, the more difficult to get there) and live comfortably off offerings left in return for the telling of fate. Just being so far away and legendary also increases one's reputation greatly. Though it can be boring for a PC to be an oracle, a wilderness adventure to see an oracle can be a challenge. The oracle may also demand a quest as payment or merely to prove worthiness for an audience. The prophecy itself can be a challenge. Dreamers who are themselves uncertain as to what their dreams mean tend to give answers that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. And, of course, the compensation for the prediction can lighten the characters of that load of treasure they accumulated on the way there. Ω

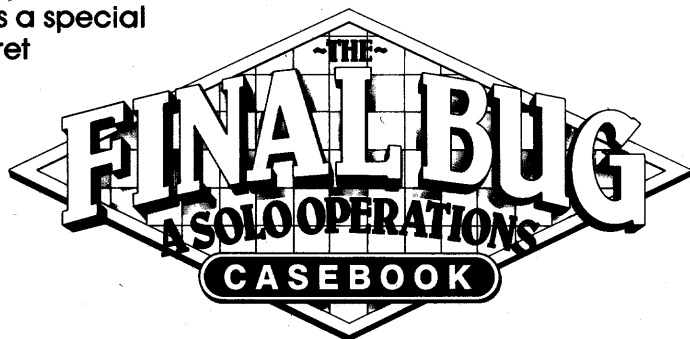
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by Jean Blashfield



# Resourceful Sorcery

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## *Some helpful hints for RUNEQUEST® game sorcerers*

In the third-edition RUNEQUEST® game from The Avalon Hill Game Company and Chaosium Inc., magic-using characters can choose from one of three types of magic: spirit magic, divine magic, and sorcery. Spirit magic is the easiest to use, divine magic is the most powerful, and sorcery is the most pliable. Because sorcery is the most pliable, it also requires a player to use the greatest skill in advancing his character. Some players let their adventurers develop through experience and luck, while others seek out ways to advance their characters purposefully. This article is of use to the latter sorts of players.

Sorcerers have several problems once they get to a certain position of power. They run out of free INT and magic points, and taking on more spells is almost suicidal. By this point, they will normally have familiars, but if they don't, or if they have less-than-sufficient familiars, the problems remain. How do they get around this? The basic plan followed in this article is to do whatever possible to expand a sorcerer's list of spells, free INT, and magic points. It's best to apply this advice to new sorcerers; old ones may have made too many mistakes.

### **The game plan**

After the basic spells are learned (Palsy, Treat Wounds, Create Familiar, etc.), the following spells should be learned, in order of their importance: Dominate Spirit, Binding Enchantment, Summon Intellect Spirit, Summon Magic Spirit, Summon Power Spirit, and Magic Point Matrix

Enchantment. The first three spells must be learned before the sorcerer's game plan is begun.

The goal of a sorcerer seeking self-improvement is to gain three things: free INT, magic points, and new spells, in that order. To begin this, a sorcerer must learn the first three spells mentioned above. Then he must create a two-point Binding Enchantment on some often-used object. The most suitable place for this enchantment is in a tattoo or ring. Then, the sorcerer must summon an intellect spirit, dominate it, and force it into the Binding Enchantment.

This initial binding is very important. The sorcerer can transfer his spells to the intellect spirit and free up more of his INT. This allows for more powerful manipulation of spells. When more space is needed, another Binding Enchantment can be created and filled with another intellect spirit — but after the first intellect spirit, the sorcerer should move on to summoning magic spirits.

To use a magic spirit, it must be bound into an enchantment. Once there, it can be commanded to cast its spells for the sorcerer or teach these spells. Either route is good, as Binding Enchantments cost POW, and the sooner intelligence can be freed up, the better.

The final step involving summonings is the summoning of a power spirit and its binding into an enchantment. Once done, the magic points of the spirit can be drawn upon to fuel spells, leaving your sorcerer's own in place for defense.

The advantage of magic-point Matrix Enchantment is to store the magic points from power spirits, fellow adventurers, and the sorcerer himself when times are quiet. This process of milking harms no one, and the magic points are useful indefinitely.

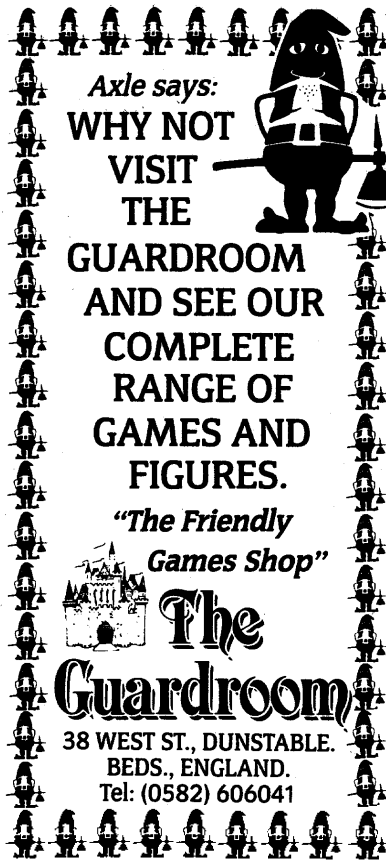
### **Summoning and such**

Summoning, if only the sorcerer participates, can be dangerous and fruitless. It is best for a sorcerer to incorporate the aid of others. Helpers need not be sorcerers themselves. When others are recruited to aid in a summoning, they can play one of two roles. The first role involves giving up magic points; the summoner has to have a magic-point Matrix Enchantment. The summoner draws these points in place of his own to fuel the summoning. His own magic points are left to defend against an attacking spirit or to cast Dominate. This is where the second type of helper can come into play: a sorcerer with the proper Dominate spell. When the spirit is summoned, the assisting sorcerer casts Dominate and forces the spirit into a Binding Enchantment. Even if the summoner tries to Dominate the targeted summoning, it is good if another sorcerer with the same Dominate spell is waiting in the wings in case of trouble. However, it is best if the summoning sorcerer tries to Dominate first as a successful use will give the sorcerer a chance to increase his POW. POW increases are essential to sorcerers who constantly use their POW for Binding Enchantments and creating other enchantment items.

The tips and guidelines presented so far have additional benefits besides their good in the use of magic. These tips can help a sorcerer better defend against magical attacks, making him seem more like a mage than a newly graduated apprentice. Added free INT, in addition to allowing the use of powerful magic, can also add to the sorcerer's chances of not being Stupefied. The use of having power spirits and magic-point storage devices is to give the sorcerer magic points. But a sorcerer who rarely uses his own magic points is very resistant to spells like Disruption and to spirit attacks.


Once your character is on his way to mastering all of these tips, he should employ some additional wisdom. First, every intellect spirit should contain a mix of spells. Though stylish and organized, it's equally stupid to have one spirit hold all the defensive spells, another hold all the ritual spells, and so on. Each spirit should contain no more than one or two spells of a similar type. All the spells a sorcerer has should be put into bound intellect spirits, and only one or two of the most essential ones should stay in the sorcerer's mind.

Secondly, all the magic points of power spirits and magic-point storage devices should be used before the sorcerer's own are drawn upon. The sorcerer's own points should be used as a last resort.



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### **Magic and adventuring**

When a sorcerer has these tips down and goes into play, there are several things he should do. One is to prepare for the worst by using protective or defensive magic. Every use of defensive magic should be given a duration, which should last either 21 + or 42 + hours (seven or eight magic points and free INT, respectively). The defensive magic should include Damage Resistance, Cast Back, or Spell Resistance. Spirit Resistance or Skin of Life might be added to the defensive magic in sway. At least one or two of these spells should be in place while the sorcerer is adventuring in uncertain territory.

Assisting magic should be employed over the sorcerer while adventuring. Damage Boosting should be cast on the sorcerer's weapons and those of his allies if they can expect surprise combat. Two intensities of Haste should be cast on the sorcerer, but not necessarily used to their fullest until trouble arrives. Mystic Vision will allow a sorcerer to see the unknown (e.g., spells cast over broad areas). All these spells should only have a few intensities to them so as to not drain the sorcerer when magic points are truly needed.

In combat, it seems the sorcerer is the weakest of the magic-using types. But there are several spells that can harm foes. Diminish SIZ and Diminish CON are useful. If Diminish SIZ is used to drop an

enemy's size down to SIZ 6, the character is slower in combat, easy to knock back, and just as hard to hit. Diminish CON, like Diminish SIZ, can reduce hit points and make the character easier to kill. This latter spell can also make injuries crippling and impossible to overcome. Every two intensities of Hinder can also slow a foe by a strike rank and delay his blow until the end of the melee round, allowing others to make their strike. Using Phantom Touch at intensities between six and ten can deliver severe blows of real damage; however an intensity-two or -three Phantom Sight is needed as well to bolster the chance of hitting. Spells like Smother and Venom can deliver true damage equally well. In combat, it is best to have spirits that can cast combat spells, as they never lose the concentration needed to maintain active spells.

Though few sorcerers will have all the spells mentioned above, most will have some of them. A combination of these can still be used with effect.

Powerful sorcerers in RUNEQUEST games have to use tactics and plans different from those employed by apprentices. With access to more spells and more magic points, the power a sorcerer accumulates grows geometrically. Sorcerers should increase their quantity of spells, their supply of magic points, and their own POW as often as possible. Ω

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# With All the Trappings

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## *A handy guide to trap design and psychology*

*Excerpts from “The Construction of Traps,” by Gramme Stonewerk, Guild of Security Devices:*

The first thing to do when designing a trap is to consider the client who ordered it. All traps should reflect the client’s needs and sensibilities. A generally amiable wizard who has a reputation for living on the edge of bankruptcy is not going to have the same sort of security problems as the high vizier of some rich, desert kingdom. Likewise, the wealthy vizier can get away with having devices that can rend flesh, though some other person’s sensibilities would be offended by finding a diced thief in his halls.

Traps come in two general types. There are passive or latent traps, and there are active traps. Passive traps are simple in design (with few or no moving parts) and require virtually no maintenance once set. They sit and catch all who cross them. Active traps also wait to be triggered, but involve a complex series of operations designed to catch or slay the ones who triggered them (i.e., many moving parts). Active traps are often selective, only catching those who fail to disarm them. Regular maintenance (like reloading) must be made on active traps, which points out that the difference between these two trap types is not only a matter of complexity, but also a matter of expense and efficiency. Active traps are both more expensive and more efficient, while passive traps remain the favorite of the severely budgeted client.

A recommendation must be made before proceeding. If you can afford the time, read the excellent paper by my colleague Denri Raithe, “Legal Advice For Security Experts,” when consulting with your client for the initial plans. Denri makes an excellent case for getting contracts and money before starting work. Denri also mentions the serious problem involving those clients

who seek to keep details of their new security devices secret by slaying the maker of the traps. Some traps mentioned in this article were emplaced for such clients. A wise trapmaker sends the plans of his work to at least one friend.

### **The passive approach**

Passive traps may be categorized into three subgroups: arresting, fatal, and magical. Mischievous traps (designed to confuse or annoy thieves, rather than capture or harm them) may be considered a fourth category, though these traps generally fall under one of the other three categories, and some mischievous traps are active ones.

Arresting traps are those that capture but do not actually do a great deal of physical damage to those who have tripped them. These are in great favor with religious figures and a number of merchants. (After all, your typical storefront merchant doesn’t care to have a great deal of blood strewn about in her shop!) An example of a passive/arresting trap is the “swivel step.” Putting pressure on this piece of floor reveals that it is hinged like a trapdoor with a simple spring mechanism. When the swivel step is tripped, it snaps up into place like a sort of mousetrap, and the plank suddenly closes around the trespasser’s ankle. Getting free is relatively simple, but can be awkward and time-consuming, particularly if a locking pin is used.

Fatal traps aren’t always fatal, but are intended to do the maximum amount of damage to the trespasser. Often, in the case of passive traps, this is simply an arresting trap with the addition of a wounding mechanism: instead of a simple pit, for instance, a pit with spikes jutting up from the floor might be used. The pit

may be covered by a trapdoor that swings open when stepped upon, then swings shut again using springs.

Magical traps are either fatal or arresting, but always have a magical component. The simplest form of this is a passive trap is the placement of an illusory floor over a pit. The trapmaker is encouraged to make use of available spell-casters when possible. If the client is a spell-caster, so much the better, since the client then saves a bit of money by casting the spell himself while gaining a more useful trap.

The trapmaker is encouraged to make passive security devices utilizing mindless, static, long-lived monsters (if the building codes allow). One device, which was built for a king who wishes to remain anonymous, sweeps characters into a pit which leads to a garbage-disposal chamber, wherein lies a gelatinous cube.

Passive traps which make use of existing resources are the most cost-effective and often the best for word-of-mouth publicity. After hearing about the above-mentioned trap, another well-to-do potentate immediately requested his own trap — in this case, one that dropped thieves into a near-freezing, underground river situated beneath his castle.

### **The active angle**

Active traps usually come in three basic types: biological, mechanical, and magical. Biological traps use animals or plants as a vital part of their mechanisms. For example, a biological trap may use a green slime positioned above the trip mechanism so that the slime is dislodged and falls on those passing beneath. This example of an active trap differs from the gelatinous-cube trap noted above because it must be reloaded after each use, and a series of mechanical devices are employed which could be disarmed by the trap’s owner or a sophisticated thief.

Sentient creatures rarely have the patience or inclination to sit around waiting for the occasional morsel, so simple plants or animals are often utilized in traps like these. Plants are, in fact, preferred; they require little upkeep and care, rarely make a mess, and are unlikely to consider a bribe. Even creatures famed for their savagery can be bribed (throw a guard dog a haunch of beef and see what happens). If the animal is a vital part of a security setup, this may cause an irreparable breach in security.

Mechanical traps need little explanation; they are the ones the common man thinks of when the word “trap” is mentioned. A spring-loaded mousetrap, a crossbow with a string connecting its trigger to a doorway, and a scimitar blade that slashes out when a chest is opened are all active mechanical traps using simple (though effective) mechanisms which must be reloaded or reset after each use or series of uses. Absurdly complex mechanical traps, while famous among commoners and daunting to thieves, are rarely worth their expense

and upkeep costs. The KISS maxim (Keep It Simple, Stupid!) is of critical importance.

Magical active traps are rarely seen but are very hard for magically unsophisticated thieves to neutralize. A "magic mouth" spell that screams when an item is picked up, drawing guards and onlookers, is such a trap, though not an immediately fatal one. A magical trap that generates a shock to a thief trying to pick a lock is another such trap, though the shock effect can be made permanent by a powerful wizard. Glyphs, symbols, alarms, and other magical traps fall into this category as well. Most of them have either limited durations or have limited "ammunition," requiring regular upkeep by a spell-caster (whose services may be hard to acquire, unless the trap's owner is one such).

A few words about a fourth kind of active trap: poisoned ones. Used in combination with mechanical traps, these can be extremely deadly, but the services of an assassin or an alchemist are nearly always required for emplacement and regular maintenance. Only the most experienced trapmakers should even consider the creation of such devices, and the gravest caution should be used at all times.

**Triggering devices**

Triggering devices are of many sorts and are left mainly to the ingenuity and natural ability of the trapmaker. However, as the basic thrust of this tome is to inform the novice, a few examples are given.

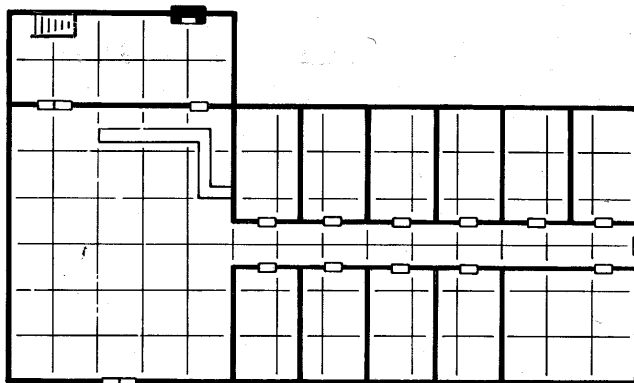
One triggering device is the common tripwire. Although it may be noticed easily (as is often pointed out), the wire may require cutting to be triggered – a nasty shock! Tripwires unconnected to traps may be placed simply to slow intruders down. Tripwires are effective in darkness, on stairways, near pits, and in combination with mechanical devices as part of active traps.

A second triggering device is the weighted lever. The lever is depressed when weight is placed on it, as when someone steps on a particular flagstone; the other end rises and triggers the trap. Many corridor-emplaced triggers are of the lever variety, setting off anything from ceiling deadfalls to spear-hurling ballistas. Too little weight on the lever may fail to trigger the trap, however; too much weight may break it.

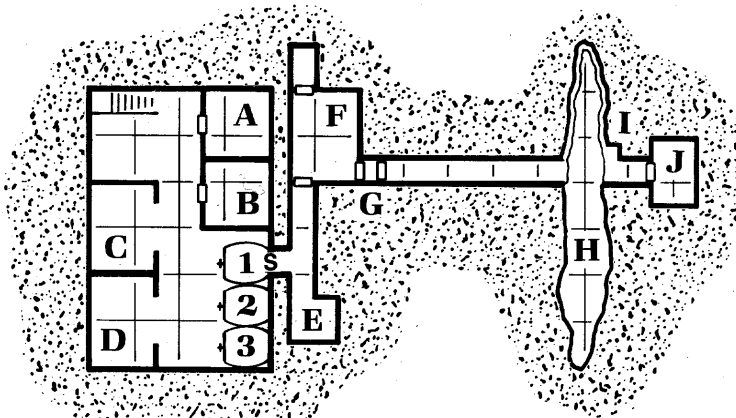
A third triggering device is the scales. Here, a weight must be removed from a pedestal or similar object, causing a mechanism to move up and trigger the trap. A wonderful active trap is spoken of in a certain temple, wherein the removal of a golden idols head causes the fall of a huge rolling stone on the incautious thief who triggers it.

A fourth and simple triggering device is the flawed support, such as the boards on a bridge that give out when weight is put on them. Other examples abound, some of which are not crafted by the trapmaker. This is one of the areas where nature,

# Grey Griffon Inn



**UPPER LEVEL**



**BASEMENT**

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| A. Storage Room (locked)               | 1. Hollow Keg (trapped) |
| B. Storage Room (locked)               | 2. Beer Keg (full)      |
| C. Wine Racks                          | 3. Mead Keg (full)      |
| D. Wine Racks                          |                         |
| E. Forester's Bane (with illusion)     |                         |
| F. Guard's Room (with storage closet)  |                         |
| G. Spiked Trap                         |                         |
| H. Trench                              |                         |
| I. Small Ledge (with crank and bridge) |                         |
| J. Treasure Room                       |                         |

(See pages 30 and 32.)

1 square equals 10'

through erosion and wear, frequently outdoes humble security workers such as myself.

Simple trap releases can be further complicated and put to use in the form of hollow statues, such as those flanking a door or actually made a part of the door-frame. Ceramic serpents, for their long, coiled shapes, are a favorite for filling with sand as part of a weighted lever release with a time-delay. In an emergency retreat, the owner simply strikes the head off one of these serpents (allowing sand to spill out), and flees ahead of a series of falling metal portcullises triggered in turn by the descending serpent-lever, or down an escape tunnel with a door that slowly grinds shut. Many clients delight in such creations, which are of great use in case of revolution, invasion, or murder attempts — though woe to he who stumbles while the time-delay is running! Perhaps the thrill of beating the trap's activation adds to this trigger's appeal.

There is also the use of pressure plates. Consider a locking mechanism concealed in the bannister of a stair. Stepping on the topmost step without engaging the lock breaks a hidden bottle of oil, which then sprays out along the lower steps. If strikers (little pieces of flint) are used in conjunction with this trap, the spray of flame is considerably more effective.

#### **Other considerations**

The use of relatively simple mechanisms should not detract from the complexities of a trap. The use of springs, cantilevers, hinged brackets, pulleys, and hoists should not be overdone, however. There is a simple enough problem — that of making a trap too complex — that often fouls up the trapmaker in the process of the trap's construction.

As an example, consider poor Alrik the Lame. His trap for one king included spikes springing out from ceiling, floor, and all four walls. Two of the walls then slowly moved to meet in the center. Unfortunately, Alrik did not figure out what would occur when the walls hit that first row of floor spikes. The walls, of course, jammed on that row and ceased moving until long after the trespassers had moved on. Furthermore, since the trap was powered by water pressure, two of the walls burst and caused extensive flooding in the king's dungeons — and Alrik the Swift went to the torturers for his name change.

Most traps should have at least one way of being disarmed or circumvented to allow safe passage. This is a precautionary measure for the client's own protection, and a hedge against such things being used against the trapmaker. A locking pin which slides into place as long as pressure is kept against a certain place is the most common example. Some active traps have no means to block their mechanisms; some people might question the use of these traps, but they do have their time and place (for example, in traps leading to a

highly prized treasure cache). An especially skilled thief might get through any trap that you can devise; getting to the treasure, however, is only half the battle. A panicked guard, running among traps lying about sprung or ready to spring, makes a recipe for disaster in cases where a client considers an item too costly to be insufficiently safeguarded. Guards are not as easy to replace as some think!

Some traps may remove the object guarded rather than removing the thief seeking it, even to the extent of destroying the protected item. Obviously, the client might not desire this latter alternative. Consider a tray of gems trapped in such a way that the tray slips back into a recessed chute, which slides back and away to a sealed room on the floor below.

On this note, consider the case of Salovar the Restless, a thief of great skill but doomed to existence as a vampire. The typical spiked walls, snares, and alarms did not deter him, but Salovar hadn't reckoned with the simplest precaution. In making his way to the trophy room of the Earl of Freglass, he found the central case and removed the sceptre within. The sceptre, of course, was a fake — a good and expensive one, but less costly than the real thing. A lacquered piece of wood on the case had to be moved to reveal the real sceptre, which was less than a foot below the phony.

Thus, removing the object sought by a thief may be easier than trapping the thief himself. To be sure, when the thief is of average ability, he can be killed by normal means or at least imprisoned. Cases such as that of Salovar the Restless are rare, but they do happen; a trapmaker needs to consider these things when designing security measures. Some of the triggering mechanisms may rely on pressure, but a leprechaun might pass through these with little trouble. Considerations of what a trap *won't* catch must be made in advance of a security system's design.

Remember: A trapmaker doesn't just build traps! The true trapmaker designs a complete, customized security system. Rather than relying on one or two traps, a layered system is strongly suggested. Indeed, a human thief traveling deep into a layered security system may find strange odors and liquids that seem both absurd and useless — substances that repel xorn or nauseate vampires. Holy water, garlic, and other reagents are effective against many creatures. A thin layer of silver on a weapon's edge adds a great deal to its efficiency against supernatural creatures. These traps are not reliable on their own, but as part of a truly comprehensive security system, they can add immeasurably to the designer's reputation.

#### **Conceptual-design notes**

As stated before, when designing your system, consider your client first; consider not only the client's moral code, but how much money he can afford to spend.

There is a saying attributed to the thieves' guild that applies here: "Do not kill the goose that lays golden eggs." To thieves, this means: "Don't take so much that your target cannot recover if there is a chance you'll be able to steal from him again." To trapmakers, this means: "Don't exceed your client's means where upkeep of the trap or payment will keep his coffers drained." If you keep an eye out for your client's expenses, the reward will show itself in increased business.

Now consider the client's line of work. A king or major warrior always has followers who can be put on guard detail. Less likely to have a corps of followers is the wizard. Priests always have followers, and these can usually be put into service as guards. Guards (men, animals, or monsters) will always be the outer perimeter of protection.

Inner layers of protection usually call for the less-accessible regions to be guarded only by creatures that don't require frequent food and water. Among some of the less moral clients, this is usually performed by undead of one variety or another. Similar guardians include constructs such as golems. If your client wants a treasure cache that can be accessed frequently, this is a security risk and you should advise your client accordingly. Among trapmakers, this is known as "guarding your backside."

The client may merely wish to deposit new treasure in his cache. This is best done through a series of small slides which allow for the deposit of wealth from a distance. The client will probably wish to view his treasure cache once in a while; therefore, the making of the security systems overview (i.e., a map) may be necessary. Other, cheaper security systems will guard the map while the bulk of wealth is in the security system described by the map. Since there should be guards (unless the location of the cache is secret), the "boss" can get by the first level of security without difficulty.

#### **An excellent example**

Since this client has reneged on payment for his traps, the Grey Griffon Inn in the town of Phalanx is here given as a sterling example of a well-designed security setup. This particular client, an extremely wealthy robber-baron named Dorobo Red, is the secret owner of the inn, and his guards (disguised as bouncers) patrol the premises. The entry to Dorobo Red's treasure vault is actually one of the massive beer kegs built into the basement wall. A comprehensive display of this system is shown in the accompanying illustration.

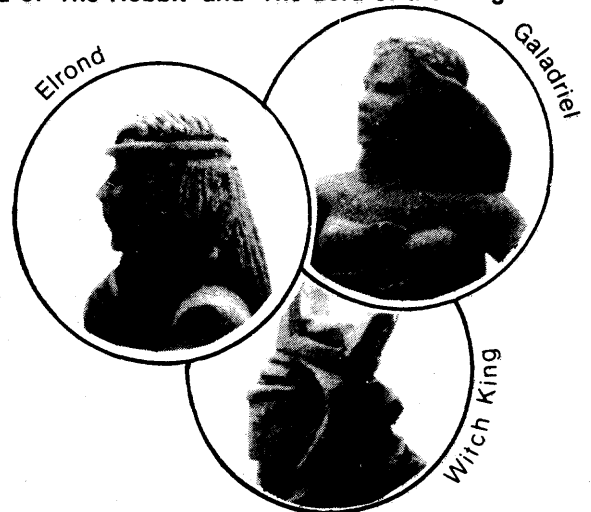
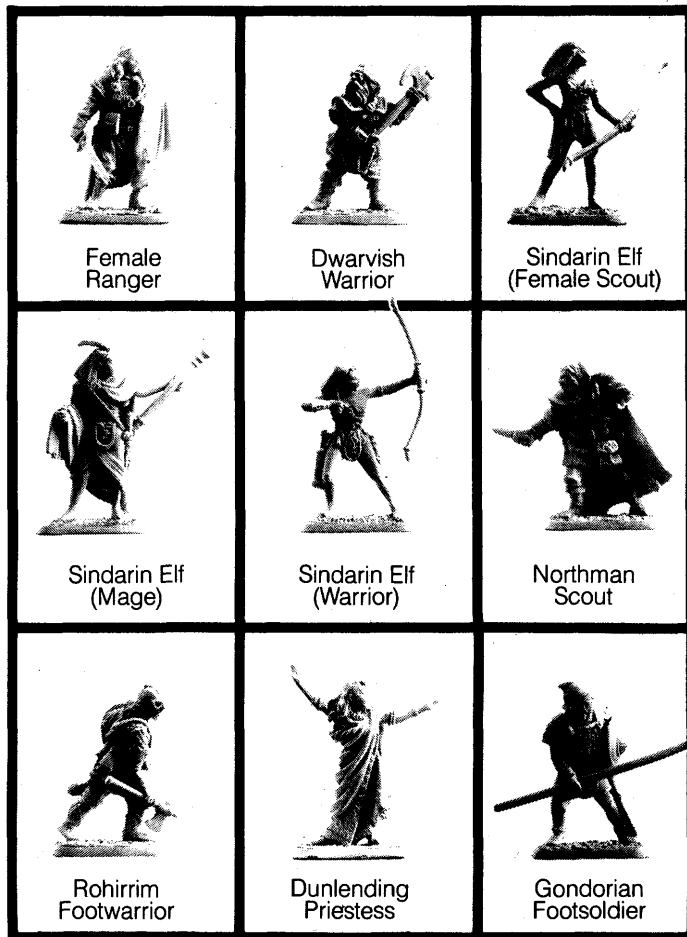
The first beer keg (#1) is trapped; the other two hold beer and mead. Any attempt to turn the keg's nozzle without first opening the tap results in a thin spray of poison spurting out. The door can be opened as soon as the nozzle is turned. At the back of the keg is a secret door; this is opened by depressing a small section of



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board in the upper righthand corner of the keg. A small corridor is revealed, leading to a T branch heading north and south. The south branch apparently ends in a door and seems clear of guards — thanks to the *permanent illusion*, which is fairly detailed and hard to detect. Creatures with a good sense of smell should be able to penetrate it since the plant at the far end (E) has a distinctive, musky odor. It is a fairly large snapper-saw plant, called by some the forester's bane. The tiny grill windows along the ceiling of the corridor provide sufficient light for the plant to thrive. These windows are only about the width of a normal hand, razor-edged, and frequently checked by the inn's outdoor "gardener."

The north path is the one for would-be treasure-hunters. The first door is not trapped in any normal manner. Instead, hanging from a strip fastened on the other side of the door are many small bells. Opening the door causes a jingling noise, but other than surprise, produces no other reaction or effect. The noise generated by these is insufficient to arouse anyone further than 30' away, but may cause fear and confusion among thieves.

The guardroom (F) is equipped with a small cistern, cot, chair, and some supplies. When an alert is on, one of the more

powerful guards is posted here. Also found here is a large gong with a mallet tied to a peg. If the gong is rung, the entire inn is aroused. (Many recurring "guests" are in the employ of the robber-baron.) Also found here are two doors. The north door leads to a small utility closet; the other leads to another short corridor to the east.

The short corridor (G) has a pit trap with a mechanical door. Should someone walk into the corridor without first closing the door leading to the guardroom, the pit-trap door is unlocked and free to swing open, dropping the thief 30' onto many sharpened metal stakes.

Beyond the pit-trap corridor is a small metal door, about 3' in height. The corridor beyond is also 3' in height. This is a security measure, since if a human is trying to walk out with a great deal of the treasure, it will take him some time to navigate the passage while hauling a load. Immediately beyond the passageway is a trench (H). This is 40' deep and runs the length of the room. The ceiling is still only 3' above the floor at this point making jumping difficult. At the far side of the trench is a crank (I) which causes a small bridge to stretch across the abyss. Since both the owner and one of his chief henchmen know a spell to summon an

invisible servitor, a tiny ledge has been built around the north end of the trench. The magical servitor, once summoned and sent across the trench, can negotiate this path, then lower the bridge into place.

The corridor then opens up to a normal-sized passageway. A single brass-bound door is set here, with a relief image of a roaring lion upon it. If the door is unlocked and opened, it reveals a wondrous device called a "mirror of opposition" affixed to a second door immediately behind the first. If one feels inside the lion's mouth before opening the first door, he will find the true doorlatch which cannot be locked from either side. The second door then opens with the first one.

Beyond this point is a room (J) that holds the greatest treasures from Dorobo's raids. This room is known to house several magical weapons and gemstones, spell books from great but deceased wizards, and various potions in addition to heaps of coinage. This trap setup is used purely as an example of a reasonably solid security system, and it is my hope that it provides food for thought for all who are interested in the subject of traps and those who use them.

And remember — pay your bills. Ω

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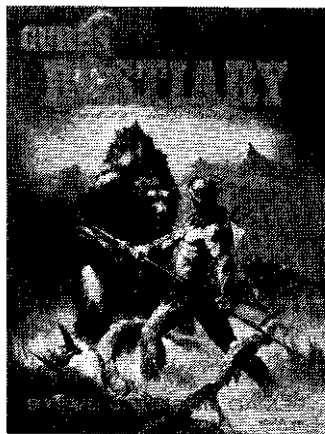
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### Dumb Idea Winners!

The Official TSR Dumb Ideas Contest, which ran in the first issue of *TSR Worlds*, has now ended. The winning idea (by a two-to-one majority) was the "GREYHAWK® Jam" supermodule, a round-robin dungeon crawl designed by some of the industry's best designers. Entitled WG7 *Castle Greyhawk*, this hilarious product is now in your stores.

The three "Trash the Player" ideas ("Fortress of the Kobolds," "Stung," and "The Ogmoor Orc Hunt") were numbers 2, 4, and 5, respectively, but together outpolled "GREYHAWK Jam." (There are some mighty frustrated and nasty DMs out there.) "The Sound and the Fury," a module with an audio cassette of sound effects, came in third. At the rear were "Space 1889" (a space supplement for the *BOOT HILL®* game) and "Top Ballista" (aerial combat based upon you-know-what).

The winner of the contest, and recipient of autographed copies of *Manual of the Planes* and *DRAGONLANCE® Adventures*, is Ted Ross, of New Concord, Ohio. Congratulations!

No winner has yet been chosen in the "Name That World" contest for the D&D® game's Known World. Keep those suggestions coming in to: "Name That World," c/o TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

# DAILY PLANET™

## GAMING SUPPLEMENT

Special "Guy Fawkes" Spring Edition

April 1st, 1988

Number 9

### DC™ HEROES RPG CONVENTION TOURNAMENTS

Tournaments will be run at the following conventions (Really no joke):

#### *Munchcon* \*\*

April 15-17, 1988  
Marshall University  
6466 Farmdale Rd.  
Apt. 7  
Barbourville, WV  
25504

#### *Kubla Khan (SF con)*

May 20-22, 1988  
Rodeway Inn Nashville  
647 Devon Dr.  
Nashville, TN  
37220

#### *Syndicon* \*\*

April 22-24, 1988  
Holiday Inn Glen Ellyn  
P.O. Box A3918  
Chicago, IL  
60690

\*\* Mayfair personnel will be attending convention. Not all will be running DC Heroes RPG tournaments, but greet and meet our talented crew.

If your convention will be running a DC Heroes RPG tournament. Please contact Mayfair Games for prizes. If we're notified far enough in advance, we will list your convention in this *Daily Planet Gaming Supplement*.

### MAYFAIR GAMES MAKES IT THROUGH EXTRA, EXTRA MILES

Remember when we talked to you about our editor Jonatha Caspian and her tumultuous trek to Buddy Saunder's open house? Sure you do.

Well, here is another cheery tale of Mayfair madness. This

one however bears no semblance to reality.

One day we received a phone call from one Dayton Blood about a convention to be held in Oshkosh, WI. Senior editor Tom Cook\* decided to hike his way up to the convention since it was only a hundred or so miles away, and he took a few manuscripts to edit on his way to keep him occupied.

The snow was only a few feet deep as Tom set out. Wrapped warmly in shredded Darkseid™ posters, he sang a merry tune, slogging along on his snow shoes. Little did he know that the worst storm in Midwest history would be descending that night.

Four hours after he left, in Zion, Illinois, Tom was looking for a Federal Express box to drop off the six manuscripts he edited so our staff could have them typeset when he got back; that's when the blizzard hit.

The wind was howling, the snow biting into his skin; the ice was forming on his eyeballs, but he got to a box, dropped off his package, and then decided to stop for lunch.

Discerning a set of golden arches a block away, health-conscious Tom instead entered the restaurant he was standing next to and ate a hearty meal of three or four chickens and biscuits.

Well, the rest of the trip was much the same: He fought off snowmobile bandits on the Illinois-Wisconsin state line; got stopped on the outskirts of Milwaukee by radar-carrying police (he's going to try and beat the ticket on the basis that he wasn't in a car at the time); the bear in Fond du Lac only took a small chunk out of his left leg, but that was healed by the time Tom got to the convention at five o'clock that night.

Tom offered to help dig out the parking lot for the the rest of the conventioners when

he found out the blizzard was so bad that all the hotel's equipment was covered.

After eating a hearty dinner, where he finished eight steaks and edited ten manuscripts, he was happy to find all of the conventioners who made it to the convention were DC Heroes Role-Players. They all soon started an all-night siege of Apokolips™

The next day after the roads were cleared, more gamers arrived and Tom launched into a wonderful oratory convincing all that they wanted to join in on the assault since there were two groups already lost in the Armagetto™ and someone had to save them. Soon the whole convention was playing, with Tom gamemastering all but four of the groups (he did, after all, need to make his deadlines).

A good time was had by all, due to the dedication, dependability and darn good gaming spirit of Tom Cook.

What a guy.



#### Clark Kent's™ Glasses

DEX: 0 STR: 0 BODY: 1  
CHARGES: N/A  
COST: 46,838 HPs+\$\*\*\*

\*\*\* more than you can afford  
POWERS:

Cling: 1  
Illusion: 184

LIMITATIONS:  
Cling is only operable when glasses contact Kent's ears.

### THE ULTIMATE, SAY-NO-MORE, DEFINITIVE, SET-IN-STONE, NOT-OPEN-FOR- DEBATE TIME TRAVEL RULES FOR THE DC HEROES ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Many of our fans have been confused of late by the emergence of several varying, even contradictory, rules for Time Travel within the DC Heroes RPG. Well, after months of intensive and laborious research, we here at Mayfair (the last bastion of civilized gaming) have devised the definitive Time Travel system.

Time Travel allows a Character to travel through Time. The Character attempting Time Travel uses his/her APs of the Power as both the Acting and Effect Values. To determine the Opposing and Resistance Values, the GM should follow these simple rules:

First, decide how much time is left for the game (in minutes, not APs) then add together the ages of all the Players (since Time Travel is an attempt to alter a person's presence in Time and age is a measure of Time, too). Then subtract the number of pages contained in the module being played. If you are playing your own adventure, add photocopying costs and distance travelled (in miles) to obtain these items to the subtotal.

Take this figure and divide it by the the number at which the little hand is currently pointing. Multiply this by the number of DC comics in which the adventure's villain appeared. This is the almost-total of the OV/RV Value.

Finally, have the Player pick a number between one and fifty. Create a fractional number with the almost-total OV/RV as the numerator and the chosen number as the denominator. Round this up to the nearest whole number. This is the new Time Travel OV/RV.

Optional Rules: wing it.



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# SAGE ADVICE

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by Skip Williams

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A quick return to the BATTLESYSTEM™ fantasy combat supplement (last covered in issue #127) is made in this column.

## Can creatures such as elves or treants charge in the woods?

Only figures representing single creatures or characters may charge in or into the woods.

## Will flying over a woods negate the sighting penalties as described on page 21 of the rule book?

Probably not. A flying creature not in woodlands can sight and cast spells in a 1" radius centered directly below the figure. Elves and other woodland creatures can sight and cast spells within a 6" radius. A woods made up of leafless trees or conifers might be more transparent to aerial viewing; this should be decided before the game starts.

## Does a unit need initiative in order to execute a wrap-around?

No. In order to execute a wrap-around, a unit must start its movement phase in base-to-base contact with an enemy unit. It must have one or more figures that are not yet in base-to-base contact, and it must have room to expand its frontage. Only figures that begin the phase out of base-to-base contact can be involved in the wrap-around. A unit can perform wrap-around movement only in its own movement phase. For example, a unit that is eight figures wide and two figures deep wins initiative and moves into melee with an identical unit. In this case, the enemy unit's next movement phase comes before the melee phase, initiative notwithstanding. The unit may use its extra figures to wrap the attacking unit during this movement phase.

## Can a unit execute a wrap-around if attacked from the rear?

No.

## Can missiles be fired into melee? Can pass-through fire be used

## against units performing wrap arounds?

Missiles cannot be fired into melee (at least those involving your own allies). Wrap-around occurs during the movement phase, and figures performing such movement are subject to pass-through fire.

## How do you determine whether or not artillery fire hits a tree, assuming that the fire is deliberately aimed at the tree?

Treat the target tree just like any other artillery target (see page 19 of the rule book).

## How fast will a forest burn?

Assuming that the trees are very dry and the wind is calm, a fire started by a single figure stand begins as a ½"-diameter circle and expands ½" per turn until extinguished. If there is a light wind, the fire starts as a rectangle ½" wide and 1" long, aligned with the wind. Each turn thereafter, the fire spreads 1" downwind and ½" to either side. If the wind is strong, the windward expansion is 2" per turn. Forest fires can spread much more slowly or quickly than this (damp, live trees are almost fireproof, save in exceptionally strong fires), but the foregoing is sufficient for most game situations. If you think a variant on these rules is in order, decide on one before the game starts.

## The combat-results table shows how many hit dice of damage an attack delivers. Assuming that 1 HD is 1-8 hp, how do you calculate damage against creatures with better than 1-8 hp, like 1st-level fighters with 1-10? Surely these troops are harder to kill than goblins at 1d8 - 1.

Most players ignore the variation in hit dice for simplicity's sake. If this bothers you, add or subtract hit dice from each figure according to the creature's average hit points per die. To make the conversion, calculate the total average hit points for a figure and divide by 4.5 (the average result for 1d8), then round fractions of .5 or less down (rounding the rest up). For example, creatures with one 12-sided hit die average 6.5 hp each, or 65 hp per 1:10 figure. Dividing 65 by 4.5, we get 14.445, rounded down to 14, so each figure has 14 HD instead of 10. The goblins in your example would have 8 HD per 1:10 figure (35 hp per figure divided by 4.5 equals 7.778, rounded up to eight). ☺

---

# FORUM

(continued from page 4)

was also common in battles between mounted noblemen.

Now that you have Allycia on foot, her armor class and melee skills are still a match for yours, right? Wrong. Next time, before you go out and challenge knights on the highway, Scud, read page 18 of *Unearthed Arcana*. There, you will find rules on weapon specialization for fighters and rangers. (*Unearthed Arcana* is where Allycia got her combat abilities and unearthly armor class. Now you can return the favor!) What does weapon specialization mean? It means, Scud my boy, that you have been transformed from a reasonably balanced character into a ridiculous, walking death machine. You swing 2/1 to Allycia's 3/2. Your bonuses and multiple swings more than offset Allycia's armor class, and woe unto her when your swings connect! With luck, you will soon stand over the smoking ruins of a 6th-level cavalier.

Yes, Scud, you did not play fair with Allycia's cavalier virtues, but the bridge is still yours. That's what cavaliers get for adhering to a ludicrous and romanticized ideal of chivalry and honor. (Woe betide you if you ever meet a dishonorable cavalier.) Rules of combat are for tournaments, not bridges in the forest, as historical cavaliers knew very well.

If all else fails, Scud, for gosh sakes, don't surrender; run away! Your *plate mail* +1 allows you to move at 9", while Allycia, her nifty horse a gruesome mess back by the bridge, clanks along at 6". If she insists on pursuing, just chuckle as you let her have it with the projectile weapons which she would never deign to use, then just run along a little further and do it again! She'll get the point. If Allycia's companions also pursue you, call her honor into question. She will be honor-bound to protect you from her interfering friends. If you must surrender, surrender to Allycia alone, and call upon her honor to force the party to treat you well and safeguard your other possessions. If Allycia refuses or tries to look the other way, scream to the DM that she should be forced to undergo an alignment change and lose her cavalier status.

Finally, Scud, be forewarned. If *my* party comes upon you denying us a bridge in the forest, we'll just *fireball* you and pick your magical items out of the ashes before our cavalier can even accept a challenge. However, for a suitable fee in advance, we might not mind just sitting back and watching while you teach that snobby little brat a lesson!

Mark R. Shipley  
Bremerton WA

Having recently returned to the AD&D game, I picked up my first DRAGON® Magazine in a long while. Normally, the "Forum" is one of my least favorite sections, but issue #126 surprised me by having a large number of writings I could relate to, and I would like to comment on several of them.

First was S. Eric Pollard's comment on the imbalance between good and evil. While I agree that many players' tastes run toward building an evil character, I feel this is due to the escapist quality of the game (where evil acts can be performed without really hurting anyone), rather than to any flaw in the system itself. Mr. Pollard states that there are "few uses" for good

characters. I say that a good character group can be used to right the imbalance of which he writes. The best campaign I ever ran was based on a group of adventurers named the Honor Keepers, a good group dedicated to righting the wrongs of their day. Somewhat of a cornball idea to many cynical minds, I know, but this is one of the great foundations for heroic fantasy: a small, outnumbered group of freedom-fighters, fighting to push back the Darkness.

Mr. Pollard also writes of the disadvantage to good characters arising from their inability to use poison. I'm afraid that ethically that's one of the obstacles of being good. Granted, a 2nd-level assassin might be able to kill a 20th-level fighter with poison (though the fighter would have to be very careless), but how does a 2nd-level paladin bring a 20th-level evil lord to justice? Necessity being the mother of invention, the paladin would have to rely on ingenuity, powerful weapons, and spells to accomplish what the assassin does with poison.

And speaking of spells, where did Mr. Pollard find the rule that "by definition" the reversal of a spell is evil? A look at first-level clerical spells in the *Players Handbook* shows only one group which could be construed as evil (*cause wounds*), and that could be waived depending on the pantheon to which the cleric belonged. As an example, look at clerics of the Egyptian Osiris and the Norse-Aesir Tyr. Both deities are lawful good, but a DM could rule that Osiris, being the god of life, allows none of his clerics to use the reverse of a healing spell. On the other hand, Tyr, a god of justice, probably could not care less how his minions destroyed evil. Ultimately, the DM's discretion is used to determine what circumstances warrant the label "evil act." On a final point to Mr. Pollard's letter, there are good thieves, and the *Players Handbook* (p. 27) states that they do exist, albeit rarely, as neutral-good characters.

On Mr. Carpenter's suggestion of a magic-user spell bonus for intelligence, I wholeheartedly agree. I have often wondered why that was not done when the game was conceived, and I will put Mr. Carpenter's table to use immediately.

Finally, there were two letters dealing with a computer BBS. Mr. Sawczyn is correct that such a system would not be that expensive to begin. But Mr. Kelk is also correct that the memory-storage problems are great. I also question what kind of access line would be available. If the BBS was set up in Lake Geneva, for example, I could run up quite a phone bill, even if I restrict my access to after 11:00 P.M. Also, since many other users would probably use the same time frame, a single-user access line would only allow 12 to 15 users a night. This might change the cost calculations Mr. Sawczyn used to determine the profitability of the set-up.

Bob James  
Cincinnati OH

I am writing in response to S. Eric Pollard's "Forum" letter of issue #126. He states that the use of poison is considered evil, therefore putting good characters at a disadvantage. This is true, and poison has always been a touchy issue, so allow me to promote a rule modification on poison:

Good characters cannot make use of *deadly* poison. Other types of "poison" do exist, however. For an example, see sprites in the *Monster Manual*. Here are neutral-good beings whose main attack mode is a "poison" attack which causes sleep instead of death. For the good character, a jar of sleep ointment is as close as the nearest sprite. To keep game balance, this ointment would look just like poison on a blade,

which makes discretion just as important. Also, this ointment will not work if the method of delivery causes more than 3 hp damage. Bastard swords are out, blowguns are in. This is just one example of a nonfatal "poison" available to the good character, and the possibilities are endless.

Craig Dudek  
Palatine IL

In reference to Alan Ristow's letter in issue #123 and the letters by J.R. Porter, Jay Kaufman, and Anthony Specia in issue #126: Banded armor most certainly did exist. The Romans called it *lorica segmentata* and it was the standard armor of the Roman legionnaire.

It consisted of pairs of front and back plates covering the upper part of the chest and back, while the trunk was protected by six or seven overlapping metal strips hinged at the back and fastened at the front with hooks laced together. They were arranged so as to give complete freedom of movement and were held together with leather strips or riveted to a leather jerkin, so that each strip had independent movement. Over this was a pair of shoulder-pieces, each with five or six strips carefully shaped and buckled on to the plates or strips.

Other examples include an ancient Japanese armor, *tanko*, from around the 4th to 7th centuries A.D., the *Yoke-hagi-do* and the *Hishinui-do*, both 16th-century Japanese cuirasses.

Finally, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, there is a complete set of 15th-century Turkish armor. The cuirass is of banded armor, with a steel helmet, lamellar skirts, banded vambraces, plate greaves and kneecaps, and mail elsewhere.

I notice that many people tend to consider (or discuss) only medieval European technology and society when discussing armor, weapons, armies, mythology or whatever. Note that none of the banded armors discussed are of medieval European origin; I believe that may have contributed to their being overlooked. As has been pointed out, the AD&D game is a fantasy world and does not need to reflect historical reality. The existence of magic means that an AD&D game society won't look quite like any premodern culture, but I find that borrowing some historical detail adds to the flavor of the game. However, gamers are limiting themselves if they draw only from medieval European history. In some of our campaigns, we have taken elements from the cultures of Imperial Rome, ancient Egypt, the Islamic Caliphate, and ancient Persia; a campaign that we are developing has elements drawn from Minoan Crete, Mycenaean Greece,

Celtic Europe, pre-Columbian America, and ancient China.

Steve & Cynthia Higginbotham  
Columbus MS

I'm writing in response to Chuck Amburn's letter in issue #126. I think the idea of a video of D&D® game playing is great. My friends and I play AD&D games, but I don't think that would make a difference. As for one of Chuck's last paragraphs, I agree! I once brought a DRAGONLANCE® book to school, and when a few kids saw it, they flipped out. They said, "Do you worship the Devil?" and "Only Devil worshippers play [DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games]!" If there's anyone who's weird, it's them.

Hey, if you can't make a video, at least advertise, but show some boys and girls playing DUNGEONS & DRAGONS games. For one, it might raise business, and two, set some people straight on what the D&D game really is.

Shawn DeMers  
Nashville TN

To those of you using Mr. Schelper's system (in issue #127) for determining troop availability as given in "Fighting for Keeps," try the following: Instead of having 100 troops in entries on Table 1, roll percentile dice to determine how many available troops there really are. Then, to determine how many troops can be contacted and subsequently hired, use the chances listed on page 35 of the DMG for locating henchmen. Example: The DM rolled a 43 on Mr. Schelper's table. He then rolls a 67, showing that 67 infantry with long swords, large shields, and chain mail are available. The player posts notices and hires an agent to hire troops. Under optimum circumstances, 80% of the troops will be found, which is 54. It's more complicated than Mr. Schelper's system, but somehow the concept of 100 identical soldiers sitting in a clump without a leader bothers me.

Another hint: Personalize your charts according to different areas. Certainly, desert areas will have different troops than forest areas. Also, the maintenance costs Mr. Schelper lists are a bit low for some of the troops. If a single hippogriff eats two riding horses per month (a scanty figure at best), then it would cost 500 gp per month for the hippogriff's food alone!

Rusty Ballinger  
Sacramento CA

I did a double-take at the editorial in issue #127 because I've met those kobolds before! It was in our gaming club at Middlebury College in

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Vermont in 1983. Our encounter was in the wilderness; there were seven 5th- to 7th-level PCs and about 60 kobolds — the first rank with flaming oil bombs, the second rank with pikes, and the third rank with short bows and many arrows.

We had a name for the kobolds' secret of success: organization.

We had a solution for those kobolds: escape and evasion.

And this was in a world where the PCs were mostly of chaotic-greedy alignment, and where PC interrogation techniques were compared favorably with those of demons. We were a tough bunch of mean, nasty midlevel characters and probably could have handled those kobolds on even terms; problem was, they were too smart for that and engaged us only on their terms — all part of organization and being "utterly ruthless and clever."

To say the least, we got clever real fast. If we saw traces of kobolds, we went the other way.

With respect to the editor's suggestion of little things taking on big player characters, I'm eternally grateful our DM never chose to use elves! Can you imagine it? Long bows galore, their "invisibility in forests" ability, several low-level fighter/magic-users — we wouldn't have been just wounded and scared, we would've been dead, in short order!

Our advice: Avoid smart, organized opponents like the plague, unless you can ambush them!

Mike Montesano  
Buffalo NY

This letter is about the editorial in issue #127 ("Tucker's kobolds"). When I first read it, I laughed. But then I thought back to that epic debate years ago in the "Forum" about whether or not a red dragon could kill an ultrapowerful party of 25th-level D&D game characters with every magical item there is. And I realized that, however improbably, every DM has his pet PC-slaughterer. (Mine happens to be Orcus.) On the other hand, as a player I dislike being killed off. So, for any hapless characters out there who graduated *summa cum laude* from the Smaug Institute for the Terminally Unprepared, I offer this guide for surviving kobold attacks:

First of all, don't let them trap you in any one area. A lightning bolt works admirably for opening doors that have been locked and barred, as well as eliminating any kobolds who get in the way. (As long as the door isn't made of stone thicker than a foot, there is no danger to your party.)

Avoid being fried. If the corridor you are

walking down is coated with oil, expect somebody to light it. A simple cloudburst spell will wash it away and prevent any left-over oil from being ignited. Even better is a protection from fire scroll.

Bestow protection from normal missiles on a few of your best characters to automatically stop anything smaller than a *javelin of piercing*. Obstruct the kobolds in any way possible; *webs*, *stinking clouds*, or *magic walls* of any sort are useful in that respect. If they hide behind huge piles of debris, give the piles a shove! (I have yet to see debris that can be moved by a few kobolds but not by a 12th-level *telekinesis* spell.)

Of course, the simplest solution is just to kill the kobolds. While *fireballs* are obviously too dangerous, spells such as *cone of cold*, *chain lightning*, *Otiluke's freezing sphere*, *shout*, and others are virtually assured death, as kobolds have negligible saving throws. (Some of these spells might backfire, but only if they are misused.) And there's always good old *magic missile*, which will afford no saving throw and no chance of missing. *Cloudkill* will quickly fill all the small honeycombed tunnels, and it gives kobolds no chance of survival either. I pity the metal-armored kobolds caught in a *transmute rock to mud*! If your magic-user is particularly advanced, he may be able to toss a *death spell*, which can slay whole legions of the creatures, again with no chance of escape.

I hate to belabor the point, but if I sent my players up against killer kobolds, they would just massacre the kobolds and ask for Orcus. And if normal, 8-intelligence kobolds can have that much style and brains and tenacity and courage, I'd hate to see Tucker's demons.

Craig Flescher  
East Falmouth MA

Shields are a part of the game that is not often thought about, and I was glad to see Tim Merrett write about them in issue #127, even though I disagree with him on several counts.

First, I don't think that using up a proficiency slot is a good idea because it reduces the number of weapons a shield-user can have relative to a character who does not wield one. Fighters need that advantage of four starting weapons to keep up with other fighter types who have more skills. Rangers also need a specific set of weapons as per the *Unearthed Arcana* and can't afford to use a proficiency for a shield. Also, one must assume that fighters learn many undefined skills while they train — they learn to dodge blows better than others, ergo their 10-sided hit die. They also learn to parry, feint,

target vital organs, pummel, and brawl, but I think that these skills should just be assumed for the fighter and not dealt with in great detail.

Second, I don't agree with the use of the mantlet. In short, a mantlet is a very large barrier between two combatants, and it severely limits combat potential for both sides. Even a large shield is big enough to hinder full swinging by its wielder, which causes a -1 to hit (mantlets cause a -2 to hit). It does seem reasonable to remove the penalty if the shield-user is being charged and he sets a weapon against that charge, or if a mounted character is charging with his weapon held fast in front of him (each case requires judgment, of course).

Third, I like the idea of driving into someone with a shield to push him off a cliff, into a fire, or the like. There should be some more risk, though. For example, should Hercules swing his shield at Jack Jostick and (gods forbid) miss, then Hercules's belly is exposed to Jack, and I would say that this exposure is a bit worse than having no shield at all since the shield wielder is slightly off balance from missing and has his shield where it will do the least good. I think a one-point penalty from the shieldless armor class is appropriate.

One of my own thoughts on shields is that they should be considered as cover when parrying against missiles or thrown weapons. If the shield wielder is aware of the attack, then the percentile dice are rolled and compared to the cover provided by the shield. If the roll is under the cover percentage, then the shield has stopped the attack; if the roll fails, the attack is resolved without the shield or dexterity bonuses (since the act of parrying is standing one's own ground). When parrying this way, movement must be reduced to one-third normal since the wielder is hiding behind the shield as much as possible (I'm not sure if a cavalier would parry missile shots). The use of the mantlet is therefore wonderful for laying siege to a castle full of archers because of the protection provided, but it is really too big for skirmishes.


Richard Devens IV  
Center Sandwich NH

I like the idea of allowing fighters to specialize with a preferred weapon. I also have a few additional ways for a fighter character to specialize which I include in my campaign.

There is parry specialization. This can be taken with any melee weapon. When this specific type of weapon is wielded, the user's armor class is improved by one against one opponent, as it would be by a small shield. This doesn't interfere with attacks using this weapon. This type of specialization also allows a disarming attack similar to that allowed with a spetum.

Also available is a two-weapon fighting specialization. According to the rules on page 70 in the DMG, a person attacking with a weapon in his off hand suffers a -2 to hit with the good hand and a -4 to hit with the off hand. These are both modified by the character's attacking adjustment, which depends on the character's dexterity. A character who specializes with two weapons must specify what type of weapon is being wielded in each hand. The weapon in the off hand must be a small one-handed weapon, such as a dagger, a hand axe, or a spiked buckler. If the character has a dexterity of 16 or more, then the negative modifiers to hit are eliminated. If dexterity is between 6 and 15, then the net modifier is +0 for the good hand and -1 for the off hand. For a dexterity of 5 or less, use the reaction/attacking adjustment for

(continued on page 88)





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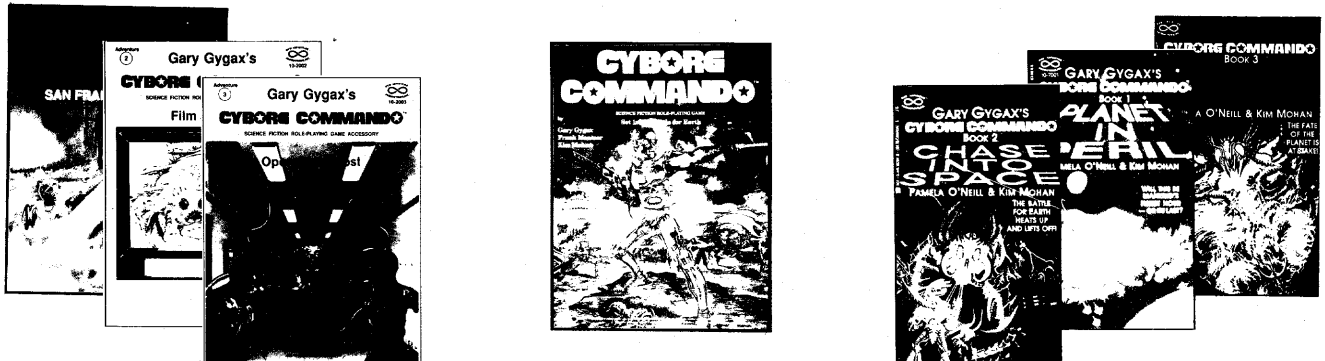
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# Let the Good Dice Roll

*Know the odds before you create your character*

**Table I**  
3d6 Generation Method

Score	A	B	C
3	0.46	0.46	100.00
4	1.39	1.85	99.54
5	2.78	4.63	98.15
6	4.63	9.26	95.37
7	6.94	16.20	90.74
8	9.72	25.93	83.80
9	11.57	37.50	74.07
10	12.50	50.00	62.50
11	12.50	62.50	50.00
12	11.57	74.07	37.50
13	9.72	83.80	25.93
14	6.94	90.74	16.20
15	4.63	95.37	9.26
16	2.78	98.15	4.63
17	1.39	99.54	1.85
18	0.46	100.00	0.46

**Table II**  
Method I

Score	A	B	C
3	0.08	0.08	100.00
4	0.31	0.39	99.92
5	0.77	1.16	99.61
6	1.62	2.78	98.84
7	2.93	5.71	97.22
8	4.78	10.49	94.29
9	7.02	17.52	89.51
10	9.41	26.93	82.48
11	11.42	38.35	73.07
12	12.89	51.23	61.65
13	13.27	64.51	48.77
14	12.35	76.85	35.49
15	10.11	86.96	23.15
16	7.25	94.21	13.04
17	4.17	98.38	5.79
18	1.62	100.00	1.62

**Table III**  
Method II

Score	A	B	C
3	0.00	0.00	100.00
4	0.00	0.00	100.00
5	0.00	0.00	100.00
6	0.00	0.00	100.00
7	0.03	0.03	100.00
8	0.34	0.37	99.97
9	2.42	2.79	99.63
10	8.33	11.12	97.21
11	17.34	28.46	88.88
12	20.55	49.01	71.54
13	19.07	68.08	50.99
14	13.65	81.73	31.92
15	9.12	90.85	18.27
16	5.55	96.40	9.15
17	2.69	99.09	3.60
18	0.91	100.00	0.91

**Table IV**  
Method III

Score	A	B	C
3	0.00	0.00	100.00
4	0.00	0.00	100.00
5	0.00	0.00	100.00
6	0.00	0.00	100.00
7	0.00	0.00	100.00
8	0.03	0.03	100.00
9	0.26	0.29	99.97
10	1.33	1.62	99.71
11	4.33	5.95	98.38
12	10.57	16.52	94.05
13	18.09	34.60	83.48
14	21.19	55.79	65.40
15	19.25	75.05	44.21
16	14.31	89.36	24.96
17	7.93	97.29	10.64
18	2.71	100.00	2.71

As a Dungeon Master, I have started a number of campaigns over the last seven years. Each time the players roll up new characters, henchmen, or family members of central characters, they ask the same question: "Which method are we using?"

I immediately start agonizing over which method of character generation will give the players a fair chance of "heroic" scores, while not being "Monty Hall" in nature. To the end of helping DMs sort out this question for themselves, this article presents the statistical chances for rolling each possible score (with a range of 3-18) for each of the common character-generation methods.

Page 11 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* offers four separate methods for rolling up characters. *Unearthed Arcana* adds a fifth alternative on page 74, though the probabilities of rolling each score with Method V have already been treated more than adequately by Arthur J. Hedge III, in his article "What are the Odds?" which appeared in DRAGON® issue #117.

The four original methods described in the DMG are as follows:

*Method I:* All scores are recorded and arranged in the order the player desires. Four six-sided dice are rolled and the lowest die (or one of the lower) is discarded.

*Method II:* All scores are recorded and arranged as in Method I. Three six-sided dice are rolled 12 times and the highest six scores are retained.

*Method III:* Scores rolled are according to each ability category in this order: strength, intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, constitution, and charisma. Three six-sided dice are rolled six times for each ability, and the highest score for each category is retained for that category.

*Method IV:* Three six-sided dice are rolled to generate the six ability scores, in order, for 12 characters. The player then selects one set of scores and notes them on the character record sheet.

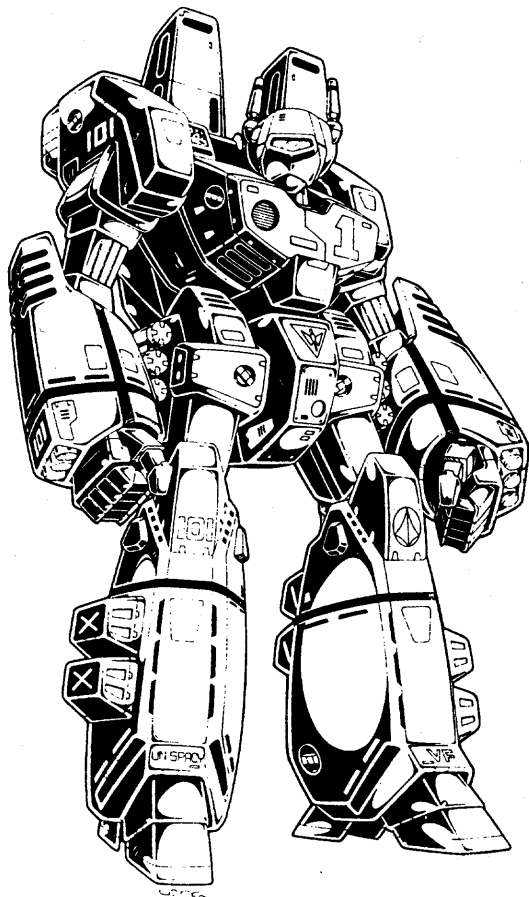
One of the drawbacks of statistics is its inability to adequately represent human choice. For this reason, it is impossible to give statistical values for the results of Method IV, and it is excluded from this article.

With the assistance of my computer, Theresa (an Apple Macintosh), I have managed to produce the following tables for your examination. In each table, column A represents the percent chance of rolling a particular score exactly, column B the chance of rolling that score or lower, and column C the chance of rolling that score or higher. Table I is supplied for comparison; it shows the chance of rolling each score with 3d6. Table II demonstrates Method I, Table III demonstrates Method II, and Table IV demonstrates Method III.

All chances given as "0.00" represent a chance under 1 in 20,000. It is worth noting that the chance of rolling a natural 3 with Method III is 1 chance in 36,349,366,588,416.



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finished my apprenticeship to sign-painter and muralist Mertyn Fishkiller three years ago, and since that time have been traveling one step ahead of my talent. When I left Mertyn's workshop in Kingsport to strike out on my own, Mertyn gave me the

standard student's kit: paint, charcoal, and thinner. He patted me on the head as if I were a boy instead of a girl, and said, "You have a lot of talent, Kerry. I hope you never use it."

I smiled at him and he smiled at me, for we both knew I would ignore his last wish. The first time he had wished it had been seven years earlier:

"Can you describe the god?" Mertyn asked the slender priest in the basement room of the Jasha Temple. I waited, a stick of sharpened charcoal raised above the square of coarse paper Mertyn had given me to take notes on. I wished he'd let me draw on the paper. I was sixteen and had been his apprentice six months, and he had not let me draw anything yet.

"Makta. Hmm. Six arms," said the priest. "Each hand grasps something belonging to one of his attributes." He prodded his forehead with the first two fingers of his right hand as if trying to knock loose a memory. "A cloud, a stalk of wheat, a cherpa kitten, a bird's nest, a half-moon. Is that all? It's a very minor deity."

"That's five," I said, counting the items I had made a note of.

"What is the last one?" He scratched his dark curly head. His black eyes fixed on the piece of charcoal in my hand. He frowned. "A flower. Let's say a flower."

"What kind?" I asked.

"You pick," said the priest. He gave me an intimate smile. I decided he must be practicing for when he met someone he could actually use; a painter's apprentice, even one with one green eye indicating half-Maeri blood, was hardly important enough to merit a smile like that. I smiled back, wondering how he would react to the space between my front teeth. He leaned toward me a fraction of an inch. What would the sisters at the convent of Saint Valley the Weaver say if they could see me now?

"Who's paying for the mural?" Mertyn asked. It was one of his most-used questions; if the priest said the god or goddess would bless the muralist in lieu of actual coin, Mertyn made a rude noise and left. He had collected a series of curses with that attitude, but I had not noticed any of them acting on him. Sometimes I wished they would, especially the one about him growing hair on his palms. If anything interfered with his painting, maybe he would let me do something important for a change. I was tired of taking notes, fetching necessities, and mixing pigments.

The priest said, "A fisher who got rich on Makta's day. He pulled in a fish that had swallowed a gold chain and pendant with a ruby in it bigger than your eye." The priest stared at my green eye as he spoke. "He commissioned the mural for a twentieth of the jewelry's value. We can give you fifteen talas."

Mertyn shrugged. It would be a small mural.

"What colors?" I asked.

# Out of Hand

by Nina Kiriki Hoffman

Illustrations by Brad W. Foster

"Mostly green. Blue or gray for showers, brown for the bark before leaves."

"What clothes?"

The priest looked down at the material he wore draped about him. He belonged to the order of Jasha Seed-sower, Makta's parent-god, and he was a member of one of the less orthodox sects that decreed clothes were no good unless one could get out of them in a hurry. "He could wear this," he said.

Mertyn was annoyed, I could tell: he puffed out his upper lip so his heavy black mustache bristled. He hated slipshod details. "Doesn't this Makta have any of his own priests?"

"No," said the priest.

"Kerry, have we got what we need?" Mertyn asked me.

"Shoes, hair, position preferred," I said.

"Barefoot," said the priest, "one horse tail from the top of his head, and could you put a girl in the picture?"

"I charge extra for each figure," Mertyn said.

The priest sighed. "The arms out, displaying the tokens, and a dance position, one leg up in front across the body." He held up his arms and lifted a leg to demonstrate. His drapes opened part way. He raised an eyebrow at me. I bit my lip and looked down at my notes, swallowing a smile. The sisters at the convent had had a lot of things to say about priests, especially priests of Jasha. Of all the gods people could worship, Jasha was the one the sisters despised most. "It just gives those men license to act like rabbits in mud time," had said Sister Pilastra often enough.

"Does anyone in the temple have a face you want on the god?" Mertyn asked. The pay rate was too low for us to hire a model, and Mertyn hated working from nothing.

"I'll send a boy down in the morning," said the priest.

He glanced around the room we were in. Jasha Earth-binder and Seed-sower's temples were usually underground, with carefully tended roots coming down from the ceiling. This room was deeper underground than the main chapel, and had no altar. It looked like a storeroom.

"Whitewash a wall," said Mertyn. "I need a clean surface to work on."

The priest shrugged and stood aside so we could leave. As I followed Mertyn out the door, the priest patted my rear. I looked back at him and thought about painting those black eyes on a wall in the marketplace. What would I put around them? The face of a ferret? But he was actually very handsome.

"Are you going to do preliminary sketches?" I asked as Mertyn and I headed back to his workshop. As we walked downhill from the temple district, I tied the inner leaf of my cloak to the loop at the waist of my trousers. The afternoon air was brisk and salty, it being spring. Too early for the real summer stinks along the docks. The sun had melted the morning mist, but the fog would be back at twilight.

"At that price?" He snorted and tugged the tail of his cloak out of the hand of one of the wharf pay-women.

I glanced at her. She was new, else she would have left Mertyn alone; all the regulars knew he had a woman beyond the walls, in the upper city. She held out a hand to me, then realized my gender or noticed my eyes and

snatched her hand back. I stared at her, though. She had wide eyes the same color green as my left eye, a pointy chin, a high forehead — a face we might use later, if Mertyn got a commission for a Lorelei, a favorite with the sailors. I tugged on Mertyn's cloak.

"What is it now?"

"A Lorelei," I said. He stopped and looked back.

"You're right." He came to stand in front of the girl.

He studied her from toes to nose, and not in a fashion she would be accustomed to. "I could use you right now — make some flash, I know we'll be needing it when Ska the Needle comes by again. A good afternoon's work. Girl, I'll give you a zilla to come home with us."

"You insult me," she said, but her voice quavered. An outlands accent. I saw by the way she laced her sandal thongs she must have come from one of the nomad tribes; she had the ties on the outside of her legs so as not to catch between horse and stirrup.

"I apologize. I don't want a tumble; I need models. I'm a painter — Mertyn Fishkiller; ask anyone here. Hey, Zolia, tell the girl I just want to look," he said to another pay-woman who had her own niche outside the Ship-at-Anchor.

Zolia laughed and said, "He's saying truth, sister; he asks us all up at one time or another. He put my face on the mural of Magda World-walker at the south cross-roads."

The Lorelei considered a moment, then said, "Very well, but I warn you." She fished a silver pendant from the placket at the neck of her crimson shirt. The pendant was in the shape of a hand, big as my thumbnail, with a red scrape drawn across its palm.

I froze. Then, under cover of my cloak, I touched my chest, where a similar pendant hung — the only legacy of my unknown parents, saved by the sisters from when I was a foundling, and inexplicable. The palm of my pendant had a green leaf on it.

"I have the firehand," said Lorelei. "Hurt me at your own risk."

"How did you get into this business?" Mertyn asked, shaking his head and smiling. "With an attitude like that, you won't make much money. Come along. What's your name?"

"Arlina Firehand," she said, and then we arrived at our building.

It was one of the few buildings on the harbor with four stories. Mertyn had his workshop and our living quarters on the top floor for best light. On the ground floor was an eatery and a tavern; on the second floor, a leather shop and a pawnshop; on the third floor, the office of the harbor-master, for it had a great view of the docks; and up top, Mertyn and I.

Most of the room was the workshop, the floor bare wood, window openings on all sides glazed with panes of translucent rock called mica, the walls white, and several large frameworks with white cloth stretched across them, which Mertyn could move about to catch and reflect light as the sun progressed. Along the right wall was our wood stove, shelves, and pantry, a place I had made into a kitchen where I dealt with foodstuffs, and the two curtained-off sections that served me and Mertyn for

sleeping places. When Sister Pilastra had come here to survey my prospects before apprenticing me (so wretched I was at weaving they said I tangled thread just walking past the looms), she had been worried about this, but I, having studied every public mural in the upper and lower cities, was determined to have Mertyn for my master, and I overbore her. Her apprehensions were baseless. If anything, Mertyn paid too little attention to me.

The workshop had props littered about it, and a rack of costumes against one wall.

Arlina narrowed her eyes and looked at the workshop, then at us. She closed her hand around her pendant, which she still wore outside her shirt.

"Make me up some black skin dye, and fetch the onion-skin block, Kerry," said Mertyn, draping his cloak over the head of the wooden statue of a sea god brought to him by a ship's captain who had found it far south.

First I blew up the fire and put the kettle on for tea. Then I went to the cabinet where we kept supplies. Mertyn led Arlina to a couch and told her what pose to use while I got out the things he had asked for and mixed the two ingredients that together made an indelible ink. Ska the Needle could push under a sailor's skin for a tattoo. I put the block of special clear thin paper on Mertyn's easel and fitted the inkpot in the round hole carved to hold it on the easel's crossbar. He snapped his fingers, and I got his brush, then glared at him long enough that he noticed.

"Well?"

"When can I try this?"

"This material is too expensive to waste," he said, just as he always did.

"How can I learn if I can't try?"

"You have other work. Finish lettering that tavern sign."

I frowned and went to my own corner. I got the rule and the template out of their box and traced more letters on the clean wood surface of the tavern sign. He let me do anything without an ounce of creativity in it, then added all the ornamentation himself; afterward I was let to color in the letters and gild the edges while he went off to do portraits. I watched him start three times on the Lorelei and then wad all three sheets up and toss them behind him. If I got them before the fire did, I would have some practice surfaces.

Arlina looked so very Lorelei my left hand itched to draw her. I felt my frustration boiling inside me. I told myself again I was an apprentice, bound to do my master's bidding, and it should all lead somewhere — in seven years. I closed my eyes and opened them, looked at the sign I was working on. THE LUSTY LOREL- it said, with a large blank place for Mertyn's artwork to the left. I gripped the sharpened graphite stick and started drawing.

I had not really drawn since I left the convent, and even the work I did there had hardly qualified, for the only paper I could find was the margins of my teaching scrolls, soon peopled with tiny folk. There were the faces of all my teachers and the two other fosterlings who studied with me; there were a thousand fantasy creatures conjured up from overheard stories and an overheated brain. There were the hands I saw at work, the feet I glimpsed under the table or working the treadles of looms. Rarely could I

fit in a whole body.

As I drew Arlina on the wood, I felt a tingle flow through my hand. I stopped drawing and waited for it to pass, thinking it only muscle tension, but it increased instead. I shook my hand. It did not respond. I went back to drawing, ignoring the tingle.

First I blocked out the basic body proportions and their positions relative to each other. I had learned that from studying Mertyn at work. Then I concentrated on giving the picture depth, shading the features. I had to imagine a great deal of her, for she had refused to disrobe aside from removing her cloak. Her image fit nicely in the space I had on the sign. Last I changed her feet to a fishtail, then sat back on my heels to look. My hand had stopped tingling.

She was perfect, small and solid, with her hand lifted to beckon to weary sailors, her lips smiling and open the merest touch as if she were about to speak. I looked from Arlina to my drawing and thought my drawing looked the more alive. Mesmerized, I rose to fetch inks to finish her, but Mertyn's hand came down on my shoulder.

I blinked and woke. I looked up at his face. "Do you waste good wood, I'll have it out of your pocket money," he said, then released me with a push toward the supply cabinet.

I got out the pigments I had spent so much time grinding and mixing, a shimmery blue-green I made from ground shells mixed with the dye Mertyn extracted from a gland in the heads of fishes, the color he got his second name from, for if he did not kill the fishes himself, they came to him too old, and the substance lost its potency.

Also I got out a gray made from clay, a white made from a mineral imported from the south — the southerners said it was petrified sea foam — and a lighter green I extracted from flower heads. All these colors I took and mixed with oils so their consistency was liquid enough to paint with. All the while I mixed, I felt that tingling in my hand again, and thought perhaps it was sheer desire and delight because at last I was doing what I had always longed to do.

Mertyn stood above me as I applied the pigments. Arlina sat holding her pendant and staring at me, having abandoned the pose I had drawn her in. My hand burned with each brushstroke, but it was not painful; it was the burning I awoke in myself when I pretended my hand belonged to another and it caressed me. The Lorelei on the sign seemed to lift from her wood with each stroke. I thought perhaps I was doing nothing, that she emerged just so I could stroke paint on her, that she basked in it. She almost squirmed and wriggled.

"There," I said at last. I sat back on my heels and looked up at Mertyn.

"I think I'll have you do the Makta tomorrow," he said. "I'll supervise. It's time I started seriously training you."

"Six arms," I said. Arlina rose from the couch and came to look at the sign.

"It's nothing, you just have the boy pose three times," said Mertyn.

"Where do you put the shoulders?"

"Would you rather go back to lettering?"



"No," I said.

Arlina made a strangled sound and pointed to the sign. And there, all my lovely work was slipping and sliding away. "What!" I said. I had mixed everything according to color lore, and I knew the dyes were fast. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. A little fishy thing flopped about on the floor, its breath gasping in and out of it.

Mertyn and I stared, transfixed. Arlina ran to the shelves where our pots resided. She lifted down a large one, emptied water into it from one of the skins hanging by the door, came back, and scooped the thing into the pot of water. It slid down under the surface and rested on the bottom.

Arlina tugged at my shirt collar, strangling me. I was too startled to fight back. She fished out my pendant and looked at it, then spat on the floor. "Lifehand!" she said. "Don't you know better than to go invoking the power for such a useless reason?"

"Lifehand? Invoking? Power?"

She squatted before me, her green Maeri eyes narrowed, her lips pursed in a way the nomads used as a word when the thunder of horses' hooves was too loud, or when there was hunting need for silence.

"Where are your parents?" she said.

"I'm a foundling."

"They settled the gift on you and left you?" She sounded horrified.

"Maybe they had no choice," I said.

"An untamed gifting," she said. She rose. She backed away.

"Wait," said Mertyn, "your zilla —"

But she was out the door, her sandals clattering down the staircase.

Mertyn and I crouched over the cook pot. He took my

brush and prodded the creature. It raised small splashes, then drifted to the surface, gills I had not painted flaring on its neck. Its beautiful face lifted clear of the water, and, then it sang. . . .

I woke from the trance when the Jasha priest shook me. Mertyn held a lamp smelt above the cook pot, and the little Lorelei nibbled at it, only she wasn't so very small anymore, and she looked more real and solid than she had when she slipped off the signboard. I heard a growling sound and realized it was either my stomach or Mertyn's.

"What is that thing?" asked the priest.

The Lorelei noticed his presence. She left off eating, trilled something at Mertyn, and turned on us. Mertyn sat back. His eyes looked vacant.

The Lorelei opened her mouth. I put my right index finger in her mouth so she wouldn't sing, and I learned something new: Loreleis had little pointy shark teeth. I said, "It's a little Lorelei! It tranced us. How can we stop it?"

"Oh," he said, "so that's why you never showed up this morning. Where did you get it?"

"Never mind! It's eating me. Can you stop it?"

"Uh —" He tore some pieces from the hem of his drape and stuffed them in my ears. I retrieved what was left of my finger. The Lorelei sang — I could hear that there was noise — but I did not fall into another trance.

I tore off another piece of his gown and stuffed it in the Lorelei's mouth. She lifted tiny hands and tried to un gag herself, but I caught her by the wrists and held her. Deprived of her singing power, she didn't have much strength.

"Wake Mertyn," I told the priest. He nodded and shook Mertyn's shoulder.

Mertyn seemed set in stone, his eyes hard gray agates staring at nothing. He did not wake. I looked down at the little Lorelei. She had grown from a creature the size of a child's hand to one the size of my foot, and I have never been called dainty. I remembered painting her eyes that dark blue-green, but now they were alive and shining. Her pupils had changed from black dots to slits. "Listen," I said to her. "Can you understand me? Nod if you can."

She flipped her tail and splashed me, a tiny spatter of drops.

"I made you," I told her. "You mustn't play with me."

"You made that?" asked the priest.

"Shush," I said. The Lorelei's pupils had flicked wide. She stared up at me. Then she surged up and laid her head against my hand, her eyes closing. Her hair was silken, wet, soft. Her gills fluttered, and her skin paled from green to white. A moment later she relaxed, lowering her neck back under the surface of the water.

"Are you proof against her?" I asked the priest. He nodded, touching the lotus flower tattooed on his palm.

I released the Lorelei. She pulled the gag out of her mouth and spat, twice. "Bah," she said. I could barely hear her. I reached up and took out my makeshift ear-plugs.

"Will you release Mertyn?" I asked her.

She frowned and looked at Mertyn. She sang something short. He leaned forward and gave her what was left of the lamp smelt. She glanced from me to him, wrinkled her

nose, and then sang something longer and more complex.

Mertyn blinked and woke up. "What?" he said. He rubbed his fingers together and smelled the fish oil on them. His mustache bristled. His black brows lowered. "What's going on here?" he roared.

Lorelei opened her mouth again. Maybe singing was a reflex. "Shh!" I said.

She looked at me and subsided.

"What's the priest doing here? How did that creature get so big? Why is the sun in the wrong window? Kerry, explain!"

"Uh —" I looked at my left hand. I looked at the Lorelei. I looked at the palette I had used to paint her with. The paints on it were drying and crusting over, and the cherpa-hair brush I had painted her with was fused into a useless mess. The tavern sign, however, looked just fine, as far as it went — to the second L in Lorelei, and picture-less now. "Well," I said.

"How did you make her?" the priest asked.

"I painted her," I said. "The pay-woman said I had — lifehand."

"You painted her and she came alive in power? What would happen if you painted Jasha?"

"She tranced us," I said to Mertyn. "All night until now."

"She —" He jumped to his feet. He stared down at the Lorelei. Then he looked at me. "Seven years," he moaned, and turned away with his hand over his eyes. An apprentice contract was one of the strictest the law allowed, very hard to nullify.

My left hand itched to draw them, the priest and the painter, such postures they were in — one in total despair, the other deep in thought. I stared at my left hand and bit my lip. Then I looked at the Lorelei. "I wonder what you'll think of salt water," I said because the cook pot had grown too small for her. Would she survive? Would she fade away in time? How much of a life had I given her?

I left the men and took the cook pot down to the docks, picking one the fishermen had not come home to yet. I went out to the end, then sat between two piles of discarded shells. I set down the cook pot. "This is the ocean," I said to the Lorelei, pointing out to the harbor. In the distance, where the arms of the harbor almost met in the face of the open sea, I could see the fortresses that stood against invasion, rocky silhouettes too square-edged to be natural.

I leaned over and scooped up a handful of seawater, then held it out to the Lorelei. She dipped her hand in and licked it. Trilling a song of triumph and delight, she splashed up out of the pot, lifting herself with her arms, but I caught her before she could slither over the edge of the dock into the water. "Listen," I said. "There are all sorts of monsters out there. You have to be careful."

She chirped at me, angry. I lowered her to the water, and she disappeared with a flick of her tail. For another half-hour I sat with my toes in the cold water, wondering what had become of her, feeling a strange misery that my own creation had abandoned me without a backward look. Then I went home.

"You will create a Jasha for us," the priest told me.

"What did you do with the creature?" asked Mertyn.

I set the empty cook pot down. "She's loose in the bay now," I said.

"Kerry! What have you done?"

"What else could I do, Master?"

We stared at each other. I thought of alternatives, and I suspected he thought of them too: kill the Lorelei, give her to the priests of Crai-the-Mind to study, sell her to the old man who kept oddities in his house and charged people two zillas a look, put her in the waste gutter, keep her and see what became of her — would she fade if unfed? Or die, like a natural creature?

"The bay," he said, and smoothed his mustache.

"You're not to draw again, at least not until we run out of projects. When next I can monitor you — you will wait until then. For now, go back to lettering."

"The Jasha," said the priest. His eyes glowed; the whites showed all around their black irises.

"My apprentice may not accept commissions," Mertyn said.

The priest put a curse on him. Like all the others, it had no effect.

But that night my left hand burned and tingled so much I woke myself. I dipped my hand in water. That stilled the heat a little, but the tingle maddened me.

A slice of moonlight came in the western window, temporary canvas stretched and gessoed across the floor. It glowed through my curtains until I parted them to look at it. I leaned off my sleep-mat and reached out my left hand. The moon's touch, cool milk across my skin, quieted the ache a little. I formed handshadows, stenciling silhouettes across the block of moonlight. The fury seeped out of my hand. My eyes fell shut and fluttered open until I was not sure whether I dreamed or watched from wakefulness when the fingered shadows lifted from the floor and danced to some music I could almost hear.

When I woke in the morning, half-on and half-off my sleep-mat, I did not remember the night's contents until I saw two shadows slip across a beam of light. There was nothing to cast them. I had never seen two things more amorously enraptured with each other.

When I looked up from watching them, I saw Mertyn watching too. His gaze met mine. He drew a deep breath. He gave me a scrap of wood left over from sign-making. "Draw. . . draw flowers or plants. Small, harmless ones. Pay attention to what you're doing."

After that, we had fruits out of season all the year round. It was less than six months before I drew my next myth — Lady Luck, for the guardsmen at the palace garrison. But that is another tale. Ω

# The Ecology of the Aurumvorax

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## *Count your fingers after you pet it*

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I was enjoying an evening drink in the Red Lion, one of my favorite taverns in Goodway during the time I was indentured to Duke Radford, and was getting ready to let fly with the story of how I once wooed six maids at the same time when, much to the pretended relief of my companions, I noticed a dwarf at my elbow. His sword was drawn but lowered. I tried to ignore him, but he would have none of that; he was determined to interrupt me.

"Are you Faulkenson the mage?" he growled, as he thrust his face close to mine. He looked like he had just crawled from the gutter. His breath certainly smelled like it.

"Yes, I am," I said, as I moved my chair back a foot for fresh air. "And who are you and what do you want?"

"I have authorization to take you immediately to Duke Kaor. Come with me."

"Duke Kaor? What does he want?" I was bewildered. Kaor the Toad was a rival of my master; his territory lay adjacent to Goodway. How did he know of me? Maybe I *had*, on occasion, let fly with a tall tale about my adventures, but it was usually only to the group of close friends now at the table. I likewise doubted the Duke wanted me to perform a service; he employed much more powerful spell-casters than myself.

The dwarf looked at me blackly. "He only wishes to talk to you and has promised me gold should I find you. His reasons

are his own. Get up." Apparently, the little guy was having a bad day.

I looked at him straight on — easy enough while sitting down. "I'm really sorry, but I can't go with you. You see, I was just about to enlighten these—" I looked around the table and dismissed the word gentlemen — these companions of mine with the story of the time I met half a dozen rich, beautiful, young maidens and what became."

My beloved companions had obviously had too much to drink and were in a particularly mischievous mood that evening, as they carried me to the dwarf's horse and tied me over its back. It must have been the drink. They usually couldn't get enough of me.

A few bumpy hours later, I stood before Duke Kaor. The dwarf had been paid off, and the Duke evidently thought me valuable enough to entrust me with four of his largest guards. We were now in the Duke's library. Around me were volumes on shelves that covered all walls except for that behind the Duke's chair of state. Golden statuettes and unusual devices of magic lay on the shelves and floor, almost hidden in the semidarkness. Moonlight filtered through the large panes of glass behind Kaor; it was now late indeed. Despite the candles on some of the shelves, Kaor's bloated face was silhouetted and obscured.

"What do you know about the aurumvorax?" he asked without preamble.

"What do you mean, sir?" I was more nervous than I had anticipated. The line of questioning caught me off guard, and I was recalling some unpleasant stories about The Toad as well.

"Don't play games with me, Fautkenson," he ordered. "I know that one aurumvorax was apparently quite fond of you while you were training at the Academy. From what I have heard about aurumvoraxes, I didn't think they were fond of anything. What do you know?"

I hadn't thought that word of Goldie had gotten beyond the few friends I had sworn to secrecy a few years ago. I decided to lay out the basic facts and hope he would be satisfied with them while I tried to figure out what he was after.

"Well," I recited, "the aurumvorax is a small, shaggy, eight-legged animal usually found around lightly forested hills, though it may be encountered near the timberline of some mountains. Its golden fur is usually long and well cleaned. As you may know, sir, it weighs over 500 pounds in adulthood and fears nothing; the little monster can be extremely vicious and will attack anything that looks edible or threatening." *Much the way you do*, I thought.

Kaor looked unimpressed. "Tell me," he said slowly, "about your pet."

"Ah. My pet. Well, we had one at the Academy that had been captured while it was just about to come full term. It gave birth to six hairless kittens that we separated from the mother. After two weeks, their eyes opened and one took a liking to me. Her fur came out in a golden brown." I was getting nostalgic. "I remember she couldn't seem to get enough to eat, but she and the others took sick. Everything we tried to feed them came back up again."

"Go on," said the Duke. He sounded bored — but his stare was making me more nervous.

"Well, one day I was wearing a gold bracelet that a girlfriend had given me. I picked the kitten up to stroke her, and her nose went straight to the bracelet. She started to chew on it. I thought it harmless enough until I noticed that Goldie was actually chewing the chain to pieces with her little teeth and swallowing the fragments. Before I could get it away from her, she had eaten the whole thing."

Kaor looked less bored now, but continued to stare.

"Goldie perked up immediately afterward and had her health back within a few days. The roots of her hair began to take on a metallic-gold glint. That's when I named her Goldie. I reported this to my mentor, and he suggested that we isolate one kitten on an all-meat diet, give mine meat supplemented with gold, and give the rest of the litter other precious metals with their meals. The kitten with a plain diet died a week later, as did the others, although the one fed platinum lived about three weeks. Goldie grew rapidly, putting on weight until she was too heavy to carry after a month. She retained all the gold



she ate. She gnawed the bars of her cage and any other metal that she could find. Copper pots were a favorite; her teeth and claws absorbed the metal from those.

"By the time she was two months old, I had read everything I could find about aurumvoraxes. I was the local authority on them at the Academy." I puffed out my chest a little. The Duke seemed to be eating it up. Maybe he wouldn't do anything rash to me. "I talked to every ranger and druid who claimed to have seen aurumvoraxes, and pieced together that they are solitary creatures, each defending a territory about 10 miles square. Every eight or nine years, they seek a mate, spend a week together, then return to their respective territories. Sometime between three and four months later, the female gives birth to about half a dozen kittens. She weans them after about five or six years, when they're halfway grown, and forces them to stake out their own territories."

The Duke raised a pudgy hand. "How long did it take yours to reach that point? Was it that long?"

"No," I told him. "Goldie was nearly grown, that's about a yard long and a foot high at the back, in less than a year." I could tell he was ready to ask the obvious question and I beat him to it. "I believe it was because we fed her a diet rich in gold. Any aurumvoraxes in the wild must pick up the gold they need to survive by eating jewelry from unlucky travelers or by actually digging up gold ore itself. The aurumvorax is a burrowing animal with eight sets of claws; no digging task is impossible for it."

The Duke rubbed his chins. "But can there actually be that much gold out there — I mean, in the hills where gold has never been found, but where an aurumvorax is known to live?"

I spread my palms, my confidence back. "Well, where there's an aurumvorax, there *must* be gold. It cannot be otherwise. But the gold will eventually be exhausted, and little will be found in the creature's lair. Dwarves and gnomes are not fond of these beasts, as you might well imagine."

The Duke seemed to consider this for a moment. "What happened to your animal? My sources tell me it was very loyal to you, and eventually you were the only one who could feed it."

My throat went dry for a moment. I dropped my gaze, then words came easily again. "Yes, sir," I said. "She would even let me stroke her, though I had to wear gauntlets in case she was in a playful mood. She could bite my hand off without meaning to do it. But she was gentle. . ." I hesitated. "I'm afraid she died from poisoning, my lord. She got into a laboratory and chewed on some metal flasks. There was nothing we could do."

"Ah." The Duke sighed, his eyes focusing on the floor in deep thought. "Oh, well."

"If I may, sir," I said after a pause, "why do you have an interest in aurumvoraxes?" Couldn't hurt to ask — I hoped.



Illustration by Jim Holloway

Duke Kaor looked up. The candlelight showed he had a faint, fat grin. "As you may or may not be aware, in two months time I am going to the royal court in celebration of 30 years of service to His Majesty. I have been personally invited, and His Highness intends to reward me for my loyalty and devotion. I thought it would be fitting to arrive wearing an aurumvorax cape. For the ego, you know."

I was horrified but didn't show it. Granted that the aurumvorax wasn't an animal you would usually call lovable, but . . . "Where does your lordship mean to find an aurumvorax?" I asked.

He stared at me, then shrugged. "I have been made aware of the existence of one of these creatures near my northern borders. I will personally lead an expedition to dispatch the beast in two weeks, and we will have the cape by the time I leave for the royal audience. Thank you for your time, Faulkenson. My men will show you the way out. Ah — one detail. I'm sure you can appreciate the contents of this room; thus, you may take any item you can spot in the candlelight as your reward." He rose from the chair, and his huge stomach jiggled as he walked toward a side door — probably to the larder. A burly guard reached for my arm.

"Your pardon, gracious sir," I asked hastily, "but how do you intend to kill your aurumvorax?"

He turned and smiled in the dim light. "With poisoned arrows. Why, Faulkenson,

you gave me the idea yourself."

I made a half-bow. "Sir, may I recommend leaving out gold with a coating of poison, then attacking the beast with clubs after it has finished its meal? An aurumvorax's fur is woven so that it resists the penetration of sharp objects, but blunt weapons easily crush its internal organs — and poisons, as I have learned to my sorrow, work swiftly on them."

Kaor the Toad looked astonished, then simply roared and shook with laughter. "Yes! My young man, that's an excellent idea! Superb! A plan worthy of a true mage." He looked around the dim room. "You may take two of whatever you wish." He left through the door, still chuckling.

"Thank you, good sir," I said as the door closed. I had spotted my payment the instant I had walked into the room. Moving behind the Duke's chair, I grasped the pair of objects that rested on the windowsill and placed them awkwardly beneath my cloak. A few minutes later, the guards showed me to a horse the Duke had set aside so I could return to Goodway. I kept up my look of awe and gratitude until I was safely away.

Then I spat to the side as I rode and smiled. "Good hunting, indeed," I whispered, and turned the horse northward.

Years ago, one of my instructors at the Academy had taken a dislike to Goldie and had tried to poison her. He was convinced that poison was the only way to kill her and escape detection; after all, who would

suspect a wizard of not using magic? He was caught, but the poisoning didn't stop; my mentor ordered it continued when he noticed that Goldie was immune to all forms of poison. Nothing slowed her down. Apparently the same internal chemistry that allowed her to use gold also made her immune to any normal toxin.

The Duke would also be in for a surprise when he went to kill that aurumvorax with a club at close quarters. Aurumvoraxes are so dense from the gold they eat that blunt weapons are of little use against them. Using the arrows, with or without poison, would have been a far better idea. A clubbing would only enrage the little beast — and the Duke would have to beg the mercy of the gods to save himself from the monster's fury. The Nine Hells have nothing like them. An old ranger told of an aurumvorax that had chased a mantichore and several wyverns from the hills it had adopted as its home. Another told me of an adolescent green dragon that tried to deprive an aurumvorax of a cave and lost its life.

Was I justified in lying to the Duke, leading him to his death? Aye, the Duke was not the most wicked of men, but his greed was legendary, and you were wise to count your fingers after you dealt with him. When the mood took him, he could be generous, as he had been tonight. He

could also have had me slain. He might still.

As the horse's hooves thundered toward the northern reaches of Kaor's territory, I pulled my two rewards closer beneath my cloak. I would be leaving the area with Duke Radford on the morrow, and wouldn't be back for two months, when my Duke would himself be honored by His Highness for his own service. By then—

The two massive candlesticks beneath my cloak were made from 15 pounds of pure, solid gold each. I laughed. Goldie was going to love them.

#### Other notes

The aurumvorax sometimes lives near the bottom of a shallow ravine, but usually chooses to dig a burrow or den in the side of a lightly wooded hill. It has eight legs, and is covered with golden fur about 3" long. Measuring 3' long and about 1½' high, the animal has copper-colored teeth and claws, the latter up to 3" long. Its whiskers and parts of its mane are bronze in color, and its eyes are pools of silver with golden pupils. The aurumvorax's flesh is extremely dense due to the intake and retention of gold, which accounts for its partial immunity to attacks by blunt weapons and its incredible weight. Other metals are absorbed into its system as well, but in lesser amounts.

A unique biochemistry grants the aurumvorax a high tolerance to heat and a total immunity to all poisons and gases. They are undamaged by small, normal fires, and magical fires cause only half damage. Likewise, they are surprisingly fast, strong, and tough, being able to drag their own weight in prey. The jaw muscles of the aurumvorax, being especially strong, are used to clamp on to a victim, and only death will loosen the grip.

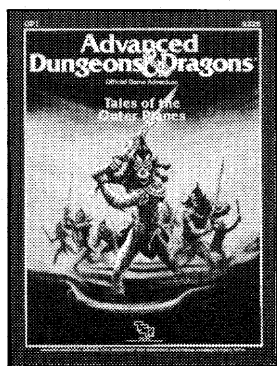
An aurumvorax typically defends its territory from all other comers, tolerating most other animals but wary of large predators and humans. Almost any animal, however, may be considered prey if it wanders within range. The lair itself often extends deep into solid rock, which can support the beast's incredible weight. Rock rich in gold ore is nearly always used as a lair, though other locations may be chosen so long as gold deposits, either natural or from a civilized area, are available.

Mating occurs roughly every eight years, resulting in a litter of 5-8 kittens, most of which die young because of the rarity of gold. Adults are sometimes forced to eat one or more of their young if gold-based nourishment is not available. Usually, only one or two kittens survive to adulthood. During the first year of life for the kittens, the mother will be bad tempered, attacking anything within sight that might represent a threat to her young. If a PC obtains a kitten before its eyes open, he may attempt to befriend it, the probability of which increases with the amount of food and gold given to the kitten. Without gold in the first three weeks of life, the kitten dies. Kittens can detect any form of gold instinctively and seek it out in addition to red meat. If raised as a pet and supplied with ample amounts of gold, food, and attention, kittens grow rapidly. Typically, an aurumvorax reaches full size in about seven years in the wild, but the time may be only a year in captivity with ideal conditions. Kittens raised in captivity grow into strong, fiercely loyal pets if conditions are ideal.

If killed and eaten, the flesh of the aurumvorax produces severe metal poisoning. The eater must save vs. poison 1d4 turns after the meat is eaten; a successful save means severe nausea and cramps strike the victim (as per a *symbol of pain*), lasting 2-8 hours. Failure to save indicates the victim goes into a coma and dies 10-60 rounds later. Only another aurumvorax may feast on one of its kind. If, on the other hand, the whole animal is roasted and the remains heated until everything burns off, 151-250 lbs. of gold and traces of other metals remain, depending on the size of the aurumvorax. In addition, if the pelt is carefully removed and tanned to preserve not only the hide but the gold-colored, metallic hair (the whole process typically costing 4,000-5,000 gp for the special procedure and materials), a durable but heavy garment may be made that has a value in excess of 15,000 gp.

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# ORCWARS



Designed by Bruce A. Heard

*The orcs are coming —  
and they're ready to party!*





nce upon a time, in a land of eternal warfare, a Lord of Chaos rose among his peers and ruled them all, becoming the greatest of their champions. He united hordes no one else could control, and soon his legions marched to crush the Fair Realms. That was his name, the very one who filled humans and elves with terror in the time of night. . . .

Ahem . . . or so the *orcs* tell it. This game is a humorous simulation of the Great Orc Wars, when the 10 Tribal Chiefs of the Known World attempted (in vain) to unite their humanoid hordes for control of the caravan routes and supremacy over the neighboring human and elven realms. From two to four players are required, each representing a Tribal Coalition. The playing time is about 2½ hours with four players.

## 1. Game Components

In addition to the materials provided in this magazine, you need two cups and a six-, eight-, and 20-sided die. Other components are explained below.

**Map:** The map in the center of this magazine depicts "The World According to Orcs." The Broken Lands are divided into 10 tribal lands at the center of the map. Caravan routes, in red, link major merchant centers. On the side of the map are Combat Result and Turn Sequence Tables, and boxes that indicate each chief's allegiances and strengths.

**Tribal Coalition Markers:** Four sets of markers indicate to which player the chiefs and the territories belong.

**Chiefs:** Each chief is a native of one particular territory. A chief is identified by color, name, and two numbers on his counter, which represents both that chief and his ferocious bodyguards (see "Chiefs").

**Hordes:** Each horde counter represents 100 armed warriors of a particular territory and race (goblins, gnolls, or

orcs of a particular tribe) according to the counter color (see "Levying Hordes").

**War Machines:** These are giant attack devices used in combat. These counters are identified by a "War Machine" label and a number in the upper right corner (see "War Machines").

**Fortresses:** These counters represent underground fortified caverns. They are identified by a cavern-mouth symbol and a number in the upper right corner (see "Fortresses").

**Caravans:** The white ½" counters are merchant caravans. The two letters on each counter indicate its starting point and destination on the caravan routes (see "Caravans").

**Gold:** The back of a gold counter shows a generic gold coin. The front indicates the value of the counter in **gold points** (each point representing a thousand individual gold pieces). See "Gold."

**Mines:** These counters are identified by a crossed shovel and pick (see "Mines").

**Spies:** Each of these counters can be recognized by the shady-looking character with cloak and dagger, the "Spy" label, and a number in the upper left corner (see "Spies").

**Shamans:** These counters are recognizable by the characters that each bear a staff and a "Shaman" label (see "Shamans").

## 2. Setting Up

Choose a set of Tribal Coalition Markers to represent each player. Put the ½" gold and caravan counters into one cup (the Gold Cup). Keep the chief counters aside and put the rest of the ¾" counters into the second cup (the Tribe Cup). All draws made from either cup are made without looking at the cup's contents, ensuring random selection.

Randomly pick one chief for each player and return others to the Tribe Cup, thoroughly mixing them with the other counters. Each player then picks five counters from the Tribe Cup, looks at them, and places them face down in front of him. This constitutes that player's Hand (his secret forces). The player may discard any number of counters in his Hand and trade them for an equal number of gold counters drawn randomly from the Gold Cup. Return all such traded counters to the Tribe Cup. Gold is placed face down in each player's Hand (forming his secret Treasure Hoard).

All caravans drawn at this time must now be placed on the map at their departure points (see "Caravans"). Keep drawing counters until all due gold is in Hand. You are now ready for ORCWARS!

## 3. Turn Sequence

On the initial turn, the player rolling the highest number on 1d20 plays first (high

ties should roll again). On subsequent turns, the player with the lowest total of Authority levels (found by adding up the chiefs' Authority levels of each coalition; see "Chiefs") decides who plays first. In case of a draw, the one with the lowest total of controlled territories and fortresses (see "Winning the Game") decides who plays first; otherwise, determine at random. Once the starting player is chosen, other players follow in clockwise order.

A Game Turn is played in three Phases: the Caravan Phase, the Tribal Phase, and the Trade Phase.

**A. Caravan Phase:** Move the caravans already placed on the map one space on the Caravan Tracks toward their destinations (see "Caravans"). Return caravans to the Gold Cup when they arrive at their destinations.

**B. Tribal Phase:** The first player performs all actions from steps B1 to B7. Each subsequent player repeats this sequence. Note that steps B3-B6 (marked with asterisks) are played in any order a player wants; however, all actions of one step must be performed at the same time. For example, a player could not levy hordes (B3), move (B4), then levy hordes again elsewhere (B3). He must levy all eligible counters at once, then move all of his armies, or vice versa.

**B1. New Caravans:** Place caravans held in Hand at their departure points on the map.

**B2. Reinforcements:** Draw counters from the Tribe Cup. A player automatically draws one counter each turn. He may also buy one extra counter per gold point, gaining up to four extra counters each turn (see "Gold"). Return all gold so spent to the Gold Cup, and place new counters face down in Hand. A coalition may not have more than 10 counters at the end of its turn (see step B7). A coalition with no chief on the map has the option of redrawing a completely new Hand of six counters and discarding the previous one entirely, instead of drawing just one counter.

**B3. Levying\*:** Place all eligible counters from a Hand on the map (see "Levying Hordes," "Fortresses," "Mines," "War Machines," and "Shamans").

**B4. Movement\*:** Move none, some, or all of the armies or chiefs on the map, then collect gold from armies and chiefs (see "Movement," "Gold," and "Transferring Gold").

**B5. Combat\*:** Resolve combats, capture chiefs and gold, and conduct diplomacy (see "Capturing Chiefs," "Combat," and "Caravans").

**B6. Treachery\*:** Reveal spies from a Hand to examine another player's Hand, steal gold or counters from a player's Hand, or attempt treachery (see "Spies").

**B7. Loot & Mine:** Collect gold from mines and place the gold on armies on a rampage (see "Gold," "Mines," and "Orcs on

*Playtesters:* Scott Haring, Karen Martin, Jon Pickens, and David C. Sutherland III  
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a Rampage"). Discard excess counters from Hand (see B2).

**C. Trade Phase:** All players with chiefs in adjacent territories may trade counters or gold from their Hands or trade control of territories.

## 4. Winning the Game

There are several ways to win an ORCWARS! game. Whenever one of the following victory conditions is achieved, the game ends and a winner is declared.

1. A Tribal Coalition with five or more chiefs on the board at the end of any Game Turn wins a political victory.
2. A Tribal Coalition wins a military victory by controlling 12 or more fortresses and/or territories at the end of any Game Turn.
3. A Tribal Coalition with 35 or more gold points in Hand at the end of any Game Turn wins an economic victory.

The chief with the most powerful army in the winning coalition then becomes the Overking. A new ruling era commences.

## 5. Chiefs

Chiefs are needed to levy hordes, build war machines, move them on the map, and conquer territories. Like hordes, chiefs are placed on the map during step B3 (see "Controlling Territories" and "Levying Hordes"). A chief with one or more hordes is called an **Army**.

To avoid confusion, place Tribal Coalition Markers in the Chief Boxes to show to whom the chiefs belong. Hordes can be left in a Chiefs Box when an army grows to an unwieldy number of counters. A chief may command an unlimited number of hordes.

A chief has two numbers printed on his counter. The first, in the upper left corner, is his **Authority** level (the brutish ability to command unruly hordes and other chiefs in his coalition; this number is also his Combat Strength). The other is his **Servility** level (a vile, subservient loyalty to his coalition and allied chiefs; this is also a talent for escaping trouble). When an Authority or Servility **Check** is called for, roll 1d8. If the die roll is equal to or lower than the indicated level, the check succeeds. A score of 8 is an automatic check failure.

## 6. Capturing Chiefs

When a chief is left without hordes in the presence of enemy hordes or any caravan at the end of a battle, he may be captured. A chief avoids capture by passing a Servility Check. If does, he retreats normally (see "Combat").

A captured chief stays with his captor until the end of combat (step B5). The

chief may then be ransomed to any player (i.e., sold to the highest bidder). Ransoms may involve paying gold, trading counters from one Hand to another, or trading control of territories and uncommanded hordes. If ransomed, the chief goes to his new owner's Hand. If capturing hordes are uncommanded or the captor has found no suitable ransom, the chief is then executed and returned to the Tribe Cup. The same chief may appear later in the game as a son or brother of the late chief.

If a caravan captured a chief, he remains with the caravan, which continues on its track until it reaches its destination. The chief is then executed and returned to the Tribe Cup. The player who destroys this caravan frees its prisoner and places it in his Hand.

## 7. Controlling Territories

Broken Lands territories (within the thick borderlines on the map) are the only areas that can be controlled; mines and fortresses can be placed there. The other territories on the map are sovereign nations under human or demi-human rule; these can only be raided (see "Orcs on a Rampage"). A coalition claims control over a territory by successfully placing a chief in it (see "Levying Hordes") or by conquering it in combat.

If a chief has not yet been placed on the map, his native territory is considered neutral unless another army or chief already captured it. If a player has the chief of a territory in Hand, he may reveal him on step B3 (along with corresponding native hordes in Hand) and claim that territory. The two cases described below apply only when the chief is placed on the map from the owner's Hand:

*Case 1:* If any neutral or uncommanded hordes of the same race are present, they automatically join the chiefs army. If there is an unoccupied fortress, the chief automatically takes it over.

*Case 2:* If an enemy chief, enemy army, or uncommanded hordes of another race are present, a battle occurs (see "Combat"). If these forces are in a fortress, the fortress's Combat Strength is totally negated since the new chief enters the fortress from below (he comes up from underground tunnels, surprising his foe).

## 8. Levying Hordes

Levying hordes consists of placing horde, chief, fortress, mine, shaman, or war-machine counters from their owners' Hands on the game map.

Chiefs and hordes can be placed only in their native territories. A chief must either be played simultaneously with the hordes or must already be present in the territory levied. For example, a player with an Orcish Chief in Trollhattan (Troll Territory) may reveal troll hordes from his Hand and

place them under the Orcish Chief (see "War Machines" and "Fortresses").

A chief cannot levy hordes in an enemy-occupied territory, unless he is placed on the map from a player's Hand (see "Controlling Territories"). If a chief with an army has moved overland to enter a territory, he must first defeat its original occupants in combat before he can levy more hordes.

A chief automatically takes over neutral or friendly uncommanded hordes if they are native to his territory. Taking over hordes of another race (even within the same Tribal Coalition) is a risky business, however. The player must first reveal all counters from his Hand that he wants to levy in a territory that turn. The chief then makes an Authority Check to convince the hordes to join his army. If he fails, the hordes show flagrant disobedience and treacherously attack him. If the chief and his army are destroyed or retreat, the territory becomes neutral, along with any surviving rebel hordes (see "Neutral Territories"); remove any Tribal Coalition Marker from this territory. If the rebels capture a chief, he is immediately executed.

## 9. Neutral Territories

Neutral territories are territories of the Broken Lands that are not controlled by any Tribal Coalition. Any single chief or army entering a neutral territory gains control over it and places a Tribal Marker there. If uncommanded hordes occupy a neutral territory, they must first be defeated in combat or rallied by a chief of the same race (see "Controlling Territories").

## 10. Movement

A horde cannot move without a chief. An army moves overland from one adjacent area to another each turn. Chiefs without hordes can each move at the rate of two unoccupied territories per turn. Rivers and other terrain features have no effect on movement.

A chief must stop and end his move to claim any unoccupied territory he enters; if he does not stop, territorial control is unaffected. An isolated chief crossing through an enemy-occupied territory must pass a Servility Check or be forced into battle (see "Combat"). A battle automatically takes place when an army enters an enemy-occupied territory. A chief may leave uncommanded hordes only within the Broken Lands.

All humanoid races are capable of moving underground through the maze of caverns and tunnels beneath the Broken Lands. This is a quick way to move from one area to another if the areas are not adjacent. Unfortunately, shifting grounds and labyrinths can cause underground expeditions to lose their way.

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# Dungeon

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An army or chief must be in a fortress to initiate underground movement. Roll 1d26. On a score of 20, the army dies a horrid death in a monstrous cave-in. On a 19, it is lost in an underground maze. Place that army in the "Lost in the Dark" box on the game map and roll again next turn on step B4. On any other score, the player's army (or chief) may be placed at any of his fortresses. If the player does not have any other fortress, the army then pops up in one of the numbered territories on the map (according to the 1d20 score), including its starting point. If the territory is occupied, the invaders must immediately attack. If the occupants have a fortress, its Combat Strength (see "Fortresses") is negated since the intruders entered through an unknown passage.

Any time a chief or an army carrying gold (see "Caravans" and "Orcs on a Rampage") enters a friendly territory, the gold is immediately returned to the player's Hand, face down.

## 11. Transferring Gold

Two or more friendly armies may end their move in the same territory. However, since humanoids are jealous, vain, and power-hungry, the transfer of any gold counter from one chief to another is not easy. The army receiving the gold must pass an Authority Check or be denied the transfer by the other chief; nothing may be transferred that turn. Transfers occur at the end of movement in step B4.

## 12. Multiple-Chief Operations

Two or more armies of the same Tribal Coalition may fight in the same territory. However, they can only be used in separate attacks, one after the other, because humanoid chiefs are notorious for their lack of cooperation and coordination. The player chooses which of the armies fights first. If that army is defeated, the remaining chief seizes any retreating hordes of the first army and has its chief deposed. (If the losing chief is dead, he is returned to the Tribe Cup.) The deposed chief returns to the owner's Hand, unless he fails a Servility Check — in which case he flees to the coalition with the lowest total of Authority levels, hoping to become a head honcho in a smaller clan; the losing chief is immediately placed in the other player's Hand. Seized hordes continue the battle under their new chief.

## 13. War Machines

Each war machine adds its Combat Strength (the number on its counter) to an attacking army's total Combat Strength. A war machine must be pulled by one horde to move. No more than one war machine

per horde can be present in an army. War machines can be left unmanned only in fortresses; they are otherwise lost to the Tribe Cup.

A war machine is placed on the map during step B3, under a chief in his native territory. An amount of gold equal to the war machine's Combat Strength must be spent in its construction. The chief and his army may then move normally with the war machine and attack other territories. War machines successfully used against an enemy fortress will destroy it (returning the fortress to the Tribe Cup). War machines used in a failed attack against a fortress are destroyed and are returned to the Tribe Cup. War machines cannot be used defensively. The player decides whether or not to use a war machine in an attack.

## 14. Fortresses

A fortress can be placed in any friendly territory during step B3; however, the owner must pay an amount of gold equal to the fortress's Combat Strength for its construction. Only one fortress can be built in a single territory. It cannot be built if potentially hostile hordes are also being levied that turn. A fortress allows underground movement (see "Movement").

A fortress has a permanent garrison that counts as an occupation force, and an individual Combat Strength (the number on the counter). It defends a territory against outside attacks. It does not offer protection against invaders moving underground (see "Movement") or rebellious hordes (see "Levying Hordes" and "Controlling Territories").

A fortress's Combat Strength is added to that of any hordes or individual chief in the territory. A chief in a fortress in his native territory gains a bonus of +1 on his Servility Checks; an outsider gains a bonus of +1 on his Authority Checks instead.

## 15. Combat

Combat occurs when an army (or an individual chief failing his Servility Check) enters an enemy-occupied territory. First, however, there's the question of loyalty.

**Code of Ethics:** If a player's army contains hordes of the same race as an enemy chief whom the army is fighting, the player's chief must make an Authority Check for each such horde prior to battle. Each failure causes the horde for which the check was made to join the enemy army. Ignore the Code of Ethics if chiefs of the same race are attacking each other. For example: a Gnoll Chief has goblin hordes in his army, and he fights the Queen of Goblins. He must succeed in an Authority Check for each of his goblin hordes or see them change sides.

When it is clear who fights on whose side, total the hordes' and chiefs' Combat

Strengths on both sides, adding eligible war machines and fortresses, if any. Compare both armies to find their Combat Ratio; fractions are always rounded up to the defender's advantage. Roll 1d6 and consult the Combat Table on the game map. Results are detailed below:

- A:** Combat results affect the attacker.
- D:** Combat results affect the defender.
- H:** Make an Authority Check for each horde in the army; those failing the checks are removed and placed in the Tribe Cup (the shameless creatures flee the battlefield, abandoning their chief). Uncommanded hordes automatically fail the check. A caravan drops two gold counters at random and flees two stops away on its track if any gold remains.
- K:** The army is destroyed, and the chief may be captured. A caravan is destroyed and its gold captured.
- N:** Make an Authority Check for each horde in the army that is not native to its chiefs homeland; those failing the check are removed and placed in the Tribe Cup. Uncommanded hordes automatically fail the check. A caravan drops one gold counter at random and flees one stop ahead on its track if any gold remains.
- R:** An army retreats to any unoccupied, adjacent territory (up to two areas away for individual chiefs). If no such territory is available, the army is destroyed and its chief is immediately captured. Uncommanded hordes are destroyed on a retreat and are returned to the Tribe Cup. If the retreating army defends a fortress, it must use underground movement to retreat. If it ends up in an enemy-occupied territory, it must immediately attack the territory's occupants (see "Fortresses"). A caravan flees to the next stop on its track; the attacker may either pursue it (if still in an unoccupied territory) and attack it again at -1, or end combat.
- S:** Hordes surrender and join opponent's army; the chief may be captured. A caravan is destroyed and all of its gold captured.
- X:** An exchange occurs. The smallest army is destroyed, its chief dying heroically in action. The larger army suffers a loss at least equal to the total Combat Strength of the smaller one. Remove an appropriate amount of gold from a caravan to the Gold Cup, if it is the larger force. The battle's survivor otherwise captures the gold. In both cases above, if the larger force does not have enough hordes to make up for the Exchange casualties, its chief also dies heroically during the battle (place all losses in the Tribe Cup).

**Notes on Retreat:** Whenever a defender survives an attack without retreating, the attacker must retreat. If only two enemy chiefs survive without any other horde, the attacker must then retreat (no one is captured). If combat





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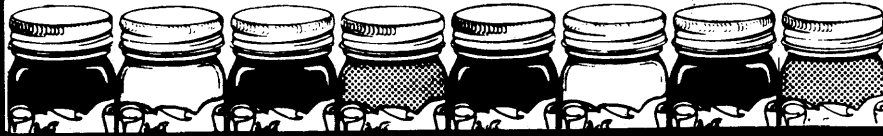
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occurs before movement, a retreat then counts as a move.

**Notes on Fortresses:** Authority Checks do not affect fortresses, although other hordes are normally affected. The Combat Strength of a fortress counts against exchange results, but it is not removed at the end of combat. A fortress is only captured on R, K, or S results; a chief always avoids capture on H or N results when defending a fortress.

## 16. Caravans

Caravans picked from the Gold Cup must be played on the player's next B1 step. (This represents his advance intelligence on caravan moves.) Caravan counters are obvious in a player's Hand since they are the only white pieces in the game; they are, however, kept face down in Hand.

A caravan moves one space per turn along its Caravan Track (the red lines on the map) until it reaches its destination or is raided. The letter on the upper left corner of a caravan counter shows its departure point, and the other letter its destination point (see map). Caravans never go backward.

If a caravan is attacked, pick a gold counter; the gold points value indicates the total number of gold counters the caravan carries. Pick extra gold counters from the Gold Cup to match that number. The caravan's total gold value, however, is also its Combat Strength. If several caravans happen to be on the same space, add up their Combat Strengths (treat them as one big caravan). If caravan counters are picked at this point, place them in the player's Hand (spies overheard caravan drivers talking about future expeditions) and draw until all needed gold counters are drawn (see "Gold").

Leave the gold under the caravan counter and resolve combat (see "Combat"). Once a caravan's Combat Value is known, the attacker *must* continue the battle. If the caravan is successfully raided or reaches its destination, return it to the Gold Cup. Caravans cannot be attacked in cities (the black city spaces on the track).

If the caravan is raided, captured gold remains face down on top of the victorious army. The army must return the gold on a later move to a friendly territory before the gold can be placed in the player's Hand; this gold cannot be used until then.

## 17. Gold

Gold counters have varying values. Whenever "gold" is mentioned, the total value of a gold counter is referred to. There is no change for gold counters; for example, if a player needs to build a fortress costing three gold and he only has one counter representing four gold, he must then

spend the whole counter with no cash back from the Gold Cup.

A Tribal Coalition's gold is called a Treasure Hoard. It is kept in the player's Hand, face down. Counters can be purchased from the Tribe Cup (but drawn at random) at the rate of one gold per counter. Gold counters that are spent are returned to the Gold Cup. Counters go to the player's Hand, face down.

Fools gold is worthless and used only to fool another player (see "Spies") during diplomacy dealings involving the collection of gold (step B4). Caravans with a "O" value are decoys; fools gold is nevertheless captured.

## 18. Mines

Mine counters can be placed on any friendly Broken Lands territory during step B3. Only one mine can be placed in any single territory. A mine earns its owner one gold counter on step B7 if a horde is present at that time to dig for it. This gold is immediately placed in the owner's Hand. Chiefs do not produce gold; only hordes do this. If a neutral territory has hordes and a mine, the gold remains on the map.

If the "mined" counter picked from the Gold Cup turns out to be a caravan, place it in the player's Hand (rumors of caravans spread fast, unfortunately sending miners on fruitless raids; the mine produces no gold that turn). If the caravan counter was picked for a neutral mine, place the caravan on the map immediately.

## 19. Spies

A spy can be used to steal a counter from an opponent's Hand, peek at the opponent's entire Hand, or attempt treachery. A spy counter can be revealed on step B6, but is not placed on the map. A spy counter is negated if the opponent also has a spy in Hand. Return spies to the Tribe Cup after use.

**Treachery:** A player may attempt to bribe an opposing chief with gold and the help of a spy. Treachery cannot be attempted against a coalition with only one chief — naturally, he thinks himself to be the grand master of his coalition and thus will not betray his own cause!

The total cost of treachery is equal to the chief's Servility level plus the spy's skill (the number on its counter). The chief then makes a Servility Check, with a penalty on the die roll equal to the spy's skill level. If the chief succeeds, he remains faithful to his coalition, and one gold counter from the bribe (a down payment) goes to his owner's Hand. The spy is then returned to the Tribe Cup.

If the chief failed his Servility Check, remove his previous Tribal Marker and replace it with the other player's. The territory he occupies and all his counters

now belong to the other coalition. Return the spy to Tribe Cup and all the gold to the Gold Cup. If another chief is present in the same territory, he and his army are immediately attacked by the traitor, as per normal combat procedures.

## 20. Shamans

A shaman is placed on the map under a chief in his native territory (one shaman per chief at most) during step B3. He always follows the winner of a battle in which he was involved, whether a defender repelling an attacker or an attacker capturing a territory ("I follow the wise voice of the One True Leader!"). If no victorious chief is there to be followed, the shaman then flees to a random territory using the rules for underground movement. He stays in his new territory until picked up by any visiting chief. Caravans never affect shamans.

A shaman gives a bonus of +1 on his chief's combat die rolls (for either defense or attack) and his chiefs Authority and Servility Checks. A shaman who ends up in a neutral territory adds his combat bonus to local neutral hordes, if any.

## 21. Orcs on a Rampage

Any army or chief may raid foreign lands. A chief collects a gold counter from looting on step B7 if in a foreign land (the territories around the Broken Lands). The army or chief must physically transport the gold back to a friendly territory. If the counter collected is a caravan, immediately place it in the player's Hand, face down (early intelligence on new caravans!) and draw again.

Each time an army raids foreign lands, its chief must make an Authority Check or be betrayed; in this case, an unruly horde deserts and returns home with a gold counter (both horde and counter are picked at random). If the army is entirely of the same race as its chief, a score of 5 or less on 1d8 is sufficient to pass this betrayal check.

If the player has a friendly territory, place the runaway horde directly in the player's Hand. If no friendly territory exists, return the horde to the Tribe Cup; stolen gold is lost. Armies may carry unlimited amounts of gold counters.

Chiefs without an army can go on a rampage (petty larceny in their case) but are limited to carrying one gold counter; they are immune to theft and desertion.

This game is based upon the Known World of the D&D® game, as outlined in the Gazetteer series; it will be re-released in the *Orcs of Thar* Gazetteer available this December. Enjoy your preview of a world in which the humanoids are the good guys, and humans are the enemy!

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# Arcane Lore

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## A walk on the wild side

Traditionally, druids have few combat-oriented spells. Their magic deals primarily with the control of natural forces and beings; these spells do not, however, reflect the natural state of things. In the wild, animals have teeth and claws used to fight for everyday survival, so it would seem natural that druids should have the ability to emulate the various attacks and defenses found in the wild. With such offensive spell capability, druids are placed back into the natural order of things and are better able to survive in the wild — naturally. All of the following spells, in addition to any other material components, require the use of holly leaves or similar holy material.

### Bat Sense (Alteration)

Created by: Tom Hazel

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M  
Range: Touch CT: 4 segments  
AE: 60' radius ST: None  
Duration: 3 turns +1 turn/level

**Explanation/Description:** When this spell is cast, it gives the person touched the echolocation powers of a bat. The person is able to “see” in all directions up to 60', sensing the physical shape and position of all solid and liquid objects. To use *bat sense* after casting the spell, the person must close his eyes; no concentration is required. No penalties of any kind occur in combat or movement while this sense is in effect.

While using *bat sense*, the person cannot be surprised and can “see” any *invisible*, *displaced*, or camouflaged item within 60'. Beings using psionic *invisibility* cannot be detected, however, as this is a true mind-control power and overrides any effects this spell has. *Mirror images* are not detected, at all; nor can the recipient detect illusions, *projected images*, clouds, gases, or insubstantial spirits such as ghosts. Thus, if such objects are capable of harm-

ing the recipient, he won't know what is attacking him until he opens his eyes, temporarily nullifying the spell's effects. Creatures which are insubstantial or gaseous in nature could thus attack the recipient at +4 to hit.

This spell works by picking up sound waves; a *silence 15' radius* spell will nullify the effect. Loud noises do not harm or hamper the recipient. Any creature using bat sense can determine the exact distance any object lies from him. The material component of the spell is a bit of fur from a bat's ear, which must be eaten by the being who wants to use the sense.

### Wild Deer Speed (Alteration)

Created by: Mike Rodgers

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 0 CT: 1 segment  
AE: Self ST: None  
Duration: 1 turn +1 round/level

**Explanation/Description:** A druid casting this spell gains the ability to run at great speed for the duration of the spell. The druid can move at a rate of 15" + 1" per level, without tiring from the effort. Any jumps made during such high speeds extend for 10' + 1' per level. Scrapings from the hooves of a fast herbivore (deer, antelope, etc.) are required.

### Lion's Claws (Alteration)

Created by: Mike Rodgers

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 0 CT: 1 segment  
AE: Self ST: None  
Duration: 1 round/level

**Explanation/Description:** The casting of this spell causes the druid's hands to temporarily develop short, thick claws, like those of a catlike carnivore. This allows the druid to make two attacks per round, doing 2-5 hp damage per set of claws, and allowing attacks against monsters struck only by magical weapons. The druid is still

able to manipulate objects while this spell is in effect and can cast spells as well. Scrapings from the claws of a carnivore, preferably a feline one, are required.

### Oxen Strength (Alteration)

Created by: Mike Rodgers

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 0 CT: 3 segments  
AE: Self ST: None  
Duration: 1 hour + 1 turn/level

**Explanation/Description:** After casting this spell, the druid temporarily gains a +1 to his strength score per level the druid possesses. Every 10% increment on the exceptional strength chart is considered to be a point of strength. The maximum strength that can be so gained is 18/00. Additionally, the druid gains an innate toughness that prevents muscle strain or physical injury from his exertions; thus, his unarmored armor class drops to 8, the equivalent of toughened leather. The component required is a bit of fur from a strong herbivore, such as an ox or buffalo.

### Bear Hug (Alteration)

Created by: Mike Rodgers

Level: 4 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 0 CT: 1 segment  
AE: Self ST: None  
Duration: 1 round/2 levels

**Explanation/Description:** As a bear can crush a victim in its arms, this spell allows the druid to make a crushing attack. Once the spell is cast, the druid may attempt to grab a target, with normal “to hit” chances as if using a weapon. A grabbed target takes 2-16 hp damage from crushing in that round and every round thereafter unless the spell ends, the druid is killed, or the *bear hug* is broken. To break free of a *bear hug*, a victim must roll his *bend bars/lift gates* strength ability; one such attempt is allowed each round, but the victim always takes damage before being able to break free in a round. While in a *bear hug*, a victim may make attacks at -2 to hit against the druid. If a druid is hugging a target while under the influence of a *viper's bite* spell (see below), he may attack the target with the bite at +2 to hit. Bear fur is the required component.

### Viper's Bite (Alteration)

Created by: Mike Rodgers

Level: 5 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 0 CT: 1 segment  
AE: Self ST: None  
Duration: 1 round/3 levels

**Explanation/Description:** This spell allows the druid to attack a nearby victim with a vicious bite of magic fangs. The bite does 1-4 hp damage on a normal “to hit” roll. Because the bite is magical, it can hit targets immune to normal weapons. While biting, the druid can make other attacks normally. The bite itself is poisonous, causing a victim to save vs. poison or die. A pair of viper's fangs are required as spell components. Ω

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by Keith Polster

Role-playing Events  
Coordinator

# The King of Conventions



## *A new era in gaming. . .*

The GEN CON® Game Fair begins its third decade this year by joining forces with the ORIGINS™ Strategy Game Fair, signaling the start of something new. Apart from a renewed emphasis on historical and miniatures gaming (from which the GEN CON Game Fair originally grew), efforts are being made to improve communications with and gain guidance from gamers and game manufacturers, to create a better and more service-oriented convention. We are laying the foundation for all future GEN CON Game Fairs, and we invite you to join us.

The GEN CON Game Fair has the reputation of being the adventure game fair, and rightfully so. Each year, we host hundreds of individual role-playing events as well as

several major tournaments. But if you have never attended a GEN CON Game Fair, you may not be aware of all that we offer, because of a lack of publicity covering past conventions.

We want to change that this year by bringing you a series of articles and bulletins from TSR, Inc., which will help you plan your sojourn to the greatest gaming convention of 1988. We also want to alert you to our special discount rates and encourage you to preregister for a full docket of activities at this year's convention.

We're also extending a special invitation to you to participate in running one of the spectacular events that entertain our attendees every year. If you think you are a good judge, here is your chance to show

your talent to other gamers from across the world. Only through the assistance of volunteers such as you are we able to bring you the kind of gaming convention you and your friends really want.

What sorts of events are we offering to start this "new era"?

To begin with, we feature the largest ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® national tournaments available today. We have the AD&D® Open Tournament (sponsored by the GEN CON Game Fair), celebrating its 13th birthday this year. This team-advancement event began at the GEN CON 9 Game Fair and entertains nearly 1,000 players every year. Players must compete in three grueling rounds with eight sessions of challenging adventures to capture the coveted title. In addition, we also host the Zef and Star tournaments, entertaining hundreds of players each — more than enough challenge for anyone. Finally, the RPGA™ Network, in conjunction with major game manufacturers, is sponsoring more than 36 national role-playing tournaments for games from all categories. The RPGA Network is dedicated to promoting excellence in role-playing games and has offered support and service to game companies throughout the industry — not just to TSR, Inc. We promote these tournaments throughout the year and look forward to expanding our focus and areas of interest in future years.

We are also creating a special program of introductory events to encourage those who aren't role-players to explore this exciting world of gaming. Skeptics have often been convinced to give role-playing a chance once they have experienced it for themselves. The latest releases in role-playing games (such as Games Workshop's WARHAMMER, GDW's TWILIGHT 2000™, and FASA's BATTLETECH® games) show us how close role-playing remains to strategy and miniatures gaming.

We are also proud to announce that this year the GEN CON Game Fair has turned to gamers and others in the hobby for guidance. Event coordinators with strong backgrounds in both gaming and retail sales are helping create the schedule of exciting events for this year's GEN CON/ORIGINS Game Fair. The staff is devoted to bringing a more personal approach to the convention, accepting ideas from veterans of gaming conventions.

We are on the brink of a new era. Come and be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime event. Volunteer your services as a judge or DM, or create and run your own events. Make this the biggest and best game convention ever! Just write to:

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See page 62 for more on the 1988 GEN CON/ORIGINS Game Fair.

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## ... With new beginnings and horizons

The GEN CON® and ORIGINS™ game conventions bring vivid pictures to every gamer's mind — visions of people attending numerous and different events covering the whole gamut of gaming. But this year is unique. The third decade of the GEN CON Game Fair is starting with a combined GEN CON/ORIGINS Game Fair, destined to usher in new horizons for conventions to come.

Starting this year, miniatures games will play a much larger part in GEN CON Game Fairs. Miniatures wargames are one of the most interesting events at conventions, and are easily learned and played by anyone. Great battles rage over the ownership of castles, small villages, or hillocks. Victory hinges on the fortunes of a few troops or thousands of soldiers. Civil War cannons fire grapeshot on one table next to a table where a few ancient Greeks hold a

bridge against an overwhelming force. Indians attack calvary as starships fight in interstellar space, and small squads of men from many different time periods fight for their survival.

The 1988 GEN CON/ORIGINS Game Fair format has been much expanded, as outlined on page 56 of DRAGON® issue #130. The miniatures-gaming area has grown, as we have included another 12,000 square feet devoted primarily to tournament play. These proposed tournaments cover a span of history from Ancients to American Civil War and beyond. Competition is fierce, as these tournaments are to miniatures players what the RPGA™ Network Open is to role-playing gamers.

Fantasy battles and science-fiction miniatures events are not only welcomed but encouraged. The scenarios are bounded only by your imagination.

### Miniatures Events Coordinator

In addition to the added battle space, we are also expanding the miniatures painting contests. The new categories include: Ancients (up to A.D. 1400); A.D. 1400-1900 (with gunpowder and flashy uniforms predominating); A.D. 1900 to the present; and futuristic. Categories also exist for dioramas in each of these time periods, in addition to our regular hero, monster, and diorama categories.

The best news is that we don't intend to let all this progress vanish after this year. We are preparing to operate on this scale at every GEN CON Game Fair from now on, to provide you with the most value for your money. We need your events, and we need you as players so our judges haven't worked for nothing!

Be a part of the action for all ages, young and old. Get into miniatures, expand your horizons as we've expanded ours, and get the most for your convention dollars. If you need judges' forms or have question or problems, write to us at:

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We will bring you more information as it becomes available. Good luck and good gaming!

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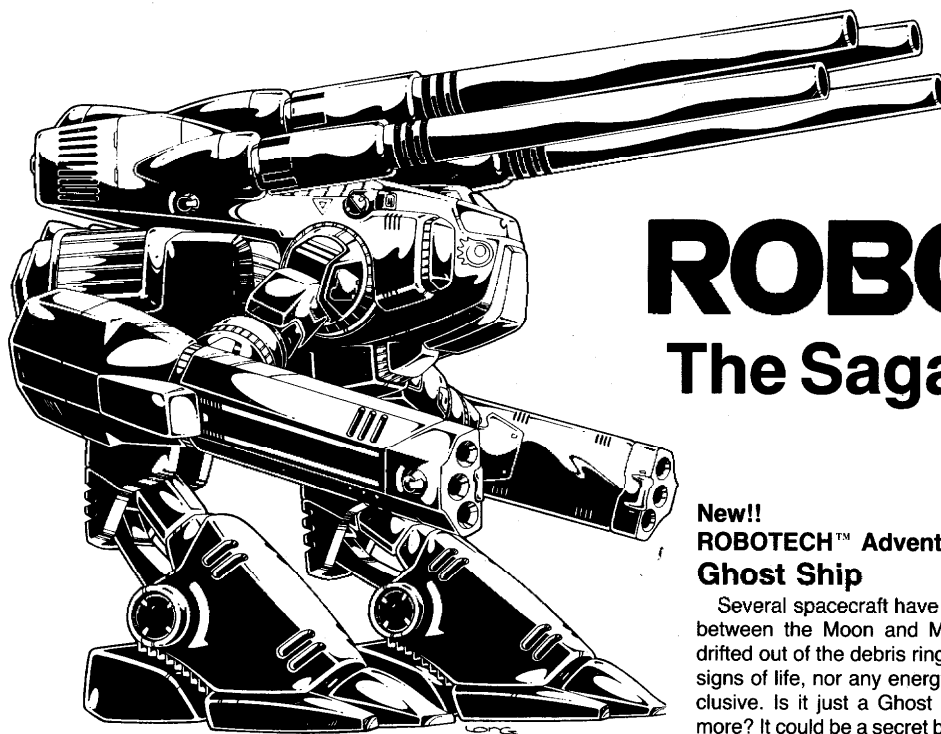
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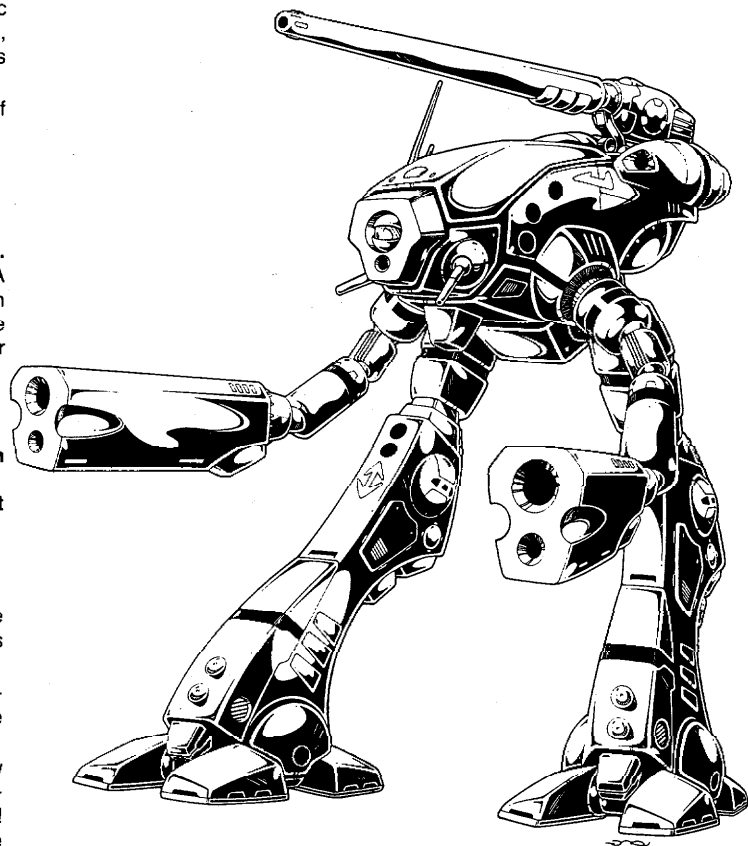
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# Cash & Carry, Gamma Style

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## *Economic wheels still turn in GAMMA WORLD® games*

When a GM invents a scenario for a GAMMA WORLD® game adventure, there is a good chance that the quest will in some way involve the economic environment. If the scenario is set in a city or town, it's especially hard to conceive of a plot that wouldn't involve economics in some way. Many characters stop at a town market at least once every few adventures to buy food, extra arrows, new weapons, more oil, or better shields, laying down their domars or gold and picking up the supplies. Sometimes, too, the characters are paid to investigate some ruins or rescue a valuable person or item.

But there are flaws in the assumptions governing the game's economic system. On page 22 of the second-edition GAMMA WORLD Adventure Booklet, the economic

system is described as similar to that of the American West in the 1800s. But there are many significant differences between these two environments. Although the Old West could be a hostile place (where terrain, climate, and outlaws were concerned), it was many times safer than the GAMMA WORLD game's environment, where deadly hazards abound. Given the dangers of radiation and biogenetic toxins, secret groups dedicated to controlling or destroying the planet, man-eating plants that sneak up on characters when they least expect it, flying warbots that coordinate 42 weapons at once, and giant lizards capable of emitting sonic blasts so loud that they cause physical injury, the 25th century is unpleasant indeed. What does this have to do with the economy? Plenty!

---

### **Fiefs and towns**

As one might imagine, there are certain things in the GAMMA WORLD game world that are much more important than domars or gold pieces. In a world where biogenetic poisons and radiation are commonplace dangers, it is right to assume that things such as good food and pure water would be so scarce that civilians would order the local militia to get its hands on these necessities at all costs. It is also reasonable to assume that such necessities would actually be used in barter by a great number of people.

Unlike the Old West, where there were big cities within reasonable distances and where food could be bought with money if necessary, few such big cities exist in the 25th century, and good food is often hard to find. It is possible that in many places, coinage and precious metals are almost worthless. Characters may want to spend

more time finding pure springs and operational food-production plants than they spend looking for old banks or cash registers. This leads to more realistic exchanges between characters and townspeople: "Okay, we'll make it 50 kilos of pure water and the location of the fruit trees for the powered assault armor, *if* you throw in the vibro blade."

Additionally, the Adventure Booklet states: "Some communities practice tribal communism and many Tech Level II cultures are Feudal in nature (divided into classes, some of which are tied to the land)." Feudalism seems to be a good choice of government if the people can find fertile land that bears edible food. If the GM wants to use feudalism in his campaign, it is recommended for realism's sake that he makes sure that the overlord keeps a firm military grip on the peasants

and a close eye on all who wish to pass into his domain, since such feudal communities would be targets for raiders, animals, and refugees.

In such a world, most communities would be very careful with food and water since both outsiders and local citizens themselves would be out to steal it. Food would probably be rationed out to all citizens equally, and heavily armed militiamen would stand guard over the supplies, with orders to kill thieves.

Nearly every town should be on some waterway, lake, or coastal area. The GM may also want to have a few communities lie on fairly decent roadways (not that there should be many left). The reasons are simple. Very few towns will be blessed with good soil or a fresh spring; those towns that are will be the strongest. Smaller, weaker communities thus need something to offer in exchange for food and water. While holding strategic military positions and vowing loyalty to a rich town in return for food are possibilities, other towns may resort to claiming part of a trade route and charging tolls to all those who wish to pass. Transportation and communication routes (waterways and clear highways) will become invaluable bargaining chips, and water sources of any kind are necessities.

Some towns might evolve into bandit communities, kidnapping victims for food ransoms or looting from passersby and their neighbors. Search teams could be sent by other towns to look for old artifacts to use in bargaining. Political marriages, offers of useful information, yearly gifts to the leaders of rich towns, and oaths of fealty are possible options. Poor communities could unite against a rich community in guerilla warfare.

A few isolated towns might be controlled by Cybernetic Installations. These well-defended places would be home to people who had lived there before the holocaust, their way of life more or less preserved through the years. As these communities will be much like the lost Ancient societies, Restorationists would be highly interested in them. However, the CIs that control these areas may be very isolationist in nature, believing that is the best way to survive.

A town serving as a Cryptic Alliance base will be interested in helping only those who support its cause or give food to its people. At other times, a valuable resource could be owned or guarded by a creature or group of creatures who work for the town or must be bribed to allow the resource's use by others.

Towns also have the ever-present problem of the infamous black market, which can be very influential in a town's survival. Since most town governments try to control the sales of goods so they can take a percentage of the profits to fund their military or necessary construction, they are opposed to black marketeers who get their goods from unknown sources and

sell those goods in secret. Most town governments will have undercover agents looking for black marketers and smugglers, with PCs on either side. The black market may get goods from hidden stores, wells, or food plants, or from thieves and bandits who fence their goods to the marketers in exchange for other services. Sometimes the black market's operatives aid rebels by gunrunning, if they feel the rebels' government will be more favorable to them than the current one.

Over 90% of a town's population will not be blessed with either luxuries or leisure time. Citizens will be busy farming, hunting, gathering, fighting, and transporting cargo. Only very rich leaders who do not have to worry about getting food and water will ever have luxuries; the leisure time of such people is usually spent plotting out ways to gain more power. Public entertainment almost always exists, however. If a community is warlike, public executions and death duels may be common. Some towns might have sporting events or primitive forms of drama. There may be an old movie theatre in the center of town where the people can be entertained when power is available. Whatever PCs can do to support these amusements is bound to win allies and favors for them; they merely supply what the public demands.

#### The economic mutant

Resources are critical to PCs. If a character needs a certain piece of information or equipment, he could very well get his hands on a vital resource and barter it for what he needs. Why dig through old ruins when you can get someone to do it for you? Indeed, some NPCs may take control of a resource simply to have insurance against assault. If a powerful NPC with numerous weapons decides to retire, he could take over a spring and give water to the locals in return for peace and quiet.

In like manner, characters can raise their status levels by handing over certain resources to the community. If a character uncovers a nearby food-production plant and gives control of it to his community, this could well be worth over two ranks! Of course, smaller status awards would be given if all the character found were a few fruit-tree seeds or a herd of milk-giving animals. The awards should be modified according to just how much the community is in need of the resource found.

Still other things can be used by characters as barter or currency besides coinage. Medicine would be invaluable to a community suffering from a plague or having an ill ruler, for example. Another good idea for NPCs or PCs who wish to receive favors from nearby villages is to find and activate certain pieces of fixed equipment, especially life chambers, rejuvenation chambers, and broadcast power stations. Weapons and armor are primary tools for defense; although these should be secondary in value to food and water, they should be

much in demand by town militias, who would willingly trade for (or steal) them.

The profession of fighting is barter in itself for PCs. Though many communities have a militia to defend their homes, the weaker ones would value anyone capable of fighting or going on special military missions. Mercenary PCs (a la The Seven Samurai) might find endless employment.

If characters have no particular home town or are very far from civilization, and they are not members of any of the nearby Cryptic Alliances, then they should be encouraged to donate to or serve a community for the sake of having a safe place to sleep. Camping out in the radioactive, mutant-infested wilderness is not one of the safer things that characters can do, and a string of friendly cities is an excellent trail to leave behind.

Although it is an important part of being powerful, food and water are not the only necessities. All towns need defenses, and weak communities can achieve this by giving out food and water for weapons and armor while using their influence to cause surrounding towns to defend them in times of war. Some communities, usually those with few neighbors or situated near a great threat, might get powerful mutants or warriors to live nearby and defend them in return for food and shelter. In addition to having PCs hire on as mercenaries for the town, this situation

poses interesting adventure plots for charismatic PCs to find and tame dangerous monsters or recruit combat veterans.

#### Concluding thoughts

The GAMMA WORLD game should place more emphasis on the economic actions of the characters and the various communities in the area. In this way, the world is made more consistent and realistic. Characters soon get the feel of a post-holocaust economy, and their actions will show it. Once you've established a few communities as economic powerhouses and the rest as their dependents, all sorts of economic and political scenarios appear in which the characters may be caught.

It is important to determine the community types from which characters hail. If you like having characters deal on the black market, make alliances between their city and others, or fight other communities for resources, then you should have the characters be members of a small, weak community. If you like the idea of the characters trying to catch black marketers and defeat bandits while trying to suppress rebellious communities, you should make the characters members of one of the stronger communities. Whichever you choose, using economic strategy in the GAMMA WORLD game can improve the quality of play and the role-playing aspect of the game enormously. Ω

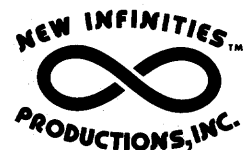
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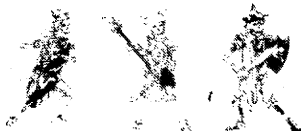
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# TSR PREVIEW

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## PRODUCTS FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH

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### The Elves of Alfheim

D&D® Gazetteer

by Steve Perrin and Anders Swenson

This Gazetteer details the cities, governments, people, and customs of Alfheim, nation of the Elves, and also offers several exciting and challenging adventures for role-playing in this land.

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### FR3 Empires of the Sands

AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS™

accessory

by Scott Haring

This sourcebook features rich and detailed information to expand the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ adventure setting. It describes the lands of Amn, Tethyr and Calimshan. The two large four-color maps that are included with this accessory are compatible with the other maps in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ series.

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## NEW PRODUCTS FOR APRIL

### OP1 Tales of the Outer Planes

AD&D® game adventure anthology  
by TSR Staff

The perfect accessory for the AD&D® *Manual of the Planes*, this 96-page collection of short adventures assists the DM in taking player characters to new worlds far beyond any in which they've traveled before. For characters of all levels.

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SNIPER™ Adventure Gamebook #5  
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by Jon Slobins

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# A Little Less Super



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*Variable creation points in  
DC™ HEROES games*

Illustration by Richard Bennett



There's only one aspect of Mayfair's DC™ HEROES game that disturbs me: the idea of unlimited growth. Using the game's rules, you can start with 250 Hero Points when you create a character, then build him up indefinitely. Granted, a comic-book universe is not supposed to function like the real universe, but it's stretching things a little too far when the rules let a 98-pound super-heroic weakling grow through his adventures to eventually rival Superman™ at 41,000 + Hero Points! Unlimited growth works fine for a game like the D&D® game, in which power grows linearly, but the DC HEROES game measures power *logarithmically*; each one-step increase in power level doubles the amount of power existing before. The drawback to unlimited growth is that you wind up watching every Hero Point with an eye to increasing your character's powers still further, which can make you reluctant to use Hero Points when they're needed — which can lead to the death of your character through miscalculation.

The game rules say that if you want to begin with a more powerful character, have everyone in the group multiply the base 250 Hero Points by 2 or 3 (or some other integer), and start with that. But this method ignores the possibilities arising from different characters starting at different levels. Sometimes it's more fun to be the weakest character because you have more reason to learn how to use your powers effectively in order to keep up with the powerhouses. The D&D game achieves this by its use of dice to determine a character's starting attributes.

For players who would rather take the risk in starting with a randomly selected number of Hero Points, or who don't want unlimited growth in their DC HEROES game campaign, the following Origin Table is presented. A player rolls percentile dice, generating a random number from 1-100. The table row that contains the percentile-dice result (1d100) also contains an optional origin background result for use by players who have a hard time thinking up origins for their characters, as well as giving the "Additional Hero Points" result. All characters still begin with a base Hero Point amount of 250 Hero Points, but the additional Hero Points resulting from the 1d100 roll on the Origin Table are added to the 250 points.

Normally, a player makes only one roll on the table to try to get more Hero Points. But the origin-background result that reads "Multi-origin" means that the player rolls 1d10 to determine the number of additional rolls he receives on the table. If another multi-origin result comes up, more rolls are allowed, racking up still more Hero Points for the character (this is how heroes like Superman come about).

*Example:* A player rolls a 22, which renders a result of "Multi-origin." He gets a 3 on the die roll and receives three rolls

on the table. The first roll is an 87 for 1,100 points. The second roll is an 18 for another multi-origin. The player then rolls 1d10 for 2, resulting in two more rolls *plus* the roll he still has remaining from the original multi-origin roll; in other words, a total of three more rolls (unless he gets another multi-origin result). The player now rolls 27, for 50 points; a 45 for 5,000 points, and a 92 for 2,000 points. He adds all these points to his base of 250 Hero Points for 8,400 Hero Points to use in creating his character.

The "Unexplained origin (minor)" result has the player roll 1d10 and multiply the result by 10 to yield the number of Hero Points won. The "Unexplained origin (major)" result has the player roll 2d10 and

become the mightiest hero in the universe) and a scientific origin (due to Krypton's advanced civilization). Cyborg™ has a personal-injury origin and a scientific origin. Dr. Fate™ has an archaeological origin; and Zatanna™ has a mystic-heritage origin. Batman™ is a crime victim, while Plastic Man™ has an industrial-accident and a serendipitous-origin.

Because new characters start out with more Hero Points for their creation than those afforded by the regular rules, and in order to limit their growth to more realistic levels, certain limitations apply when heroes are created using the Origin Table. First, all attributes, powers, and skills that are bought at a level higher than zero may not be raised to more than 6 APs beyond

**DC™ HEROES Game Origin Table**

1d100	Origin background	Additional Hero Points
01-07	No extraordinary origin	—
08-11	Unexplained origin (minor)	1d10 x 10
12-15	Unexplained origin (major)	2d10 x 100
16-23	Multi-origin (roll 1d10 times)	—
24-27	Crime victim (minor)	50
28-31	Crime victim (major)	1,000
32-35	Mutation (minor)	250
36-39	Mutation (major)	800
40-43	"Chosen One" (minor)	400
44-47	"Chosen One" (major)	5,000
48-51	Archaeological origin (minor)	70
52-55	Archaeological origin (major)	1,900
56-59	Personal injury (minor)	85
60-63	Personal injury (major)	1,300
64-67	Serendipitous origin (minor)	300
68-71	Serendipitous origin (major)	1,500
72-75	Industrial accident (minor)	75
76-79	Industrial accident (major)	1,200
80-83	Scientific origin (minor)	150
84-87	Scientific origin (major)	1,100
88-91	Mystic heritage (minor)	200
92-95	Mystic heritage (major)	2,000
96-98	Other-world origin (minor)	500
99-00	Other-world origin (major)	10,000

total the results, then multiply the sum by 100 to get the number of Hero Points won.

As noted above, you can use the origin background listed to come up with a personal history of your character, although you are not bound by the result from the table. If you want an alien as a hero, you don't have to have a result of "Other-world origin" from your 1d100 roll. Origin backgrounds are intended to prompt creativity when needed.

By way of example, here are several origins. Superman™ has an other-world origin (his home planet is Krypton™), a "chosen one" origin (it's been pointed out in the comics that it was his destiny to

the level at which they start. Second, powers and skills may be purchased at level zero as latent powers or skills to be increased later. These powers or skills may not be raised above 6 APs. No latent powers or skills may be bought later.

In using the Origin Table, GMs may wish to adopt a method from the AD&D® game's character-creation system. You may allow each player three attempts to generate a character's Origin Hero Points from the table, allowing him to use the highest resulting point total. This method makes it less likely that a player will feel cheated by the dice.

by Jeff Grubb

**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SUPER-HEROES**

Jeff Rovin

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**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SUPER VILLAINS**

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Anyone hoping to create a complete, definitive text on superpowered heroes is building a house on shifting sand. The nature of the comic-book world, with current heroes changing, resigning, dying, and having their histories rewritten precludes the existence of any long-standing handbook which will remain accurate for any length of time.

With that in mind, Jeff Rovin's achievements in producing *The Encyclopedia of Superheroes* (first published in 1985) and the recently released *The Encyclopedia of Super Villains* are simply outstanding.

Rovin has not created completely definitive works, but he has created a usable, fun, massive, and enjoyable pair of texts which are well worth their hefty prices.

Of the two, *The Encyclopedia of Superheroes* is my personal favorite, running the gamut from the funny-book heroes (Superman<sup>TM1</sup> and Spider-Man<sup>TM2</sup>) to the heroes of the pulps (Doc Savage and G-8), cartoons (Roger Ramjet and Fearless Fly), and legend and literature (Heracles and Tarzan). Some of my personal favorites, like Buck Rogers and Dangermouse (a British secret-agent cartoon mouse) are missing, but this is a small quibble; there is a lot here.

Each entry details a hero's alter ego, first appearance, occupation, costume, tools, weapons, and biography, finishing off with a quote to show the hero at his or her best (one of the better ones: "Have a souvenir hunk of the door you thought I lay dead behind," says Lightning). The entries are entertaining and enjoyable. The modern material already appears dated in the fast-moving world of comic books, but there is a wealth of material on many heroes of the 1940s and 1950s who have never been seen since, their companies having quietly

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# Superheroes Alive!



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folded in the passage of time.

Almost as good as the above is *The Encyclopedia of Super Villains*. I say "almost" because it has a major flaw in organization. Villains by their nature are hard to track and get information on as they usually don't have their own regular comics. Rovin lumps large numbers of rogues together without break under the comments section for the first such villain a hero encounters. The robotic Dreadnoughts™<sup>2</sup>, the Spider Slayers™<sup>2</sup>, and the deadly Kingpin of Crime™<sup>2</sup> (a foe of Spider-Man and Daredevil™<sup>2</sup>) are all found under an entry for the Answer™<sup>2</sup>, a minor foe who lasted four issues. Similarly, a large Superman rogue's gallery appears in the commentary under Admiral Cerebus™<sup>1</sup>, another minor foe of the Man of Steel™<sup>1</sup>. This information is good as an attempt at completeness, but it does not jibe fully with the rest of the entry. Perhaps it would have served better as an appendix.

The second book also seems littered with small mistakes. A reference to Cobra's™<sup>2</sup> partner, Mr. Hyde™<sup>2</sup>, sends the browser to a full entry on Robert Louis Stevenson's classic and original creature, with nary a mention of the Marvel character. Armadillo's™<sup>2</sup> wife is named Bonita, not Maria. Reed Richards™<sup>2</sup> did not invent the Ultimate Nullifier. These are minor points, however, which do not detract from the book being a definitive, if not complete, text of the supervillain population.

Both books are massive, with a minimum of interior art except for large color-plate sections. Most of the art is devoted to the less well-known members of the superhero and supervillain contingent, and includes a lot of characters who might otherwise have been forgotten. In terms of presenting superpower mechanics for developing characters for the various excellent superhero role-playing games on the market, both books are okay as starting points, though they do not go into sufficient detail on superpowers, abilities, and personalities to allow you to create complete comic-book characters based upon them. The entries do give a basic idea of what the heroes and villains are like, as well as their earliest appearances.

If you are interested in superheroes, Rovin's text is the best volume on this diverse subject. The supervillain text is less pleasing but is still an enjoyable and entertaining book.

### **SUPERMAN®<sup>1</sup> AT FIFTY: The Persistence of a Legend**

**edited by Dennis Dooley and Gary Engle**  
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Superman, the creation of Cleveland schoolboys Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, is turning 50, and the papers have been full of stories on the Man of Steel and the changes made in him..

*Superman at Fifty* chronicles the impact the Man of Steel has made on us over the

course of his career. This isn't a detailed listing of every punch he ever threw, every date he ever missed with Lois Lane™<sup>1</sup>, or every villain who waded into Metropolis™<sup>1</sup> with his latest doomsday device. Rather, this is a book about our perceptions of Superman, from his creation to present-day rebirth. Dooley starts the ball rolling with Siegel and Shuster's story of Supes' evolution into the figure lifting the car on the cover of *Action Comics #1*. Longtime Superman artist Curt Swan and editor Denny O'Neil add their voices to the evolution of the cultural hero and show the progression of Supes out of the comic books and into the American psyche.

The second part of the book looks at those effects in detail, as contributors offer their ideas on how and why Superman became one of the most identifiable pieces of modern American folk history. The essays range from pop to psychological in thinking as they examine the folk background and times of Superman and his creators. All are intriguing, adding new lines and shading to the picture of the Man of Steel.

The last section is my favorite, being a collection of short and wonderfully silly pieces on Superman and his mythos, including things like Krypto's breed, Superman's astrological sign, and who Supes would probably have voted for in the elections (the last by a former mayor of Cleveland). These little bits offset the serious tone of the earlier sections and serve as a rewarding dessert.

In short, *Superman at Fifty* is an excellent birthday present to the hero from Krypton™<sup>1</sup>. Here's to the next 50 years.

### **ACES HIGH**

**edited by George R.R. Martin**  
**Bantam Spectra 0-563-26464-8 \$3.95**

### **JOKERS WILD**

**edited by George R.R. Martin**  
**Bantam Spectra 0-553-26699-3 \$3.95**

These are the second and third of the Wild Cards series edited by George R.R. Martin. [*The first book, Wild Cards, was reviewed by John C. Bunnell in issue #121; Aces High was briefly reviewed in issue #125.*] For those who tuned in late, here's the premise of the series: Shortly after World War II, the nonsuper but incredibly brave war hero Jet Boy battled an insane opponent who had found an alien virus that was sent to Earth to be tested on our unsuspecting population. In the midst of their battle in a blimp high over Manhattan, the bomb went off, dusting the planet with the Wild Card Virus. The virus caused a large portion of the population to seriously mutate, creating a world of superpowered individuals. Those whose powers are beneficial are Aces; those who were twisted by the virus are Jokers.

In the first book in this series, the contributors followed the history of the world

with its new, powerful minority groups. McCarthyism still occurs, as do the Vietnam war and the Civil Rights marches of the 1960s. However, Aces, not Hollywood writers, are on trial; Jokers are sent to Southeast Asian jungles; and, the Joker Liberation Front joins the rebellions, seeking to break out of Jokertown at the lower tip of Manhattan. What do you do for an encore?

The second book, *Aces High*, takes place entirely in the present, losing some of the epic sweep of time that the first book possessed. It adds an alien invasion and an Egyptian-based evil cult of agents and superagents, all battling for control of a device to repel the invasion. Earth has its Aces for protection, and its own alien advisor, Doctor Tachyon, who was responsible for bringing the Wild Card bug to Earth 40 years previously. It's an epic crafted by many hands, building to the final conflict with the alien creatures and the destruction of the cult's main base in New York's Cloisters.

*Jokers Wild* consists not of separate stories, but of pieces of various tales that all flow together, like an episode of *Hill Street Blues*, into a single continuous story. World War III takes place in the span of a single day, the 40th anniversary of Wild Card Day, the Mardi Gras of this strange new world. In the course of the day, deadly games are played as the master of the cult from Book II effects his revenge, while crimelords and Joker-enhanced gangs battle for a book which passes through everyone's hands at one point or another. The tale catches the flow of the city and its celebration in one 24-hour period.

Throughout these books, it is the characters who make the entire idea work. This is no world of super-suited heroes. Doctor Tachyon, the alien, is a borderline drunk ashamed of his people's actions against Earth. The Great and Powerful Turtle is a telekinetic who is never seen outside his shell made of wrecked cars. Fatman controls weight, but rather than engaging in crime-fighting, he runs a ritzy restaurant at the top of the Empire State Building. Fortunato is a pimp who draws his power from tantric sex. And there is probably one of the scuzziest villains I've ever met, named Spector, who can kill with a glance (any similarity between this character and my boss, Warren, is apparently intended).

Now, these books are *not* comics. They are *not* for young kids, and they are peppered with extreme violence and graphic sex, sometimes overdone. For this reason only, I'd question the wisdom of setting up a "Wild Cards" campaign, using your favorite RPG rules, unless you're dealing with a mature audience. If you'd think twice before walking through Times Square in modern-day New York, you may be offended and should just give these a pass. If not, you'll find these to be part of a wonderful shared-world series that is highly recommended.

by Mike Lane

# The Frontiers of Design

Many STAR FRONTIERS® game players have problems when it comes to designing nonstandard military ships for use with the Knight Hawks board game and, as I can testify, it becomes rather nerve-racking to be constantly asked "How many laser batteries can I put on this minelayer? Well, then, how many rocket battery salvos can it carry? Well, then. . ." and so on. Over many hours and some calculator thumping, a system that pleased everyone in my gaming group was generated. This system creates starships compatible with (if a little tougher than) those given in the board-game rules. The new ships also have a great variability in weaponry, which can make even a simple assault-scout duel quite interesting.

The following sections deal with the shipbuilding formulas and overall system in depth. Tables 1-6 give details on the items discussed below.

## Hull points and DCR

A civilian ship's hull points and DCR (Damage Control Rating) are determined as per the Knight Hawks rule book — i.e., hull size x 5 = hull points; (hull size x 3) + 20 = DCR. Military and Star Law ships multiply hull size by 10 to determine hull points and by 9 to determine DCR. The greater values generated show the toughness and technical superiority of the secret military hardware over the civilian/militia equipment, and result in fewer attacking ships being vaporized in the "Defensive Fire" phase of combat.

## Weaponry and defenses

All weapons and defenses on a ship are placed according to the amount of space they occupy in cubic meters, as per the statistics on page 61 of the Knight Hawks game rules, rather than using the MHS (Minimum Hull Size) method. The MHS is still used as a measure of how many weapons of one type may be mounted on a certain hull.

The maximum number of each type of weapon on a ship may not exceed the hull-size rating divided by the MHS of that weapon system. However, any ship with the necessary space may mount any one weapon despite its MHS. (Yes, you can have an assault scout with a laser canon!)

Defenses are also bought by the cubic meter, though no ship of less than hull size 5 can mount a powered defense screen because of the screen's heavy energy demands, which require the larger "B" engines.

The cubic meters of space for each hull size is determined by a decreasing percentage scale, with figures rounded to the nearest useful amount. This effectively reduces the free space on a battleship to about 1.6%, as compared to a fighter's 97%, which reflects the squeeze on space as life-support systems, crew quarters, storage areas, and so forth expand with ship size and potential patrol duration.

*A new shipbuilding system for the  
STAR FRONTIERS® game*

**Table 1**  
**Space Available by Hull Size\***

Hull size	Military ships	Civilian ships
1	30	20
2	50	30
3	75	40
4	100	50
5	175	90
6	250	125
7	300	150
8	350	175
9	400	200
10	450	225
11	500	250
12	550	275
13	600	300
14	700	350
15	800	400
16	900	450
17	1000	500
18	1100	550
19	1200	600
20	1300	650

\* All space is in cubic meters.

It should be noted that noncombat ships such as freighters, research vessels, liners, and the like have only 40% of the space listed, since their primary functions demand nearly all available space. This is not to say that there could not be small-capacity, heavily armed liners used to move VIPs; this simply means that such ships would not be self-sufficient and would thus be very rare.

#### Weapon magazines

Rather than saying that a certain number of rounds can be kept in a launcher, the cubic-meters system is used to determine the number of rounds carried. Thus, ammunition for assault rockets, rocket-battery arrays, torpedo launchers, mine spreaders, seeker-missile racks, masking-screen launchers, and ICM launchers are figured on a cubic-meters-per-shot basis, though one round (or one array, or 20 meters of mines) may be kept at no space cost in any launcher except a masking-screen launcher. This is because a masking-screen charge is larger than the launcher itself.

#### Space stations

Space stations come in four main categories: fortresses, fortified stations, armed stations, and unarmed stations. The last title is something of a misnomer, as even the smallest freight station is likely to have a laser battery to discourage piracy.

Military stations fall in the fortress and fortified-station categories, while megacorporations have only a few fortified stations and many armed ones. "Free" stations not belonging to any one group or cartel are

**Table 2**  
**Weaponry and Space Needed**

Weapon	Cubic meters	MHS
Laser cannon	40	5
Laser battery	25	3
Proton-beam battery	30	10
Electron-beam battery	30	6
Disruptor cannon	60	12
Assault-rocket launcher	10	1
Assault rocket*	10	—
Rocket-battery array	40	5
Rocket-battery salvo	10	—
Torpedo launcher	75	5
Torpedo	20	—
Mine spreader	60	7
Mines (5 fields)	20	—
Seeker-missile rack	40	7
Seeker missile	40	—
Grapples	60	5

\* Assault rockets for rearming fighters kept aboard an assault carrier are kept in cargo space. Up to 15 per cargo unit can be carried.

**Table 3**  
**Defenses and Space Needed**

Defense	Cubic meters
Reflective hull	—
Masking-screen launcher	10
Masking-screen charge	25
Electron screen	10 x hull size
Proton screen	12 x hull size
Stasis screen	10 x hull size
ICM launcher	10
ICM	5

**Table 4**  
**Optional Items Carried**

Item	Cubic meters
Fighter	60
Assault-transport dropship	35*
Hull size 2 ship	120
Assault scout	850

\* Dropships are mounted about 75% externally, thus taking up less space than the totally interior docking areas and repair facilities used by fighters.

usually armed, though a few fortified and unarmed stations can be found. Small freight stations, scientific stations, and automated stations are usually unarmed.

Space-station weaponry and defenses are mounted in exactly the same way as they are on starships, with two differences: No forward firing weaponry may be mounted, and MHS restrictions are ignored with respect to the maximum number of one weapon type mountable.

The statistics given on Table 6 refer to a single space-station hull of a given size. It should be remembered that more than one hull may be joined to create megasta-

tions, as per page 8 of the Knight Hawks rule book, though such huge stations are prohibitively expensive for all but the military and megacorporations of the largest size.

#### Miscellaneous items

Players and GMs will undoubtedly find new things to put on ships. By carefully determining an item's size, it can easily be integrated into this system. Remember, though, that addition of any item beyond the listed maximums reduces the ADF or MR of the ship by one.

(Tables continue on page 76.)



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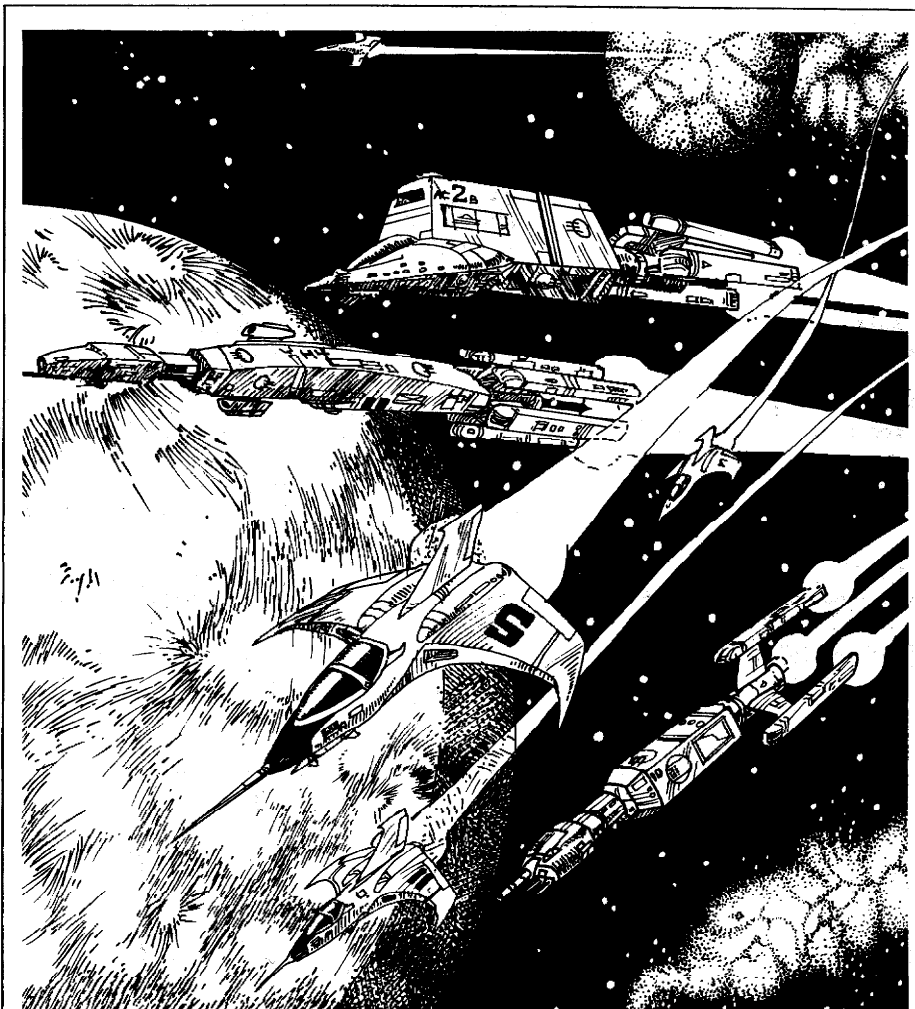


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**Table 5  
DCR and Hull Points**

Ship type	DCR determination	Hull points
Civilian	(HS x 3) + 20	HS x 5
Military	(HS x 9) + 20	HS x 10

**Table 6  
Space Stations**

Station type	Hull size	Hull points	DCR	Space in cubic meters	
Fortress	5	250	175	550	
	6	300	200	800	
	Fortified	3	80	60	180
		4	120	80	210
		5	140	100	250
Armed	1	30	30	80	
	2	55	40	120	
	3	70	65	160	
	4	80	75	200	
Unarmed	1	20	25	25	
	2	40	35	50	
	3	55	50	75	
	4	75	70	100	

'All the News  
that Gives  
You Fits'

# PARANOIA

## ENQUIRER

Weather:  
Cloudy, chance  
of light radioac-  
tive fallout this  
afternoon.

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# PARANOIA LINKED TO IRAN-CONTRA SCANDAL

## Administration Officials Deny Everything

WASHINGTON — Highly-placed US officials have repeatedly denied that over 20,000 copies of *Paranoia*, the roleplaying game of a darkly humorous future, were secretly airdropped onto Nicaragua recently. When asked if the CIA had covertly supplied the Contra rebels with thousands of copies of the popular game, a source close to the President said, "What, are you kidding?"

In *Paranoia*, which is set in a post-nuclear holocaust, players take the part of Troubleshooters, elite agents for a well-meaning but deranged computer. Pitting the heroes against bizarre robots, crazed mutants, enraged bureaucrats and mad scientists, the handsome, complete, tastefully-illustrated game encourages players to lie, cheat, and backstab at every turn. Commented one official, "*Paranoia's* a natural for the CIA. Remember, those are the guys who tried to feed Castro an explosive cigar ... this is right up their alley."

The official added: "Don't forget that when the *Paranoia Excessory Pack* was published in October — Boom! — the stock market dropped 500 points. Then the *Paranoia Form Pack* comes out, and all of a sudden Gorbachev signs a disarmament agreement ... 'Glasnost' my eye! He's running scared."

The *Excessory Pack* is the first supplement for second edition *Paranoia*. It contains a 4-panel Gamemaster pack,

bureaucratic forms in triplicate, and full-color Cardstock Commies with neat plastic stands.

The *Form Pack* is the latest *Paranoia* release; it contains even more bureaucratic forms as well as a deadly bureaucratic runaround "Code 7" adventure. Sources within West End have revealed that several other adventures and supplements will be published in the coming year.

At a news conference yesterday, another official said, "This is just another sleazy attempt by West End to gain some free publicity for their bizarre and twisted roleplaying game." Obviously deeply deranged, the official was restrained by Secret Service agents and dragged kicking and screaming from the podium.

In addition to *Paranoia*, West End Games publishes boardgames on a wide variety of topics, as well as several other roleplaying games, none of which have anything to do with space-based nuclear missile shields.



Humorous futuristic roleplaying game or CIA terror weapon?

Space Aliens  
Eat Elvis's Brain

See Literary Supplement, page 112.

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Looks very much like

# The Marvel-Phile



## Animal crackers

Hey, True Believers: I want to take this opportunity to introduce the latest, greatest, and overrated-est character to come down from the House of Ideas in a long time! It's got passion, it's got power, it's got legs. It's *The Life and Times of Rocket Raccoon!*

Yes, I know you've all been waiting for this classic Copper Age character to return to the pages of the Mighty Marvel Universe, and here's his complete story. It

begins as Young Rocket, jettisoned from his dying planet, lands on Earth and is adopted as the kid brother Spider-Man never knew he had. Developing powers over and above those of normal raccoons, he is branded a mutant and persecuted. Rocket, in a series of *Annals* over the next two years, joins the X-Men, X-Factor, the New Mutants, the Avengers, the West Coast Avengers, the Rangers, the Champions, SHIELD, and Power Pack, using

assumed names. He is then captured by the dreaded Doctor Doom and, his mind altered by the Power Cosmic, joins Hydra, the Masters of Evil, Heavy Metal, the Serpent Society, AIM, Freedom Force, and the Irving Forbush Fan Club, again using assumed names!

*[Jeff, wait a sec.]*

Then, when all the societies and groups have a sock hop on the same night, Rocket suffers an identity crisis and a complete mental collapse. In a soul-inspiring rewriting of his origins, Rocket retreats to the Savage Land near the South Pole, where only the mighty Wolverine (aided by Katey Power) can bring him to his senses.

*[Jeff? This isn't in the—]*

*The Life and Times of Rocket Raccoon* is no ordinary story, and it's now available in a 50-issue limited series, each with a flexidisk centerfold containing that great Beatles hit, "Rock—

*[Yo, Jeff!]*

Yes, Roger?

*[Is this April Fool stuff, or what?]*

Well, now that you mention it, yes.

*[Wonderful, wonderful. Very good. Now let's see the character.]*

Uh, yeah. Okay, ladies and gents, here's the Animal Hero of the Marvel Universe: Rocket Raccoon (no joke).

### ROCKET RACCOON™

F	IN Health: 110
A	RM
S	GD Karma: 50
E	RM
R	GD Popularity: 40 (on Halfworld)
I	RM
P	GD Resources: EX

#### KNOWN POWERS:

*Acute sense:* Like the Earthly mammal he resembles, Rocket has Excellent senses of smell and vision, including night (light-intensifying) sight.

*Weapons:* Rocket has a number of weapons and weapon systems available to him, but usually packs a laser pistol that does Remarkable-rank force damage (Remarkable energy damage to robots) and has a range of three areas.

*Flight:* Rocket wears a set of rocket-powered jets on his feet that allow him to move at Excellent speed (10 areas/round).

**TALENTS:** Marksmanship, Martial Arts A, Piloting, Acrobatics.

**CONTACTS:** The Loonies (human natives of Halfworld), robots of Halfworld, most of the animal population of Halfworld, and the Incredible Hulk.

**ROCKET'S STORY:** Rocket Raccoon is a native of Halfworld, an odd planet in the



distant section of space known as the Keystone Quadrant. Halfworld was originally settled by human or humanoid beings, who established the colony as an asylum for its mentally unbalanced members. These unbalanced humans, or Loonies, were to be cared for by robots while other humans sought a cure for their problems. Animals were brought to the planet as pets for the patients.

The "sane" human doctors were recalled to their home planet by a cut in their funding, but they left behind the robots and an impenetrable force field around the section of space containing Halfworld. All this is recorded in the Halfworld Bible, the logbook of the *SS Gideon*, the starship that brought the human colonists. The log survived through the ages to become a holy tome – the "Gideon's Bible" of the land. Some time after the doctors departed, a nearby supernova caused the robots to achieve a degree of sentience. Chaffing at their chores as watchmen for the human Loonies, they in turn genetically manipulated the animal stock, gave them prosthetic devices, and turned them into the Loonies' keepers. The robots then retired to the far side of the globe, stripping its natural resources to produce a mammoth factory complex. The complex then produced toys to keep the human patients amused, as well as a gigantic, human-shaped ship. The robotic activity produced the "half-world" feature of the planet: Half is a green and pleasant home to the animal and human population, and half is a wasteland.

Ranger Rocket Raccoon, whose ancestors were manipulated by the robots, rose in rank to become the chief law officer of Halfworld and protector of its human population. His chief opponent in these matters was Judson Jakes, a mole who took over the main toy-manufacturing operation for the planet. Jakes conspired on a number of occasions to steal Gideon's Bible and use the knowledge within it to rule the world. Rocky's allies included his friend Wal Russ (a walrus with prosthetic tusks that could be used as weapons), the Lady Lylla (an otter), Pyko (a tortoise who served as Jake's chief toy designer), and the Incredible Hulk, who was in the neighborhood at the time.

The final confrontation on Halfworld resulted from a conflict between Jakes and Lord Dyvyne, a lizardlike rival toymaker. The two battled over control of Halfworld, its toy industry, and the Lady Lylla, and were only defeated when Rocket, working in conjunction with the robots of the metallic half of Halfworld, deciphered Gideon's Bible and devised a cure for the human inhabitants. The fully-cognizant humans, robots, and good animals defeated the combined armies controlled by Jake and Dyvyne, who were killed in a fall afterward. The animals and robots then left the humans to settle Halfworld, their task done. Using the huge, man-shaped rocket, the animals and

robots left Keystone Quadrant, searching for new adventures.

#### Typical Halfworld robot

F A S E R I P  
TY TY EX EX GD TY TY

#### Typical Halfworld human (uncured)

F A S E R I P  
PR GD TY TY FE FE FE

"Cured" humans have Typical Reason, Intuition, and Psyche.

#### Typical Halfworld animal

F A S E R I P  
TY GD PR GD TY TY TY

#### Wal Russ (genetically altered walrus)

F A S E R I P  
TY GD TY EX GD TY TY

Rocket's pal, Wal, has a number of prosthetic tusks that can serve as tools, hands, and weapons (firing force or energy bolts of Remarkable damage).

#### Uncle Pyko (genetically altered tortoise)

F A S E R I P  
PR TY TY EX IN GD GD

The greatest animal mind on Halfworld, Pyko translated the bulk of the Halfworld Bible, in addition to once being Jake's chief toy designer. He has a laser (Remarkable range and damage) built into his shell, along with wheels for his armored carapace (Excellent ground speed). The shell itself provides Good protection.

#### Judson Jakes (genetically altered mole)

F A S E R I P  
PR TY TY EX EX GD GD

Jakes was the owner and operator of Mayhem Mekaniks, one of the two major toy companies on Halfworld – now defunct. (With the human population cured now, the demand for entertaining toys has been drastically reduced.) Jakes and his competitor Dyvyne were insane and dreamed of ruling all the factions of Halfworld. His malicious toys included:

\* *Killer Clowns*: Robots with deadly dispositions, killer clowns carried juggling-ball

bombs (Remarkable damage), electrified hammers (Remarkable damage), and other deadly but funny-looking weapons. Their statistics were:

F A S E  
EX GD GD GD

\* *Prank Tanks*: These clown-headed tanks fired Incredible-strength force beams, used Incredible-strength armor, took 40 points of damage before destroyed, and moved three areas per turn.

\* *Drakillers*: These mutated flying beasts had the following statistics:

F A S E R I P  
GD GD GD GD PR PR PR

Drakillers had claws and teeth, and flew at Excellent speeds.

#### Lord Dyvyne (genetically altered lizard)

F A S E R I P  
TY PR TY TY RM EX TY

Jakes' lizardlike competitor, Dyvyne, was just as merciless as his opponent, and let nothing get in the way of his power. His more dangerous toys and allies included:

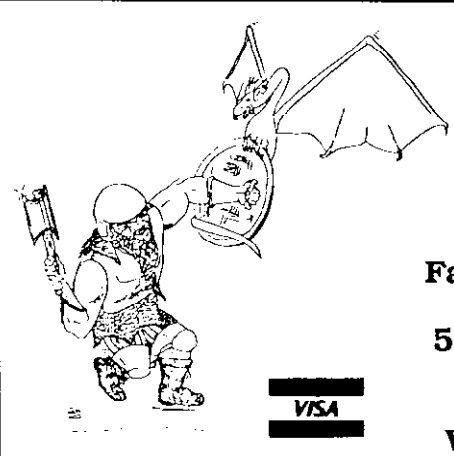
\* *Ape Guards*: Armed with Remarkable-strength force lasers, apes made up the bulk of Dyvyne's forces, as the robotic clowns did for Jakes.

\* *Chimp Blimp*: An airborne dreadnaught of the Dyvyne forces, this airship had Typical control, Excellent speed, and Good body and protection. The simian sentries on board dropped banana bombs (Incredible-strength force damage) on their foes.

\* *Red Breath*: The last invention of one of Dyvyne's toy-makers, this mutated, mystical creature was a red cloud that was immune to normal physical or energy attacks. Those swallowed by the cloud made an Endurance FEAT or were "erased" forever. Dispersing the cloud (with vacuum cleaners or strong winds) caused it to be destroyed, bringing back those who had been erased.

Next time: The return of the Complete Marvel-Phile Index for the Marvel Universe. And that's no joke.

Ω



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# The Role of Computers



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and dozens more

A scene from Electronic Arts' *Dragon's Lair*. See page 84 (Commodore 64/128 screen).

What do a giant onion and a discipline crab have to do with one another? Both are part of a fantasy-adventure game entitled *Beyond Zork*. Boasting an improved parser, *Beyond Zork* is the finest interactive-fiction game from Infocom that we've had the pleasure to play. The interdependence of seemingly unrelated objects within the game is part of a massive scenario that includes a separate plane of existence, mysterious shops, wine cellars, lighthouses, aerial tramways, and

bridges of opportunity. On a scale of one star to five, this game gets all five.

## Infocom, Inc.

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## *Beyond Zork*

\*\*\*\*\*

Apple Macintosh and Atari ST versions

Infocom is the game company that produced such delights as the original *Zork* trilogy, the *Enchanter* series, *Trinity*, *Stationfall*, *The Lurking Horror* and many more classic text adventures. These games all require concentration, skillful note-taking, and cartographic skills to best the scenarios. We doubt whether there are any who would deny the value of an Infocom text adventure; the performance/cost ratio is extremely high. Frustration at solving various puzzles and mysteries takes second place to the user's joy when he forges ahead to unexplored areas and reaches the summit of the adventure. Infocom games are properly developed, produced not only for company profit but for user pleasure as well.

*Beyond Zork* is not a continuation of *Zork I*, *Zork II*, or *Zork III*. *Beyond Zork* unravels in its own land, displayed on a full-color map of the Southland of Quendor that is included in the superior packaging. As with all Infocom offerings, the materials found with the game disks contain clues that are critical to solving the adventure. The *Beyond Zork* package contains the *Zork* instruction manual, which explains some of the various keyboard commands, and *The Lore and Legends of Quendor*, a listing of the flora, fauna, and locales of the kingdom. The latter illustrated booklet should be read from cover to cover, with attention paid to the illustrations as well as to the descriptive text for each listing.

*Beyond Zork* is available for the Apple Macintosh, Apple II family, Atari ST, IBM microcomputers and compatibles, Commodore 64 and 128 computers, and the Commodore Amiga. We reviewed both the Atari ST version and Apple Macintosh versions, finding each has something the other version does not have. The Atari ST version is presented in color on screen, while the Macintosh version offers faster game-saves and recalls.

*Beyond Zork* incorporates two new features: auto-mapping and windows. Auto-mapping is a feature that displays a player's position on-screen in relation to his surrounding elements. For computer-based text-adventure gamers, drawing boxes on paper that each signify a specific game locale is a common method of game mapping. When one travels northeast from a box, a line is drawn from the upper left corner of the first box (representing, say, the kitchen) to the lower right corner of the locale found to the NE of the kitchen (perhaps the main hallway). Writ-

ten in each box are the name of the locale and a key code, or (in small writing) the other elements found within it. The box marked Main Hallway on the paper might also include items such as an umbrella or trapdoor to signify important elements located by the player within the Main Hallway. Leading away from the Main Hallway box are other connector lines representing each known exit, including all compass points as well as up and down.

Brian Moriarty, who worked on *Beyond Zork* for over a year, has taken care of the on-screen mapping for you. On-screen mapping is great for this game, for the player soon learns that locales he thought were mapped correctly appear in a different light if the game is reentered from the beginning with a new character. This occurs often, as the character with which you start the game is rarely the character who ends the game. Even with the locales so clearly marked on-screen and the connecting lines all drawn in for you, the player should still map the game. However, the player can see at a glance exactly what is going on at a particular moment just by looking at the computer screen. The player can zoom toward or away from maps to show more of the area in reduced-sized boxes.

The auto-mapping feature certainly helped our game enormously. This feature may signify the arrival of games designed to complement play and ease the mapping burdens for the player, as was done in *Might & Magic*. Hopefully, other vendors will see the efficacy of auto-mapping and include it in some of their more complex offerings.

*Beyond Zork* characters have attributes such as Endurance, Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Compassion, and Luck. The Character Setup menu allows the player to begin with a preset character known as Buck Palace, select one of the other six preset characters, randomly generate a new character (the computer rolls the attributes for the player), or create your own character. When creating a character, you are given 60 points to distribute between the attributes. Initially, we believed that Intelligence was nothing to concern ourselves with; how wrong we were! Without a credible amount of Intelligence (at least 8%), you'll find your character unable to read many of the scrolls found throughout the game, leaving the power within them unused.

As with other Infocom games, *Beyond Zork* is easy to play: You simply type in at the on-screen cursor the commands you wish the character to complete. The words typed onto the screen can be complete sentences separated by periods or just a few words to get something done quickly; GO WEST, GO W, or W all accomplish the same thing — the character goes west. Many of the commands are new to Infocom games, such as COLOR, which changes on-screen colors if you are playing on a computer that supports color, and

DEFINE, which allows you to define the computer's function keys as macros for inputting a command directly into the game. For example, the F2 key is defined by the game INVENTORY. You can change this key to ROLL BALL by using the DEFINE command. Additionally, there's MODE; if you don't like the auto-mapping and window features of the game, this command turns *Beyond Zork* into a full-text adventure game similar to other Infocom games.

What is *Beyond Zork* all about? Your quest is to find the Coconut of Quendor, which is in the hands of the Implementors. The Coconut is needed to prevent the death of Magik in the land. Your success depends upon your ability to find objects and solve puzzles.

Not only are the puzzles tough, but you will find that as you reenter the game (after a character's demise), items previously identified and rooms previously mapped have now changed. We talked to the author, Brian Moriarty, and he indicated that a new challenge was needed in Infocom games. Until now, items found and locales mapped in previous games were static. A gamer could easily figure out what was happening from game to game, and would know where to look for rewarding items. This is no longer the case.

This offering is going to require a great deal of skill and concentration to complete. There are staves, wands, sticks, six kinds of potions, and a variety of unique creatures such as the grue, discipline crab, eldritch vapor, dornbeast, monkey grinder, Implementor, giant corbie, Christmas tree monster, minx, unicorn, hungus, moss of Mareilon, compass rose, morgia root, cruel puppet, dust bunny, red herring, lucksucker, and ur-grue that do their best to ensure bewilderment (and possibly death). Running away from a hostile confrontation is usually a worthwhile alternative.

When you find the Magik Shoppe, its proprietress will help identify items you have found. For now, ignore the mysterious curtains that hang in three shops found in different villages within Quendor; bear in mind, however, that the drapes really do have a purpose. There's a fantastic tramway ride, strange quests in the cellar of a pub, a tearful situation when confronted by a dornbeast, the making of a color to identify a specific scarecrow, and more. As more readers buy this game, additional and timely hints will appear in this column for desperate souls in search of a critical solution.

Brian Moriarty is no stranger to the computing environment. Prior to becoming involved in writing adventure games, he was with the Bose Corporation, the famous speaker company, as their technical writer. After three years with Bose, Brian became the technical editor for *Analog Computing*, a magazine dedicated to Atari systems. He remained there for one year during the Atari bull market, and in 1984 joined Infocom as a microcompu-

ter expert. Infocom was the most tasteful and fastest-growing company in 1983, and the company was close to his home. When Brian joined Infocom, there were three other employees. "After about six months designing interpreters for computers, I threatened to hold my breath until they made me a game designer," Brian says of his position.

Though the company is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Activision, Brian states that he and the other Infocom architects still retain control of game design. Brian was not involved with the original Zork programs but is responsible for Infocom's *Wishbringer* and *Trinity* games.

"I wanted to write this program [*Beyond Zork*]. The reason this is a Zork game is mainly due to marketing reasons. The Zork game name is worth a lot of money. I wanted to write a big fantasy game, and we have this great title, so I said, 'Let's use it.' *Zork I* was written with our most primitive parser, and in the intervening years we have improved our technology quite a bit. It was time to do a big fantasy game using some of our new tricks. That's what *Beyond Zork* is."

The auto-mapping idea and other new user-interface changes incorporated into *Beyond Zork* were Brian's ideas; these were designed by Brian and Infocom's systems group, the people who really make it happen on the micros. Brian believes that auto-mapping will be used on a game-by-game basis not only by Infocom but other developers as well.

The source code for the game is 1½ megabytes, and the game code (called ZCODE) is about ¼ megabyte in size. Infocom's technology is machine independent. The ZCODE can be made to run on any machine with enough power. Once an interpreter is written for ZCODE, any game that's written in the ZSYSTEM automatically runs on all machines. All of Infocom's software development is completed on a DEC 20 mainframe computer.

Brian's favorite computer right now is the Apple Macintosh II, with each micro having its own particular strengths and weaknesses. He believes that the choice of a computer should be based on the user's needs. For example, if you want to be able to access the highest number of games available, Brian states the Apple II or Commodore 64/128 are the machines of choice. If extensive two- and three-dimensional Computer Aided Design capabilities with 256-color selection are needed, then the IBM Personal System/2 model 80. or the Macintosh II should be purchased. If you want the best graphics and sound for a game, Brian recommends the Commodore Amiga.

Brian has two suggestions for gamers involved with *Beyond Zork*. "There are some things about this game that are different than other Infocom games. This isn't just the way the game looks on the screen. Most Infocom games are very predictable — the platinum bar is always



in the last room. No matter how you play the game, certain elements are always fixed. In this game, we incorporated random elements and a random-geography generator that builds rooms on the fly. Thus, if you leave the game and reenter it, individual sections of the game are different. Keep this in mind at all times.

"The included books are absolutely essential to the game. There are little tidbits that are found only in the book that are very important, with every page possessing an important fact."

This is not a game a player can sit down with and finish in a week. Brian and the Infocom professionals must be congratulated in developing and publishing one of the finest fantasy text-adventure games ever released. If you have never played an Infocom game, *Beyond Zork* should whet your appetite for even more. For experienced Infocom gamers, this offering is so different from previous adventures that it must be in your game library.

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#### MicroProse Simulation Software

120 Lakefront Drive  
 Hunt Valley MD 21030  
 (301) 771-1151

#### Pirates!

\*\*\*\*\*

Commodore 64/128 version

*Pirates!* is an ingenious and exciting game for the Commodore 64/128 computer, putting the player in the role of a sailor looking for adventure. The saga takes place around the coast of Florida, the West Indies, and the northern part of South America during the 1660s. Characters can be English, Spanish, French, or Dutch. You may take the role of a smuggler and carry sugar and other necessities far and near in hopes of obtaining good prices for the merchandise. Or else you can become a pirate, either aiding your nation by attacking enemy ships or simply plundering and sinking any ship that crosses your ship's bow.

After booting the game, you can start a new game, continue with a previous career (saved game), or become involved in an historic mission. The historic missions are short and are used as an introduction for new players. If you choose a new game, a series of windows appear on screen that reveal the story of how you became a sailor. You are then queried for your skill level.

As an apprentice, your first task is rather monumental. A group of disgruntled sailors approach you and ask if you would take over their ship and fight the current captain, as they are ready to mutiny. If you decide the risk is worth the gamble of command, the screen shifts to display the deck of the ship you want to control. A sword fight takes place between you and the captain. Losing the sword fight means that you must continue life as a plantation farmer, never to brave the brine; success guarantees command of the ship and an experienced crew. The sword fight is arcadelike, as you counter and thrust using the joystick.

Your career as the ship's captain starts in a town that is controlled by the country of your origin. That is good, as it means your first activities can be peaceful in nature. You may visit the Governor and perhaps get promoted, find a wife, and also receive information on what other countries constitute your allies and your enemies. Visiting the tavern can be worthwhile in that you can sign up additional crewmen, hear tavern news about what is happening around the known world, and perhaps even obtain a valuable treasure map from a bedraggled fellow in the corner.

You can also talk to merchants, sell and repair ships, and buy and sell food and other staples (such as cannons, sugar, etc.). There are over 50 towns in this game, meaning a lot of trading can take place. But be wary of towns that fly the flags of countries considered your enemy. You'll either have to sneak into those ports at night or make a direct attack.

Sailing is easy. You get an overhead view of your ship, land masses, and even

storms. Sailing is a lot of fun, but you have a mission to accomplish — the one given to you by the Governor of the first town. Don't forget what happened to the first captain of your ship!

During your voyages, you encounter other ships of differing sizes. You should learn how to sail away to avoid the larger vessels (such as the galleons) if you have a much smaller frigate. If a ship is confronted, a new window appears on-screen that shows a picture of the ship you face. You can further investigate the identification of that ship; once the ship is identified, you can close for battle, hail the crew of the ship for recent news, or sail away. Closing for battle sets up an overhead view of you and your enemy, and requires both arcade and strategic skills as you try to sink your enemy.

Each hit by a cannonball can kill crewmen or do damage to the ship. If the crews do not inflict enough damage to one another to declare a victor, combat ends as both ships sail away from each other. A second option is to close with the opposing vessel and board it. Once aboard the other ship, and if enough of the enemy are wounded from the pounding of your cannons, the ship's captain may give her up as a prize. Otherwise, a sword fight between you and the ship's captain occurs, with the winner plundering and sinking the ship, or adding it to your growing fleet.

You can also try to attack towns. If you destroy a town's defensive forts, you can sail into the harbor and fire on the port. Another option is to attack the town by disembarking your crew on land some distance from the town and marching against it. You had better hope your savage crew outnumbers the forces garrisoned within the town, though, if you are to succeed. Once inside the town, you still have to best the town leader in a sword fight. Success brings money and fame.

The crewmen also have feelings and are prone to mutiny if things are not going well. You can usually keep crewmen happy and intact about eight months before they start grumbling and planning a mutiny against you. Plundering, killing, and winning sword fights boost crew morale, but running out of food, fleeing from battle, or losing a ship drops morale like lead in water.

*Pirates!* is an exciting game that combines the fun of an action-arcade game, adventure game, sailing simulation, and role-playing game all in one offering. MicroProse really has a hot product with this release. *Pirates!* is perfect for practically any game enthusiast.

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#### Mini-reviews

##### Accolade, Inc.

20813 Stevens Creek Boulevard  
 Cupertino CA 95014  
 (408) 446-5757

### **Hardball**

\*\*\*\*

Apple IIGS and Commodore Amiga

For baseball with an arcade feel, the Apple IIGS and Amiga versions of this game are tops. The joystick control is far more substantial than the Activision offering, and the animation and graphics presentation are far more realistic. Of all *Hardball* versions, the Apple IIGS and Amiga versions offer the best program presentation and playability. This is our *second* favorite baseball simulation.

### **Test Drive**

\* \* \* \* ½

Atari ST and Commodore Amiga versions

This is an awesome package for any sports-car enthusiast or any gamer who enjoys driving simulations. Taking the capabilities of such greats as the Ferrari Testarossa, Lotus Turbo, or Porsche 911 Turbo, you have a through-the-windshield view of the roadway, including things splattering on the windshield. Use of the joystick for car steering and shifting doesn't seem natural at first, but you grow accustomed to it. Both the Atari ST and Amiga versions are magnificent in graphic presentation and sound.

---

### **Activision, Inc.**

2350 Bayshore Parkway  
Mountain View CA 94043  
(415) 960-0410

### **Championship Baseball**

\* \* \* ½

Commodore 64/128 version

This is our *third* favorite baseball simulation, with the C64/128 version being our preferred version of the formats available. With a split-screen view, the player gets a first-person perspective of the action, whether he is pitching or playing defense. The game was developed by Gamestar, one of Activision's recent acquisitions.

### **On-Court Tennis**

\*\*\*\*

Commodore 64/128 version

*On-Court Tennis* is by far the best microcomputer-based tennis simulation that can be played against the computer or another player. It takes time to learn the on-screen perspective of the ball, but once you've mastered the strokes, this Gamestar game can really work up a sweat!

### **The Last Ninja**

\*\*\*

Commodore 64/128 version

There are too many ninja-type arcade games on the market, and oversaturation leads to fewer sales for those companies that release similar games late in the introduction cycle. As one of the newest releases, this Activision offering does provide a terrific color presentation and the widest variety of hand and weapon routines seen in any ninja game. The IBM version is extremely disappointing, and we would only rate the PC version at \*½. If you are still interested in acquiring a ninja/

martial-arts game, you should check this one out before buying any other.

---

### **Broderbund Software**

17 Paul Drive  
San Rafael CA 94903-2101  
(415) 492-3200

### **Wings of Fury**

\*\*\*\*

Apple II version

This game has quickly become one of our favorite arcade games. You pilot a Navy Hellcat in Pacific operations during World War II. The joystick commands the plane in bombing, strafing, and rocket attacks against enemy antiaircraft emplacements, personnel, planes, and ships. The fast-paced action is great, and learning to land on your own carrier is worthy of praise when accomplished. Those playing this game on the Apple IIGS had better use the control panel to slow the system speed to normal if you have any hope of surviving and putting your name into the high-score listing.

---

### **Electronic Arts**

1820 Gateway Drive  
San Mateo CA 94404  
(415) 571-7171

### **Earl Weaver Baseball**

\*\*\*\*\*

Commodore Amiga version

This fantastic computer game still ranks as the premiere baseball simulation game yet released. The IBM version (reviewed in DRAGON® issue #127) is quite playable, but if you've tried the Amiga version, the IBM version might leave you disappointed. *Earl Weaver Baseball* could still be the best sports simulation of the year.

### **Skate or Die**

\*\*

Commodore 64/128 version

This is another game that tries to capture the excitement and feel of skateboarding for those of us who aren't skateboarders. Those who do skateboard won't bother with the computerized version. Of the skateboarding games on the market, this is the best. Still, this game leaves us shrugging our shoulders as to why it was introduced; a far better method of introducing skateboarding is to make it an element in another game, as Epyx manages to do with its *California Games* software offering. If you really want to skateboard, you might find enjoyment in this program if you can't go outside.

### **World Tour Golf**

\*\*\*\* ½

Apple IIGS version

This is certainly one of the most exacting and graphically accurate golf simulations you can play. This version includes 12 of the worlds greatest golf courses and allows you to practice before playing. The perspective element is truly spectacular. For as many as four players, *World Tour Golf* is now our favorite golf simulation.

---

### **Epyx, Inc.**

600 Galveston Drive  
Redwood City CA 94063  
(415) 366-0606

### **Winter Games**

\* \* \* ½

Apple IIGS version

For one to eight players, *Winter Games* continues to provide good value for the entertainment dollar. The Apple IIGS version, however, dropped a couple of events from the schedule, lessening its playability as an Olympic Games simulation. For our money, the best version remains the C64/128 version.

### **World Games**

\*\*\*\*\*

Apple IIGS version

It seems to us that Epyx invested great time and effort in the Apple IIGS version of *World Games*; this game is stupendous. The graphics, music, and sound effects all serve to heighten the excitement of participating in a wide variety of games in different parts of the world. The Apple IIGS version certainly wins our recommendation for this offering.

---

### **MicroIllusions**

17408 Chatsworth Street  
Granada Hills CA 91344

### **The Faery Tale Adventure**

\* \* \* \* ½

Commodore Amiga version

The superior graphics and sound capabilities of the Amiga have lent elegance to this fantasy game, wherein three brothers attempt to find a special weapon to defeat an evil necromancer. The visuals are absolutely stunning, and the play is exciting. We think the Amiga version is more than worthwhile for any Amiga gamer.

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### **Mindscape, Inc.**

3444 Dundee Road  
Northbrook IL 60062  
(312) 480-7667

### **Superstar Soccer**

\*\*\*

Commodore 64/128 version

At first, we had high hopes for this game. Unfortunately, the inability to control the entire team leaves something to be desired. Some of the computer-controlled players manage to do strange things that a true soccer player would find hilarious or stupid. With arcade action, however, Mindscape has managed to bring soccer to the computer better than anyone else. This offering is part of the company's SportTime software family that also includes *Superstar Hockey*, which is a far better game.

---

### **New World Computing, Inc.**

14922 Calvert Street  
Van Nuys CA 91411  
(818) 785-0519 (Tech support)

## Might and Magic

\*\*\*\*\*

IBM micros and compatibles version

In issue #122, we reviewed this fantasy-adventure game in the original Apple II format. The IBM version is equally good, with excellent animation even when running under a Color Graphics Adapter (CGA); the resolution is superb. As with the Apple II version, patience and courage are required to get your characters up and going in the adventure, but the weeks spent with *Might & Magic* are worth the investment of both time and money. *Might and Magic* is highly recommended for PC gamers and is distributed by Activision.

## Spectrum HoloByte

A division of SPHERE  
2061 Challenger Drive  
Alameda CA 94501  
(415) 522-3584

## Falcon

\*\*\*\*\*

IBM micros and compatibles version

This is a great F-16 flight simulation for IBM hackers. Requiring only a CGA card, the animation is extremely fluid. Flight controls are assigned to either the keyboard or a joystick. A variety of missions and ranks ensure that the player's learning curve matches his skills throughout practice. We were very disappointed with the Macintosh version, as fatal crashes occurred each time we tried to input the player's name — a mandatory requirement for game play. Even after the problem had been identified and a second disk had been sent to us, the same problem continued to occur, whether the game was run from one or two micro drives, or from the hard disk. For IBM owners, Falcon represents a great opportunity to fly an F-16.

## Soko-Ban

\*\*\*\*\* 1/2

IBM micros and compatibles version

Without doubt, *Soko-Ban* has become our favorite combination arcade and strategy game for the PC. Developed in Japan, this game is also a leading arcade game there. *Soko-Ban* puts you in charge of a

designated slots. There are 51 levels, and the user has the ability to create a total of 99 game levels. The game is timed, and the number of moves and pushes to succeed in each level is recorded. Utilizing a CGA as the minimal graphics resolution, this game would be a real killer if produced for the Amiga, Atari ST, or Apple IIGS.

## Strategic Studies Group

distributed by Electronic Arts

## Halls of Montezuma: A Battle History of the U.S. Marine Corps

\*\*\*\*\*

Apple II version

There is no doubt in our minds that this offering from SSG is one of the best war-simulation games we've played. Foremost is the fact that the company has taken the time to prepare both a written and on-disk tutorial that help you learn how to manage the various menus that control the game. This package offers all of the major battles involving the U.S. Marine Corps, as well as a complete graphics editor and wargame construction set. This offers marvelous value for your gaming dollar, especially if you happen to be a wargamer.

## News and new products

### Conflict Recreations

P.O. Box 272  
Oakdale CT 06370

*Age of Sail* is now available for Commodore Amiga users. This offering is centered on combat between 17th- to 19th-century sail-powered warships, with accurate renditions of classic naval battles available for your computer. This is a multiplayer game that enables as many as 40 ship captains to play via electronic bulletin boards, direct-connect modems, or one computer. The simulation faithfully re-creates one-degree turns and speed changes as small as one knot. Up to four ships can grapple simultaneously. The price is \$39.95, plus \$3.00 for shipping and

## Electronic Arts

As is usually the case, Electronic Arts has introduced several new programs of interest to our readers. For wargamers, the first is *Bismarck: The North Sea Chase*, available for C64/128 users. This is a simulation of the historic 1941 battle in the Atlantic Ocean between the HMS *Hood* and the powerful German *Bismarck*. The simulation may be played from either the British or the German point of view. The price is \$29.95. A second offering is *Force 7*, an action-strategy game for the C64/128. This game launches players into the far future, where Earth survivors are held hostage on the planet Karis and must be rescued despite overwhelming-odds. The price is \$19.95. Another program for the C64/128 is *Demon Stalkers: The Raid on Doomfane*. This 3-D action-adventure game has 100 levels of dungeon mazes, as well as a construction set for designing your own medieval mystery games, all for \$29.95.

The smash arcade hit, *Dragon's Lair*, has been released for the C64/128. This offering has two adventures on one double-sided disk. The first adventure, *Dragon's Lair*, has the player duelling Singe the Dragon, the meanest fire-breather that ever lived. The second adventure, *Escape from Singe's Castle*, has the players dodging deadly boulders, riding a phantom horse, and surviving the treacherous Throne Room in a quest to slay the Lizard King. The price is \$24.95. Last is a new helicopter simulation for Apple II users, with a version for C64/128 users already released. The offering is *Tomahawk*, where players manage the controls of the U.S. Army's AH-64A Apache helicopter. With the assistance of 13 onboard computers and complete automatic fault detection, *Tomahawk* lets the player fight the deadliest enemies and the most horrendous weather conditions. The price is \$29.95 for either version.

## Epyx, Inc.

Two new additions have been made to the company's MAXX-OUT! line of software. The first is *Spiderbot*, wherein three chemical reactors are rapidly approaching meltdown and are threatening to destroy the surrounding electronic jungle. You must operate the only remaining SpiderDroid to diffuse the reactors. The second new game is *Coil Cop*. Here, you patrol a toy factory where you are the last remaining plaything to survive a takeover by the haywire master computer. You must collect pieces of a computer program to stop the computer. These games are available for the C64/128, Apple II, and IBM micros and compatibles, each for \$24.95.

## MicroProse Simulation Software

MicroProse has released *F-15 Strike Eagle* for the Atari ST with high resolu-

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tion, great detail and color, and a few new play features. This is a sophisticated combat-jet simulation that puts the player in the cockpit of an F-15 all-weather ground-attack fighter with 24 flight, weapons, and electronic countermeasure controls. An additional mission allowing the player to re-create the United States' 1986 retaliatory strike against Libya has been included. The price is \$39.95.

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#### Mindscape, Inc.

New software from the company includes *Infiltrator II*, a realistic combat-helicopter simulation and three land-based graphic adventures in one package. You must foil the Mad Leader's plan in this game. This offering is available for the C64/128, IBM micros and compatibles, and the Apple II computer; all are priced at \$34.95. A truly unique offering from the company is Chris Crawford's latest software masterpiece, *Trust and Betrayal: The Legacy of Siboot*. Focusing on language, personality, and power as means to an end, players communicate with characters in an alien language as they make deals, ask and answer questions, beg, make promises, and gossip. Players strive to acquire power; the love, trust, and fear that they seize from the other characters determines who wins the game. This offering is for the Macintosh and is priced at \$49.95.

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#### Origin Systems

136 Harvey Road, Building B  
Londonderry NH 03053  
(603) 644-3360

A brand new role-playing game has been released for the Apple II family. Named *2400 A.D.*, this adventure takes place in a future in which technology replaces magic, and animated robots replace the dragons and demons of fantasy role-playing games. As a new inhabitant of the planet XK-120 with no police record, you are the only human with a chance to penetrate the Authority Complex and deactivate the system that manages the robot-controlled police state. The price is \$39.95.

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#### Simon and Schuster

One Gulf + Western Plaza  
New York NY 10023  
(212) 373-8882

All Trekkies, gather around: The third *Star Trek* graphics adventure has been released by this company. Entitled *Star Trek: The Rebel Universe*, this game has the United Federation of Planets faced with its greatest challenge ever. An insidious mind-control scheme by Klingon forces is turning loyal Federation members into violent rebels. You must lead the

crew of the starship *Enterprise* through the perilous Quarantine Zone, where you will encounter hostile Klingons, Romulans, and rebel Federation vessels. You must halt this rebellion or suffer the penalty of eternal exile. The game is available for IBM micros and compatibles, the Atari ST, and C64/128. Pricing ranges from \$39.95 down to \$29.95, depending upon system format.

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#### Simulated Environment Systems

800 South PCH #8-331  
Redondo Beach CA 90277

Watch for the possibility that *Quarterstaff*, the graphic fantasy role-playing game, may soon be ported over for IBM micros and compatibles and the Apple IIGS. Additionally, new enhancements have been added to the game, which currently runs on the Macintosh.

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#### Sir-Tech Software, Inc.

P.O. Box 245  
Charlestown Ogdensburg Mall  
Ogdensburg NY 13669  
(315) 393-6633

Sir-Tech has pulled out all of the stops and is now shipping the fourth Wizardry scenario, *The Return of Werdna*. Four

years in the development for Apple II computers, this is for expert gamers only (see our initial coverage of this program in issue #130). The price for this three-disk, six-sided game is \$59.95. Sir-Tech has also released another role-playing game called *The Seven Spirits of Ra*, a computer fantasy-adventure game based on ancient Egyptian myth. This game is for IBM micros and compatibles, and it is priced at \$49.95.

On a final note, the reader voting for the best software entertainment of 1987 was minimal at best. We have cancelled any awards for 1987 and now hope to make awards instead for 1988 in our December column in this magazine. We *must* receive your ballots as soon as possible. Write your name, address, and computer system(s) on a postcard, then write the name of your favorite recreational software packages in order of preference, indicating the computer version receiving your vote. It's that simple, but we can't honor the most popular games unless we hear from you! Write to:

Hartley and Patricia Lesser  
179 Pebble Place  
San Ramon CA 94583

We ask that you do not telephone us. Until next month, game on! Ω

## Legend

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# DRAGONMIRTH

by Robert Muleady

... LITTLE DID HE KNOW, HE HAD JUST DISCOVERED THE ENCHANTED RING OF OBSCURE NOISES ...



by Joseph Pillsbury



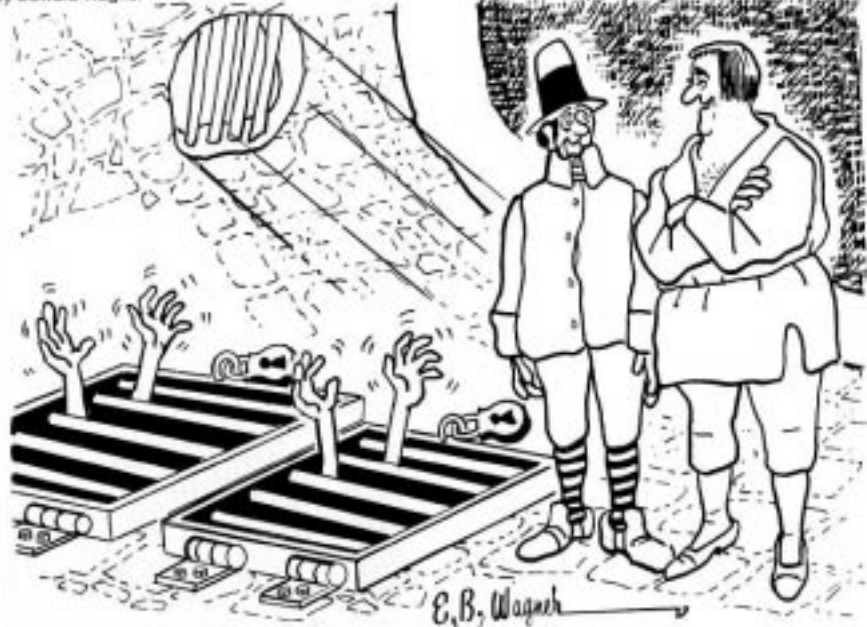
by Bruce Simpson

"NOTHIN' BEATS THE TASTE OF SPRITES."



by Brian Froy

by Edward Wagner



"BEING A SINGLE PARENT RAISING TWO TEENAGERS IS NOT ALL THAT DIFFICULT."





(continued from page 3)

of a million people. I dread seeing a letter from a reader asking me a question like: "Why did you misspell my name? Why are the texts on pages 12 and 14 transposed? Did you mean for that picture to appear backwards?"

Worse yet is to get a call from our legal department with a question like: "Where is the trademark symbol that's supposed to be next to the DRAGON® Magazine logo on the cover?" (See if you can find the 1987 issue without it.)

Nonetheless, feedback on issue quality is what we need most if we are to keep that quality high. (Nice comments for things done well are also welcome.) Despite the mistakes, we take great pride in our ability to put the best possible magazine together for you, our readers. Without you, what have we got? You make this magazine worthwhile.

Keep in mind that we won't be

able to respond to every letter we get. However, just knowing that you're out there looking at each issue gives us that much more incentive to check and recheck our work.

One other point: We also pride ourselves on not making the same mistake twice once we've noticed it. This editorial, for instance, has been edited by at least two other people - avoiding the most embarrassing glitch of them all, which is an error right in the middle of the editorial. This happened in issue #129, page 19, in the second to the last paragraph. If you would take a red pen and cross out the phrase "is that they" from the second sentence, so the sentence starts: "Modern-era games allow you . . ." then I would be most grateful. The writer proofread his own work, which shows you how well that strategy works.

Editing. It's a hard life, but someone has to have it.

And I'm glad it's ~~us~~ we.

(continued from page 36)

the main hand and add -1 to that for the other hand.

Characters can also specialize with a sling, but not a staff sling, using the same rules and modifiers as for a crossbow. (This is instead of specializing as an other missile weapon.) However, close range for a sling is 10' to 30'.

Characters who have already specialized with a bow, a crossbow, or a sling can choose an extended-range specialization. With this, there is no additional change at close range. At short range, there is a +2 to hit, +1 to damage. At medium range, there is a +1 to hit and damage. At long range, there is a +1 to hit. From long range to twice the maximum long range is the extended range. The range modifiers still need to be included; they are +0 for close and short ranges, -2 for medium range, -5 for long range, and -8 for extended range. A 5th-level fighter with a long bow would have an extended range from 210 yards to 420 yards; to hit AC 10 requires a roll of 14 or better in this range.

Characters are not allowed to take more than one type of specialization at 1st level. Double specialization is also restricted to characters who have a little more experience. However, a fighter at higher levels could easily take several of these specializations. A 10th-level ranger could easily be double specialized with a long sword, take parry specialization with his dagger, and take two-weapon specialization with the long sword in his good hand and the dagger in his off hand. If he has 18/83 strength and 16 dexterity, then his nonmagical bonuses are +5 to hit and +7 damage with the long sword, and +2 to hit, +4 damage, and +1 AC with the dagger.

I also see no reason why a barbarian character couldn't specialize with a weapon common to his tribe. Many types of barbarians depend on hunting for food. Specialization would indicate a hunter or warrior has practiced extensively, so his aim is more deadly.

Stephen Rasmussen  
West Valley UT

As a D&D game player, I have also noticed that there are almost no articles exclusively for the D&D game. Roger Moore commented that hardly any articles are written for that game ("Letters," issue #123). But this hasn't really bothered me because just about every article for AD&D games can easily be converted to D&D games by simply ignoring certain rules such as magic resistance and psionic ability. Only a few articles cannot really be used; usually this is because the article is already covered by the D&D game (such as articles about archery contests, jousting, and a few monsters). But even articles that can't be used at all with the D&D game can still give DMs good ideas (like the article on gliders, "On a Wing and a Prayer," in DRAGON issue #124).

Unfortunately, an article for D&D games cannot usually be converted to an AD&D game as easily, because the DM will have to add rules to the article that aren't used in the D&D game. I find it's easier to take out rules than add them.

Michael A. Costa  
San Jose CA

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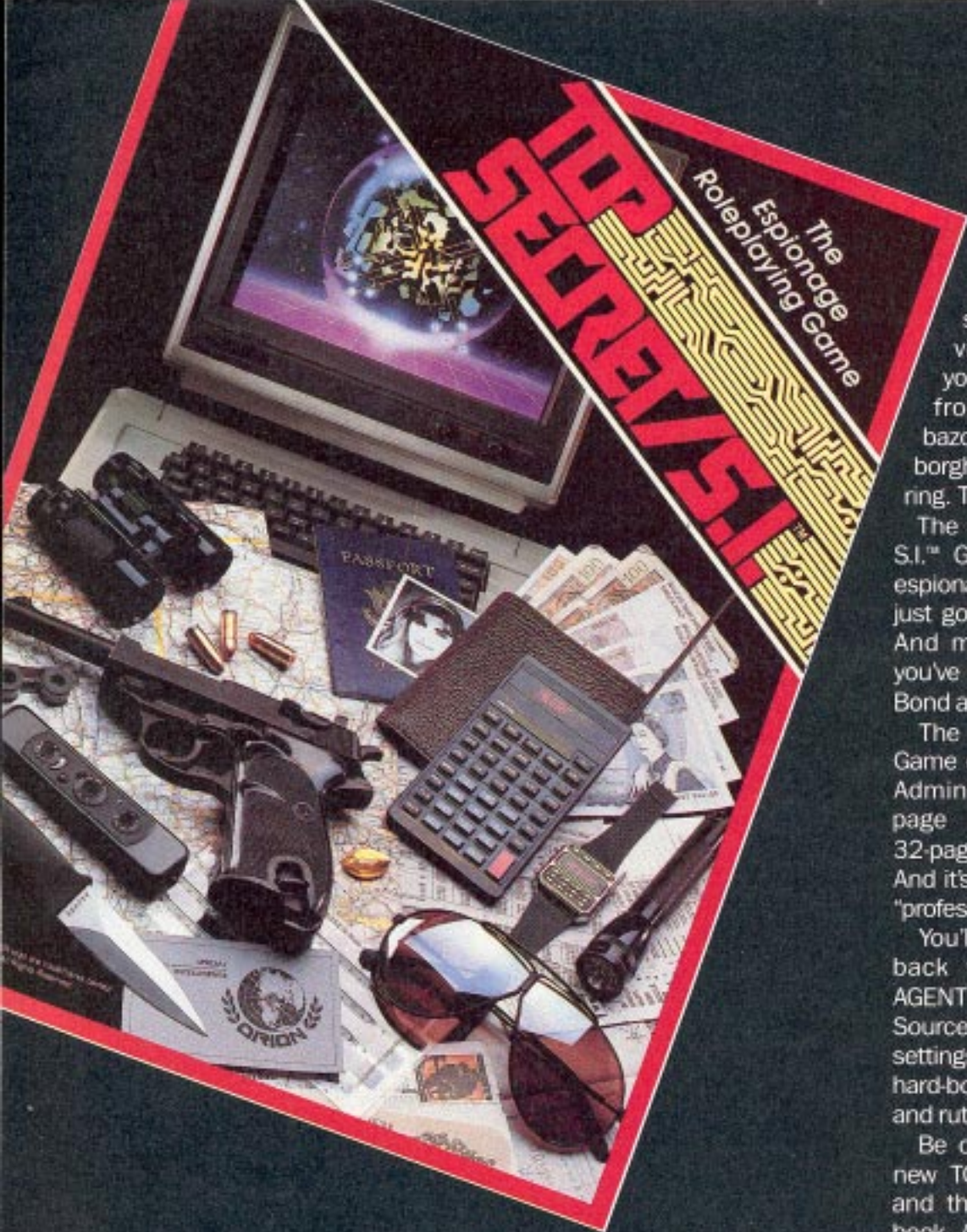
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# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## 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 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following information, in the following order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. **No** call-in listings are accepted. Domestic and foreign conventions are welcome.

**WARNING:** We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example, the copy deadline for the July 1988 issue is the last Monday of May 1988. Plan ahead; early listings pay off!

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, **please contact us immediately!** For any questions or changes related to this column, please call either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625.

tournaments, demonstrations, role-playing games, board games, computer games, miniatures competitions, live games, free gaming, a continuous video room, dealers' room, auction, and special guests. Registration fees are \$8 at the door. Write to: CONTEST V, P.O. Box 4726, Tulsa OK 74104.

### S.A.G.E. 4, April 2

The fourth Simulation Adventure Game Expo will be held at the Visalia Airport Holiday Inn in Visalia, Calif., from 9 A.M. to midnight. Featured events will include non-stop board, computer, miniatures, role-playing, and coin-operated video games, as well as a miniatures figure-painting contest, games auction, and dealers' area (which is open to the public). Day memberships are \$6 at the door. Please send an SASE to: S.A.G.E. 4 Information, P.O. Box 4517, Visalia CA 93278; or call: (209) 738-1362.

### BAMACON II, April 8-10

This gaming convention will be held at the Stagecoach Inn, located at 4810 Skyland Blvd. E. in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Room rates are \$21.75 for a single and \$27.20 for a double. Special guests include Allen Hammack, Dr. Ed Passerini, Dr. Kendrick, Jim Birdseye, Dr. Lloyd Snerets, and others. The festivities planned include workshops, seminars, and panels dealing with subjects such as science fiction, gaming, inventions, metaphysics, and computers. Gaming tournaments (as well as computer-gaming tournaments) will be held, most offering cash prizes. Featured events include an art show, a costume contest, a combat-techniques seminar, miniatures combat, four 24-hour movie rooms, an awards banquet, and a 24-hour con suite. Other activities will include filksinging, storytelling, open gaming, and more. Write to: BAMACON II, University of Alabama, P.O. Box 6542, Tuscaloosa AL 35486; or call: (205) 758-4577.

### CAPCON XI, April 8-10

The Ohio State University Miniatures and Gaming Association (OSUMGA) announces the 11th-annual CAPCON, to be held in both ballrooms of the Ohio Union, 1739 N. High Street, in Columbus, Ohio. Featured events include: miniatures events, board games, and role-playing games from several time periods and genres; several AD&D® and BATTLESYSTEM™ game tournaments; and, a miniatures-painting contest. Convention times are: April 8th, 5:00 P.M. to 11:30 P.M.; April 9th 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 P.M.; and, April 10th, 12:30 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. Admission is \$3 per day. Write to: OSUMGA/CAPCON, Box 21, The Ohio Union, 1739 N. High Street, Columbus OH 43210; or call: Jill Moody at (614) 299-5658, or Jon Kimmich at (614) 447-1705.

### DRAGON QUEST VI, April 8-10

This gaming, fantasy, and science-fiction convention will be held at the University of Wyoming Union Building in Laramie, Wyo. AD&D®, CAR WARS®, CHAMPIONS™, STAR TREK®, and TRAVELLER® games are featured. Other events include a writers' panel, a custom-

game design and creation panel, computer gaming, electronic music, and more. The guest of honor will be Jerry Olton, author of "Frame of Reference" and miscellaneous short stories. Preregistration fees are \$9 until March 26, and \$12 thereafter. Write to: Knights of Enchantment, P.O. Box 3625, Laramie WY 82071; or call: (307) 755-4721.

### GAME FAIRE '88, April 8-10

The 9th-annual GAME FAIRE convention will be held at Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane, Wash. Events will run continuously from Friday night to Sunday afternoon. The program includes game tournaments, micro-armor, historical miniatures, a video room, a dealers' room, SF and fantasy RPGs, board games, family games, and a game auction. The local chapter of the SCA will also host a demonstration. Registration for this convention is \$10 prepaid or \$12 at the door. Friday-only or Sunday-only passes are \$5; Saturday-only passes are \$6. All profits from this event go to the Wishing Star Foundation, a local charity dedicated to helping needy children. Write to: Merlyn's, W. 201 Riverside, Spokane WA 99201; or call: (509) 624-0957.

### GAMESFAIR 88, April 8-10

The United Kingdom's premier games-playing event and the eighth GAMESFAIR organized by TSR, UK, will be held at Reading University in Reading, United Kingdom. Events will include an AD&D® game open championship, an AD&D® game team competition, a CHASE™ game tournament, a huge EN GARDE game, a creature-creation competition, all-night gaming, a charity marathon, game demonstrations, and more. Tickets for the full three days are £37.00 residential, or £12.50 nonresidential. Write to: The Organisers, GAMESFAIR 88, TSR UK Ltd., The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD UNITED KINGDOM; or call: (0223)212517.

### MISCONCEPTION, TOO, April 8-10

This gaming convention will be held at the Auraria Student Center on 9th and Larimer in Denver, Colo. Featured events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, CHAMPIONS™, and STAR FLEET BATTLES game events among others. Preregistration is \$3; at-the-door fees are \$4. Tournament fees are \$1 for each event. Write to: AGC, Metro State College, 1006 11th Street, Box 39, Denver CO 80204; or call: (303) 556-3320.

### S.T. CON '88, April 8-10

This gaming convention will be held at the Marlborough Inn, 1316 33rd Street NE, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Guests include: Bjo, John, and Lora Trimble; Sonni and Dr. Ralph Cooper; Diane Carey; and Gregory Brodeur. Special events include an art show and auction, a costume contest, a short-story competition, a STAR TREK®: THE RPG tournament, a STAR FLEET BATTLES tournament, and numerous mini-competitions. Registration is \$25 before April 7, or \$30 at the door. Single-day registration may be purchased for \$15 a day. RPG tournament fees are \$5 per player; STAR FLEET BATTLES tournament fees are \$2 per player. Write to: S.T. CON '88, Unit #38, 3223 83rd Street NW, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA, T3B 2P9.

### GAMEMASTER '88, April 9

Sponsored by the Gamemasters Guild, this one-day gaming convention will be held on Saturday, April 9, from 8 A.M. to midnight in the Big Four Room of the Student Union Building on the Boise State University in Boise, Idaho. Cash prizes will be awarded in the ZOMAX game, and

- \* indicates a Canadian convention.
- ⊙ indicates a European convention.

### CONTEST V, March 31-April 3

Tulsa's only all-gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Holidome at 8181 E. Skelly Drive in Tulsa, Okla. Events will include game

product prizes will be awarded in other categories. WARHAMMER, AXIS & ALLIES™, SHOGUN, D&D® games, and a host of other events will also be featured. Preregistration is \$4 until April 1; thereafter, registration is \$8. Send an SASE to: Gamemasters Guild, ATTN: Scott Brough, 5240 Targee, Boise ID 83705; or call: Ken Brough at (208) 384-5549.

#### HOBBY CON '88, April 9

Sponsored by Amazing World of Fantasy and Bojo's Records and Tapes, this one-day gaming event will be held at the Cartersville Civic Center, 435 W. Main Street, Cartersville, Ga. The convention will run from 11 A.M. to 6 P.M. Guest of honor is Wayne Van Sant, Marvel Comics artist of *The Nam*. This show will feature all sorts of collectibles, including comics, baseball cards, and *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and *Dr. Who* paraphernalia, as well as gaming materials. Admission is \$1. Write to: Amazing World of Fantasy, 1922 Shorter Avenue, Rome GA 30161; or call: Patrick at (404) 234-5309 after 6 P.M. or Dan West at (404) 748-2791.

#### SHOW-ME CON III, April 8-10

Sponsored by the I'm Game gaming store and gamers guild, this midwest gaming event will take place at the Dance Hall in Warrensburg, Mo. Events will include AD&D®, D&D®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, TALISMAN, STAR WARRIORS, Visual Dungeon, BATTLETECH®, and ROLEMASTER™ games, with a figure-painting contest. The AD&D® game tournament will be run by a TSR staff writer. RPGA™ Network sponsored events, game demonstrations, a dealers' area, and a comic-book show and sale are also featured. Door prizes and other giveaways will also be offered at the door. Registration is \$7.50 in advance or \$10 at the door. Write to: I'M GAME/SHOW, 102 W. Pine Street, Warrensburg MO 64093; or call: (816) 747-DICE on Saturdays only.

#### WIZARDCON '88, April 9

Sponsored by the Columbia University Games Club, this all-day convention will be held at Ferris Booth Hall at Columbia University, 115th Street and Broadway in New York City. Events will include numerous role-playing events, a DIPLOMACY® tournament, a miniatures-painting contest, a plethora of vendors, and several other games. Registration is \$2 at the door; tournament events will cost an additional \$2 per round. Write to: WIZARDCON '88, 206 Ferris Booth Hall, Columbia University, New York NY 10027.

#### GICON X, April 15-17

This gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Inn in Grand Island, Nebr. Numerous gaming events are sponsored, including events in the AD&D®, TRAVELLER®, ELFOQUEST, TOP SECRET®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, and BATTLETECH® games. There will also be an artists' and authors' competition, with well over \$1,000 being offered in these and other events. Registration is \$10 for the weekend if paid before March 31, or \$15 thereafter. Send an SASE to: GICON X, 3077 S. 40th Street, Omaha NE 68105.

#### I-CON VII, April 15-17

This 7th-annual gaming science-fiction, fact, and fantasy convention will be held at the State University of New York in Stony Brook, Long Island, N.Y. Harlan Ellison and Hal Clement are special guests; the guest of honor and media guests are yet to be announced. This year's program will also feature other guests from a variety of fields including film and television, science and technology, and book and magazine publishing. Tickets for this event are \$16 before March 25, or \$18 at the door. All checks should be made payable to I-CON. Send an SASE to: I-CON, P.O. Box 550, Stony Brook NY 11790.

#### LAUDERDALE SKIRMISHES '88

##### April 15-17

SKIRMISHES presents the grand opening of this role-playing and wargaming convention at the Hilton Inn at Inverrary in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Events include: AD&D®, TRAVELLER®, STAR FLEET BATTLES, and CAR WARS® games; Napoleonic; board gaming; a dealers' room; SCA demonstrations; and, other RPGs and historical events. Hotel reservations may be made by calling: (800) 327-8661. Registration is \$18 for the weekend. Write to: SKIRMISHES, P.O. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 294-9166.

#### MUNCHCON 7, April 15-17

This science-fiction, horror, and fantasy convention will be held on the Marshall University Campus in Huntington, W.Va. This year's theme is an H.P. Lovecraft Memoriam. Featured events include a costume contest, an art show and sale, seminars, movies, FRP gaming, board gaming, AD&D® and CALL OF CTHULHU® game tournaments, a hucksters' room, and more. For details, send an SASE to: James Augustus Isaacs, Convention Coordinator, MUNCHCON 7 HQ, 6466 Farmdale Road, Apt. 7, Barboursville WV 25504.

#### TECHNICON 5, April 15-17

Sponsored by the Virginia Tech Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, this gaming convention will be held in Blacksburg, Va. Nick O'Donohoe and Sharyn McCrumb (author of *Bimbos of the Death Sun*) are the special guests. Events will include a D&D® game tournament, a Jeopardy Trivia contest, several videos, Japanimation, *Star Trek*, panel discussions, and a masquerade contest. Other gaming events will feature competitions in CAR WARS®, PARANOIA®, and many other games. Memberships posted before April 1 are \$9 for students, \$12 for general admissions, and \$30 for dealers; after April 1, memberships are \$12 for students, \$15 for general admissions, and \$40 for dealers. Write to: TECHNICON 5, P.O. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24063.

#### TRI-STATE CON 1988, April 15-17

This gaming convention, which is sponsored by the Cincinnati Adventure Gamers, will be held at Cincinnati Technical College. There will be a selection of authorized and company-sponsored tournaments, including BATTLETECH®, AD&D®, ACE OF ACES, LOST WORLDS, and CHAMPIONS™ games. The RPGA™ Network will sponsor AD&D® and MECHWARRIOR® game tournaments, along with a miniatures-painting competition and a costume contest. Send an SASE to: TRI-STATE CON 1988, P.O. Box 462, Cincinnati OH 45201-0462.

#### WERECON X, April 15-17

Sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Department, this role-playing games convention will be held at the Lighthouse Center on Riverside Drive in Detroit, Mich. Guests of honor include Palladium Books publisher Kevin Siembieda (creator of ROBOTTECH®, PALLADIUM RPG®, MECHANOID™, HEROES UNLIMITED™, and BEYOND THE SUPERNATURAL games) and Erick Wujcik (designer of TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES™, Revised RECON®, and NINJAS AND SUPERSPIES games). Detroit's finest DMs and GMs will offer a complete schedule of role-playing games and tournaments. Registration is free. Game fees range from \$1 to \$4. Write to: Erick Wujcik, P.O. Box 1623, Detroit MI 48231; or call: (313) 833-3016.

#### COSCON I, April 16

Sponsored by the Circle of Swords, this one-day gaming convention will be held at the Butler Community College in Butler, Pa. Scheduled events will include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, along with numerous board games, miniatures events, and other role-playing games. Other features include a dealers' room and a miniatures-painting contest. Registration is \$6 until March 31 and \$8 thereafter. Send an SASE to: COSCON, c/o Dave Schnur, 127 Crosslands Road, Butler PA 16001.

#### MUNCIE CON II, April 16

This gaming convention, which is sponsored by the Quester's Gaming Club, will be held on the third floor of the Ball State Student Center in Muncie, Ind. Guests of honor include Tim Quinn (British comic artist of *Dr. Who*), Jean Airey and Laurie Haldeman (*Dr. Who* and *Blake's 7*), and Lois McMaster Bujold (John W. Campbell Award nominee and author of *Shards of Honor*). Events will include a STAR FLEET BATTLES game tournament, an AD&D® game gladiator's tourney, a WARHAMMER game demonstration, and more. Registration fees are \$5 if mailed before April 9, and \$6.50 thereafter. Dealers' rates are \$15 for one table and two admissions or \$25 for two tables and three



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**SCRYCON 88, April 16**

Able adventurers are needed to regain lost shards of the famous crystal monolith at SCRYCON 88, an annual one-day tournament sponsored by the Seekers of the Crystal Monolith Gaming Club. Held on Saturday, April 16, at the Red Hook Methodist Church in Red Hook, N.Y. (about 60 miles south of Albany on Route 9), the tournament will consist of AD&D® game rounds, alternate games (including a barroom brawl), painted miniatures judging, and our popular, used-game flea market. Admission is \$5 for the entire day. Send an SASE to: SCRYCON 88, c/o Richard Daugherty, Rd #1, Box 194A, Red Hook NY 12571.

**SYNDICON I, April 22-24**

Sponsored by the Windy City Science Fiction Association, this gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn at 1250 Roosevelt Road in Glen Ellyn, Ill. Room rates for SYNDICON are \$49. Jean Rabe, head of the RPGA™ Network, is the guest of honor; Rick Loomis, founder of Flying Buffalo Inc., and Barbara Young, editor of DUNGEON™ Adventures will be the special guests. Featured events include a two-round RPGA™ Network AD&D® game feature tournament and Masters game tournament, a one-round RPGA™ Network AD&D® game team tournament, a one-round RPGA™ Network AD&D® game special tournament, a PARANOIA® and MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game tournament, a CAR WARS® and ILLUMINATI™ event, and more. Registration is \$15. The first 50 Saturday buffets are \$12 each; Sunday's buffet is also \$12. Write to: WCSFA/SYNDICON, P.O. Box A3981, Chicago IL 60690; or call: (312) 462-7954.

**LOST WORLDS GAMING CONVENTION IV April 23**

The UNI Simulation Gaming Association is holding a gaming tournament on the University of Northern Iowa Campus in Mauker Union. Role-playing and board games are offered in the morning and afternoon in the Union Hall. Entry fees are \$3 and each game is \$1. Prizes will be awarded to the winner of each event. For more information, write to: Simulation Gaming Association, Student Organizational Center, Mauker Union, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls IA 50614-0167; or call: (319) 277-5998.

**PLATTECON ALPHA, April 23**

Sponsored by the Platteville Gaming Association, this one-day gaming convention will be held at the Student Center of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in Platteville, Wis. Gaming events will run from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. E. Gary Gygax will be the guest of honor. Special events include an RPGA™ Network game tournament and a LAZER TAG® competition. Advanced registration is \$2, or \$3 at the door. For more details, send an SASE to: Platteville Gaming Association, Box 109, Platteville WI 53818.

**POINTCON XI, April 23-24**

**DATE CHANGE:** The West Point Military Affairs Club is proud to sponsor this year's 11th-annual POINTCON. The convention will be held at the West Point Military Academy. All types of gaming will be featured, including miniatures competitions (ancient, Napoleonic, and microarm), fantasy and science-fiction RPGs, board games, open gaming, and more. Dealers will also be present for promotion and sales of games

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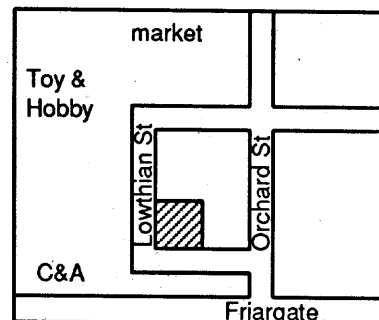
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and related products. Preregistration is \$4, or \$5 at the door. This price includes entry fees into any events at the convention. Write to: Tim Brown, Box 4377, West Point NY 10997; or call: (914) 938-3358.

**ECLECTION, April 29-May 1**

Austin's never-ending science-fiction convention, ETERNACON, brings you a convention run by fans for fans. Held at the Waller Creek Plaza Hotel in Austin, Texas, this science-fiction convention features George R.R. Martin as author guest of honor, Kelly Freas as artist guest of honor, Robert Asprin as toastmaster, Richard Garriot as gaming guest of honor, and Martin Wagner and Joy Marie Ledet as fan guests of honor. Featured events will include a 24-hour con suite, a 24-hour silly room (including an alien pet show, pun-off contest, Clay Wars, Dinosaur Hunt, and other madness), an art show and champagne auction, a masquerade (with hundreds of dollars offered as cash prizes), gaming and computer gaming, a meet-the-pros session, and an official presentation on the new Lucasfilm fantasy movie, *Willow*. Memberships are \$12 before April 1 and \$15 thereafter. Send an SASE to: ECLECTION Membership, P.O. Box 18269, Austin TX 78760.

**THE WIZARD'S CHALLENGE**  
**April 29-May 1**

This 6th-annual convention will be held at the Westwater Inn in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. The premier event will be a four-player team AD&D® game tournament. Other events will include a Supremacy tournament, BATTLETECH®, CAR WARS®, and many other games. An opening-night costume ball, open gaming, movies, a games auction, and closing-night Medieval Feast and awards presentation are some of the many planned activities. The convention fee is \$5, the AD&D® game tournament is \$20 per person, other tournaments are \$5, the costume ball is \$6, and the Medieval Feast is \$17.50. Further information may be obtained by writing to: The Wizards Corner, 2124B Broad Street, Regina, Saskatchewan, CANADA; or by calling: Kelly Sturch at (306) 757-8544.

**AMIGOCON 3, May 1-3**

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Sunland Park in El Paso, Tex. Guest of honor is George Alec Effinger, with Brad Foster as artist guest of honor. Events include open gaming, an art show, a masquerade party, and a dealers' room. Preregistration fees are \$12 for the entire weekend, if paid prior to April 22. At-the-door

fees are \$15 for the entire weekend or \$7.50 for each day. Write to: AMIGOCON 3, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923.

**MISCON III, May 13-15**

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Quality Inn in Missoula, Mont. Guests include TSR designer David "Zeb" Cook, author Greg Bear, and artist David Cherry. Special events include a masquerade dance, a huckster's room, gaming, and an SCA demonstration. Registration is \$15 until April 15 or \$18 at the door. One-day memberships will be available for \$10. Write to: MISCON III, P.O. Box 9363, Missoula MT 59807.

**CONQUEST VIII, May 14-15**

This gaming convention will be held at the Michigan State University Student Union in East Lansing, Mich. CONQUEST VIII will emphasize role-playing games and historical miniatures competitions. Board games, movies, dealers, and a well-attended games auction will also be featured. Registration fees are \$5 for Saturday, \$4 for Sunday, and \$7 for both days. Contact: CONQUEST, c/o Janice Gamalski, 126 Woodmere, East Lansing MI 48823.

**CANGAMES '88, May 20-23**

Canada's oldest and largest gaming convention will be held at the Carleton University Commons in Ottawa, Ont., Canada. RPG, miniatures, and board-game tournaments will be offered, along with an auction, a dealers' room, and a miniatures-painting contest. Tournament play is free; trophies will be awarded for best players. The convention starts at 4 P.M. Friday and ends at 4 P.M. Monday. Preregistration fees are \$12 before April 1, and \$16 at the door. Write to: CANGAMES '88, P.O. Box 3358, Station D, Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1P 6H8.

**KEYCON 5-CANVENTION 8**  
**May 20-22**

Sponsored by WINSFA, the Winnipeg Science Fiction Society, this science-fiction convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Downtown in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Gene Wolfe will be the guest of honor, Charles de Lint will be honored guest, Fran Skene will be fan guest, and Kevin Davies will be artist guest. In addition to all regular events (art show and auction, dealers' room, movies, etc.), a selection of CANVENTION programming will also be presented, including French and bilingual programming as well as the presentation of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Awards (also known as the CASPAR Awards). Convention rates \$20 until

April 30 (\$17 U.S. funds) or \$25 at the door (\$22 U.S. funds). CANVENTION 8 voter supporting fees are \$5 (U.S. funds) for nonmembers. Write to: KEYCON 5-CANVENTION 8, P.O. Box 3178, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA, R3C 4E6.

**NI-CON III, May 21-22**

This two-day gaming convention will be held once again at the College of DuPage SRC Building at 22nd and Lambert in Glen Ellyn, Ill. Events will include: historical, fantasy, and science-fiction miniatures battles, board games, AD&D® game events, BATTLETECH®, TITAN, TALISMAN, SHOGUN, and other game events. Other features include a dealers' room, our famous silent auction, and more. Special guests will be announced at a later date. Entry fees are \$8 for the weekend, or \$5 per day. Write to: NI-CON III, c/o Eric Ortega, 306 Belmont Drive, Romeoville IL 60441; or call: Eric at (815) 886-5940, or Randy at (312) 894-3435.

**GAMEX '88, May 27-30**

This gaming convention will be held at the Pasadena Hilton Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family board-game tournaments are offered, as well as seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitors' area. Write to: GAMEX '88, c/o Jeff Albanese, DTI, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808; or call: (213) 420-3675.

**INTERDIMENSIONS '88, June 3-5**

Sponsored by the SouthEastern Indiana Gamers' Association, this gaming convention will be held at the Batesville Middle School in Batesville, Ind. Events include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, an RPGA™ Network TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game tournament, a Hack-N-Slash tournament, open gaming, a miniatures-painting contest, an art show, and much more. Guests include Shawn McKee (co-creator of Hack-N-Slash), Gary Williams (artist guest), and others. Registration is \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. Special reduced fees will be offered to senior citizens. Tickets for the Sunday brunch are \$5. For more details, send an SASE to: INTERDIMENSIONS '88, P.O. Box 266, Batesville IN 47006-0266.

**CONGREGATE 88, June 10-12**

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Moat House Hotel in Longthorpe, Peterborough, U.K. Terry Pratchett is the guest of honor. Supporting membership fees are £5 and attending membership fees are £11. Write to: A.D. Smith, P.R. Officer, CONGREGATE 88, 25 Cavendish Street, Peterborough, PE1 5EQ, UNITED KINGDOM.

**HOSTIGOS, June 10-12**

This science-fiction convention, which is sponsored by the Penn State Science Fiction Society, will be held in the Hetzel Union Building on the University Park campus of Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pa. Hotel accommodations are available at the Sheraton Penn State located at 240 S. Pugh Street in State College, Pa. Jerry Pournelle will be the author guest of honor and John Carr will be the editor guest of honor. This convention will be held in honor of Pennsylvania's most famous SF writer, H. Beam Piper. There will be numerous panels concerning Piper's life and works, as well as several gaming events, an art show, a dealers' room, and more. Preregistration is \$16 until April 23, and \$22 thereafter. Write to: HOSTIGOS, 400 S. Gill Street, State College PA 16801; or call: (814) 237-5333.

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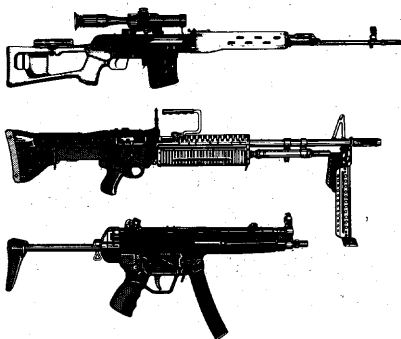
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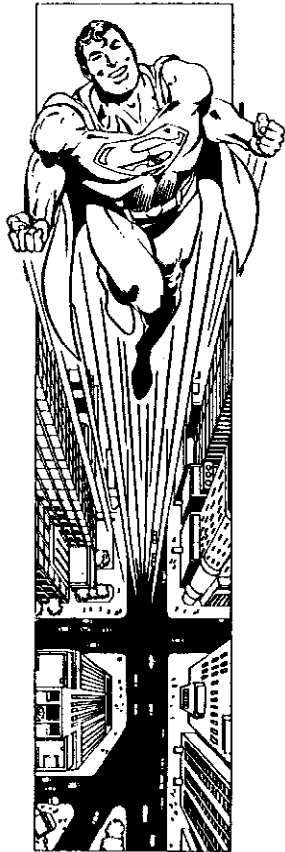
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SPECIAL GUESTS

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**MICHICON GAMEFEST '88, June 10-12**

This gaming convention will be held at the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, Mich. Events include 60 board games, 25 role-playing games, and 60 miniatures events, as well as a BATTLE FOR MOSCOW tournament, 35 dealers' booths, three used-games auctions, and open gaming. Advance admission is \$12 for all three days, or \$7 for one day. Write to: Mike Bartnikowski, Metro Detroit Gamers, Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192; or call: Barry Jensen at (313) 591-2300, ext. 325 (days) or Mike Bartnikowski at (313) 928-7744 (evenings).

**X-CON 12, June 10-12**

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Red Carpet Inn, 4747 S. Howell Avenue in Milwaukee, Wis. Special guests include: Somtow Sucharitkul as author guest, Bruce Pelz as fan guest, Dell Harris as artist guest, and Wilson "Bob" Tucker as first fandom guest. Scheduled events include an art show, ice-cream social, a huckster's room, masquerade party, and blood drive. Registration is \$15 until May 10, or \$20 at the door. Terry Carr Memorial Memberships are also available at \$18 (this includes a \$2 donation to the American Diabetes Association and a listing of your name in the program book). Write to: X-CON, Ltd., P.O. Box 7, Milwaukee WI 53201.

**DAGA, June 12**

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held from 10 A.M. to 5 PM at the Fiesta Motor Inn Ballroom, less than one mile south of exit 27 on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, in Willow Grove, Penn. Scheduled events include model

building, look-alike, sound-alike, costume, and trivia contests. Also scheduled are discussions on running role-playing games, figure painting, and more. Dealers will display their wares, and various science-fiction and fantasy models and dioramas will be on exhibit. Dealers' tables are \$40 and registrations are \$8 at the door. For more information, write to: DAGA Conventions, Daniel A. Aunspach, 105 Alison Lane D-15, Horsham PA 19044. Please enclose an SASE with this request.

**THE INTERNATIONAL SUPERMAN™ EXPOSITION, NEOVENTION VII, and 1988 STARFLEET™ NATIONAL CONFERENCE, June 16-19**

Ohio's largest gaming convention proudly sponsors a once-in-a-lifetime event: The International Superman™ Exposition at the Cleveland Convention Center. This once-only exposition will take place at the annual NEOVENTION normally held at Kent State University. This major summer happening will also include the STARFLEET™ National Conference. Special attractions include: an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game Open Masters tournament; BOOT HILL®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, CHAMPIONS™, and CAR WARS® tournaments; over 100 AD&D® game and other role-playing game events; over 50 miniatures competitions, including ancients, Napoleonic, and Civil War events; a games auction, figure-painting contest, masquerade ball, a city-wide parade; television and movie presentations, and major Star Trek and other science-fiction movie displays and floats; and much more. Dozens of science-fiction and fantasy authors and a score of television and

movie personalities will be in attendance. In addition, design workshops, panel discussions, and several other events will be featured. Limited preregistration pass prices are \$6 per day and \$15 for the weekend. For more information write: NEOVENTION VII, c/o Neverending Battle, Inc., Suite 852, Hanna Building, Cleveland OH 44115.

**POLYCON VI, June 17-19**

This science-fiction and fantasy gaming convention will be held at the Santa Lucia Dormitory on the California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, Calif. Featured events will include fantasy role-playing and war gaming, a games auction, numerous seminars, a miniatures-painting contest, game demonstrations, a dealers' room, and much more. Registration rates for the weekend are \$14 before April 10, \$18 before May 15, and \$24 at the door. One-day registration fees are \$12 at the door. For more details, write to: POLYCON VI, Box 168, Julien A. McPhee University Union, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo CA 93407.

**GATEWAY '88, September 2-5**

This gaming convention will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family board game tournaments are offered, as well as various seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitors' area. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374 Village Road, Long Beach CA 90808; or call: Diverse Talents at (213) 420-3675.



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**SNARF QUEST**  
# 56  
BY ELMORE

WAIT A MINUTE, POP,  
DEM PEOPLE DONE  
CAUGHT DAT TALKIN'  
BUG AND IS COMIN'  
DIS WAY!

@\*\*@! MORE  
INTERRUPTIONS!

WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO??  
WE MUST CAMOUFLAGE.

INTO WHAT?!

EEHH.. ROPE!..

EFFIM, WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO  
LEARN TO FLY CORRECTLY?

MAYBE YOU  
JUS' DIDN'T  
PROGRAM ME  
GOOD ENOUGH.

BOYS, BOYS,  
CALM DOWN.  
WE HAVE SNARF  
TO WORRY  
ABOUT ALSO

OH YES  
I DID!!

AVEEARE, HAND ME THAT  
SHORT PIECE OF ROPE.

SURE, NOW EFFIM, DON'T  
UNTIE YOURSELF THIS TIME.

OKAY!

(POP!)

@\*\*@!!

I JUST WANTED TO KNOW  
WHAT WAS GOING ON IN  
THE CANYON.

WELL, WE  
TOLD YA.

OH MY!  
OH MY!

AND WHEN IT GETS DAYLIGHT, I'LL  
BACK THE TRUCK OVER BY THE  
CANYON SO YOU CAN SEE EVERYTHING.

HUH!?! WHAT'S THAT  
NOISE I HEAR!?!  
WHA A!...???

POP, LOOK WHAT DEY DONE TO  
ME! WHAT ME GONNA DO?

STAY CALM, SON, YOU ARE  
STILL IN ONE PIECE... WE'LL  
JUS' GET OUTTA HERE  
IN A MINUTE.

HEY, YOU GUYS!

COME HERE,  
QUICK!  
HURRY!

NOW WHAT?

THIS PIECE OF ROPE IS  
TALKING TO THAT PIECE  
OF ROPE!

WE BETTER  
KEEP QUIET!

YOU MUST HAVE  
KNOCKED SOME  
CHIPS LOOSE WHEN  
YOU WERE BOUNCING  
AROUND IN THE

I'M TELLIN' THE TRUTH!

LISTEN, I'LL STAY  
OVER BY THE  
CANYON AN'  
KEEP SNARF  
COMPANY 'TIL  
MORNING...

GREAT, AND I'LL  
STAY HERE WITH  
EFFIM, G'NIGHT!

MORNING AT LAST...

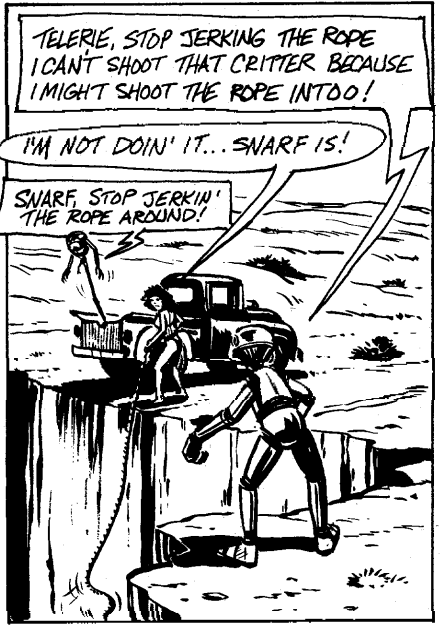
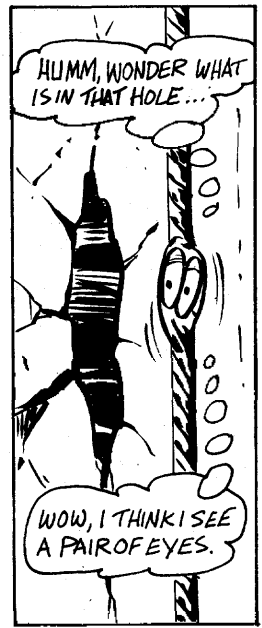
HOLD IT, THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH.

NOW, EFFIM CAN SEE  
EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING  
ON.

G'MORNIN',  
SNARF.

@\*\*@! X

©-ELMORE '88



**LATER**

IF EVERY DAY IS LIKE DIS LAST ONE, WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT TO DA YUKETOOTH MOUNTAINS AN' FIND ALL DAT GOLD!

WE'LL MAKE IT. DON'T WORRY.

YUKETOOTH MOUNTAINS!

GOLD!

ALRIGHT GUYS, LET'S HIT DAT OL' TRAIL.

HERE, THIS SACKET MUST BE YOURS, IT'S TOO SMALL FOR ME.

BUT, I-I DON'T, ... NEVERMIND.

**LATER THAT DAY...**

HEY, POP, WE NEED SOME KIND OF PLAN.

I GOT ONE, BOY, LINTIE YOURSELF FROM DAT BIG OL' BUG, THEY WILL STOP THIS MONSTER TO CATCH THE BUG, THEN WE CAN ESCAPE!!

ROPES DON'T TALK, ROPES DON'T TALK, ROPES DON'T TALK...

**THE PLAN WORKED...**

WHAT DO WE DO NOW, POP?

JUS' PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN US AND THEM BEFORE THEY CATCH THE BUG.

GET HIM!

WHOA! LOOK OUT

HE'S COMIN' YOUR WAY!

WHHEW! POP, DEY WILL BE COMIN' OVER DAT HILL IN A FEW MINUTES!

YOU'RE RIGHT, BOY, WE GOTTA DO SOMETHIN'!

MAYBE I GOT SOMETHING HERE IN OUR TRAVELIN' SACK, I'M ALWAYS PREPARED FOR ANYTHING!

HUMMM, WHAT DO I HAVE... CHEESE, CANDLE, BLACK MARKER, RAISINS, FISH FOOD, GOLD PAINT...

HOLD ON, POP, I THINK I MIGHT HAVE A PLAN, WE COULD FOOL DESE SILLY PEOPLES. NOW LISTEN...

**LATER...**

I ALMOST HAD HIM... HOW DID HE GET LOOSE ANYWAY!

I THINK I'M ABOUT FINISHED WITH OUR MOUNTAIN RANGE.

YUKETOOTH MOUNTAINS

I FINISHED DA SIGN AN' I'M ALMOST DONE WIF OUR GOLD NUGGETS.

I GOT DA BEE MORON - GET A ROPE!

HEY, THEY CAUGHT THE BUG. YA BETTER HIDE, SON, THEY'LL BE COMIN' OVER THAT HILL ANY MINUTE. MAN, I'M GONNA SMEAR THAT MONSTER THIS TIME!

GOOD LUCK, POP, I HOPE DIS PLAN WORKS.

AND IF YOU LINTIE YOURSELF AGAIN, WE WILL NOT STOP AN' CATCH YA!

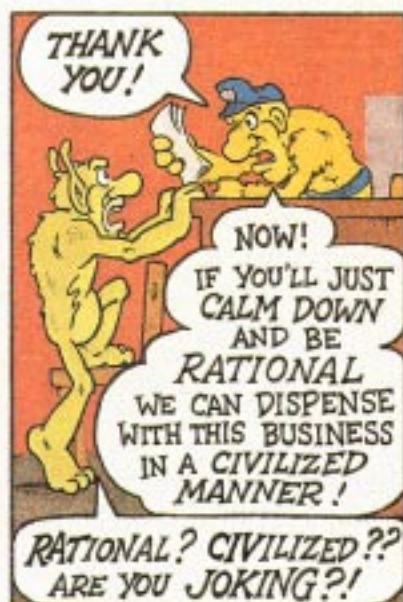
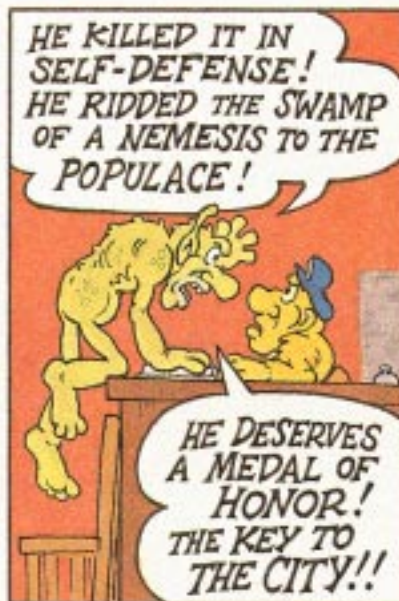
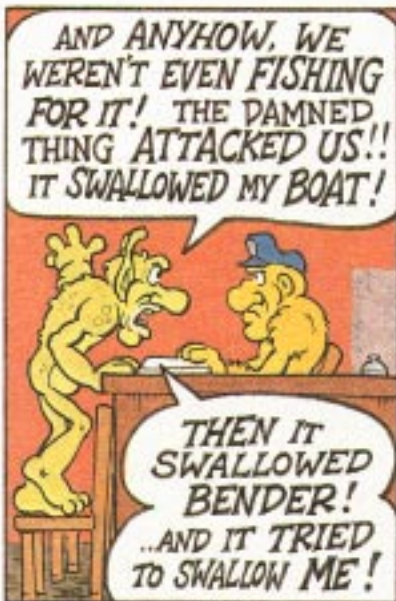
HEY, LOOKS LIKE MOST OF OUR ROPE IS GONE!

I'M INNOCENT!

WE SHOULD PUT HIM IN A SUITCASE.

NEXT ISSUE: MORE DESERT, MORE TROUBLES, SHORT TEMPER...









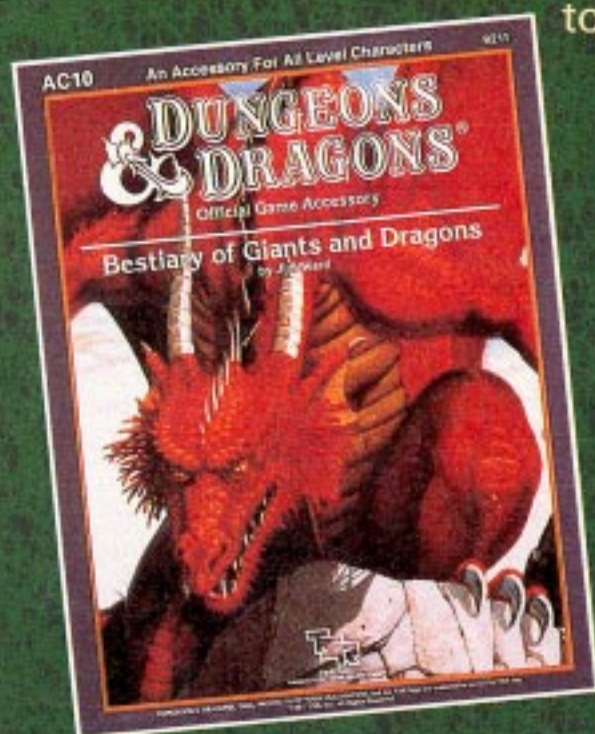
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