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Contents

Vol. VIII, No. 8

February 1984

SPECIAL ATTRACTION

- The Baton Races of Yaz.39
A game of tactics and Tarnoses

OTHER FEATURES

- The ecology of the peryton10
Why hearts? Here's why
- Wounds and weeds14
Plants to help your characters heal
- Enhancing the enchanter.20
DRAGONQUEST™ game alterations
- Rings that do weird things.28
Thirteen new pieces of magical jewelry
- New avenues for agents32
TOP SECRET® Companion preview
- Curing the Monty Haul malady.46
How to help a runaway campaign
- Spells between the covers.55
Expanding the magical research rules
- Windwolf.64
A fictional flight of fantasy

REGULAR OFFERINGS

- Out on a Limb3
Letters and answers
- The forum.6
Opinions and observations
- Convention calendar48
- Review section:
- One-of-a-kind game aids50
Pavis52
Big Rubble52
City States of Arklyrell.54
- Gamers' Guide70
- Dragon Mirth71
- Snarfquest73
- What's New?76
- Wormy78

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Our article wish list

One of the questions I'm asked most often is "What sort of an article should I write?" My stock answer is "Whatever you want, as long as it's good."

Oh, I know what the question *means* — what subjects are we interested in seeing articles about? But unless I think about it ahead of time, I usually have trouble coming up with a concrete answer to *that* question on the spot.

And now I've thought about it, long enough and hard enough to come up with a short list of topics that I think would make good AD&D™ game articles. In approximate order of their desirability, they are:

(1) Given that the magical universe has laws that govern it, just as the physical universe does, what are the "laws of magic" in the AD&D game world? What is the nature of magic? What is magic capable of doing, and not capable of doing?

(2) What is life (so to speak) like on the other planes of existence? We've done a few of these treatments, most notably Roger Moore's essay on the Astral Plane in #67 and Ed Greenwood's tour of the Nine Hells in #75 and #76, but *lots* of planes are still unexplored.

(3) What is the rationale behind the spell classification system (abjuration, alteration, conjuration, and so forth)? How can this information be put to use for game purposes, or isn't it useful at all?

(4) How does a DM calculate XP and GP values for original magic items? Is there a system inherent in the DMG's treasure-table values, and can it be applied to new magic in a way that keeps the values consistent with the official rules?

(5) Aside from direct intervention by a deity or the minions of a deity, is there a way for a cleric to enchant magic items? Should there be a way, or would giving clerics this ability unbalance the game?

(6) How should henchmen and hirelings be treated, both by a player (through his character) and by the DM? How are the two types different, and what can be said about how they will generally act?

If you've been dreaming of getting an article published in DRAGON® Magazine, and if one of these ideas causes a light bulb to go on inside your head, you might be on the way to composing an article that we'd be very interested in seeing. Drop us a line to let us know what you're working on (especially if it's an other-planes article, since someone else might already be working on "your" plane) — or, take the plunge and send in a finished manuscript. We'll try to give prime consideration to "wish list" manuscripts, and maybe we can both have one of our wishes fulfilled at the same time.





ames we publish in this magazine have to be fun to play. But it's nice when they can also teach us something about the virtues of cooperation and

teamwork. And that's what *The Baton Races of Yaz* is all about — Skadinglees, Flibdills, Tarnoses, and Luggants all working together to succeed. *Baton Races* is the latest game we've published by designer C. C. Stoll, who was also responsible for *Flight of the Boodles* (issue #60) and *Arrakhar's Wand* (#69). I don't know where he gets his ideas, but I hope he keeps on getting them.

If this issue's cover painting looks dark and gloomy to you, then artist Jerry Eaton did his job well. The scene portrays what a dungeon would look like if the only significant light source came from the casting of a *Mordenkainen's sword* spell. It looks like the wizard in the background has matters well in hand — even though his hand is nowhere near the sword.

Our AD&D™ game articles in this issue are led off by "The ecology of the peryton," in which Nigel Findley gets to the (ahem) heart of the matter in explaining that strange creature. "Wounds and weeds" by Kevin Thompson suggests ways that characters can use the flora they find around them to make up for the absence of a cleric with a healing spell; and in "Rings that do weird things," a DM can get ideas on how to freshen up a treasure hoard with magic rings that are unlike any of those that players may have "accidentally" read about in the DMG.

One of the most complicated and open-ended aspects of the AD&D rules is the section on spell research. In "Spells between the covers," Bruce Heard does some research of his own on ways in which DMs can moderate their characters' attempts to build up libraries and design distinctive new forms of magic.

The DRAGONQUEST™ game has a magic system of an entirely different sort, and Craig Barrett has some definite ideas on how to go about "Enhancing the enchanter." Even those of you who don't play that game may get some inspiration from the magical principles and concepts he discusses and develops.

TOP SECRET® game players who have waited long and patiently for expansions and additions to the rules don't have to be patient any longer. "New avenues for agents" is the first installment of a short series of articles previewing the contents of the TOP SECRET Companion, soon to be released by TSR.

Our fiction feature this month is "Windwolf," a story that's difficult to characterize without giving away the plot . . . so I'll stop right there, and just say that I hope you enjoy it.

And that's about the end of the space for this issue. Have a happy Valentine's Day, and may your heart be stolen by something other than a peryton. — KM



Strange but true

Dear Dragon,

In issue #80 in the adventure "Barnacus: City in Peril," Haermond II is listed as having a strength of 8. This is impossible, even if he is venerable, due to the statement in the DMG, p. 13 under aging, "... any adjustments cannot lower any ability below racial or class minimums." I would like to ask what the correct strength should be.

Jay Elliott
Sherrard, Ill.

Dear Editor:

I'm writing in reference to "The Ecology of the Treant" in issue #79. In this article, a halfling, Clarissa, is a druid. This presents a great problem, for in the *Players Handbook* it clearly states that halflings cannot be druids. Therefore, it may create some confusion to AD&D players who read DRAGON Magazine.

Greg DeGruccio
Round Rock, Tex.

Neither of these characterizations was a mistake, because both of the characters in question were portrayed as non-player characters. It is perhaps unusual, but nonetheless legal, for an NPC to have a characteristic outside the normal racial or class limitations, which are meant to be strictly adhered to only when player characters are considered. Similarly the rules do indeed prohibit PC halflings from being druids, but the *Players Handbook* just as clearly allows them to be druids if the character in question is a non-player character. — KM

Fixing our foul-ups

Dear Editor,

Katharine Kerr's article on castles in the December issue was informative and stimulating. One serious error was the definition of a hectare as 10,000 square kilometers. The article notes that it took fifteen to thirty peasant families to work a holding of forty to one hundred hectares in order to support a knight *et al.* With hectares as large as the article's, agriculture must have been labor-intensive indeed.

Thomas Mullen
Taipei, Taiwan

Dear Dragon,

I have read through "Barnacus: City in Peril" (#80) and have found but one error. On the map there is no number 67, yet on the following page number 67 is described as being a bridge. The only bridge on the map is the one joining the two sides of the city together. I was wondering if the number was left out purposely or was it an error?

Kedar Warriner
Beaconsfield, Quebec

Dear Editor:

I have just discovered another error in the listing of my chi-square program (#78). Line 670 should read NT=NF. . . instead of NT=NC. . . The result of this error is that in standard (ungrouped) mode, the message regarding the test will be wrong (always biased in most BASICs) The chi-square value is still correct, however,

I'm not sure of the source of this error. It doesn't appear on my program listing, but since I didn't have a printer at that time, what I sent you was a typed transcript of the listing, and I can't find a copy of that now. Well, if it was my error, sorry. Regardless, I would appreciate your informing your readers of the correction.

David G. Weeks
Webster Groves, Mo.

Dear Editor:

About the article "Treasures rare and wondrous" (#80), I have a question concerning number 31. You said the staff had two rubies worth 500 gp each and the foot was shod with 25 gp worth of adamantite. This comes out to 1,025 gp, but the chart said it was worth 10,025 gp. Which is the correct price?

Greg McLean
Eustis, Fla.

Dear Kim,

Thanks for your kind editorial words introducing my first DRAGON article, "Living in a material world" (#81). Alas, when sorting through my tables and notes, I uncovered an error (mine) which needs a bit of correction. In Table VI, the last sentence of the entry for the druidical spell *changestaff* should be changed to read:

Curing the staff by sun drying and special smoke requires 28 days. Shaping, carving, smoothing, and polishing requires another 28 days. The finished staff, showing scenes of woodland life, is then rubbed with the juice of holly berries. This work must be done by a druid of at least 3rd level, and will cost 5,000 gp.

Also, on the top of p. 66, the effectiveness of substituted spell components depends on their "(a) appropriateness and (b) expense" rather than on their "(a) effectiveness and (b) expense."

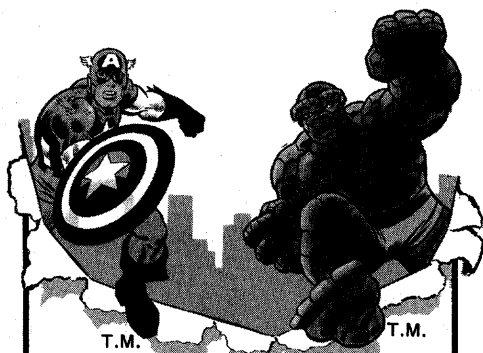
Michael Dobson
Lake Geneva, Wis.

Okay, let's take 'em one at a time.

The hectare mistake appeared in Katharine Kerr's original manuscript. (Of course, it should be 10,000 square meters, not kilometers.) I know she'd be willing to take all the blame, because she's a nice person, but we really should have noticed the error and corrected it in our editing.

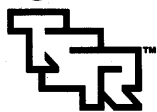
The missing number 67 on the map is our fault — and no, we don't make mistakes on purpose. It's a good thing there was only one bridge in the city, isn't it?

I pulled David's original listing of the chi-square program from our files and discovered that the mistake did appear in the typed tran-



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script he sent. I really do understand how these kinds of mistakes can happen (because I've made so many of them myself), and I'm grateful to David and a few other readers who pointed it out to us.

The foul-up in the treasure article was a simple typographical error, but not one that you'd be able to figure out yourself, since the correction could go either way. Actually, we dropped a zero from the value of the rubies, which should have been worth 5,000 gp each, so the total value of the staff was correct as printed.

Thanks to Mike for setting the record straight about the changestaff component — but again, we must take part of the "credit" for this goof since we could have and should have checked it out before printing it. As for the double use of the word "effectiveness," all I can say is that sometimes we get so overworked that we type things twice twice by mistake. — KM

Armor class dilemma

Dear Editor:

In regard to the Combat Computer in issue #74: I have found it a great help in running my campaign, and I think you did a great job in explaining how to use it. However, I have a problem with apparent and enhanced armor class.

Obviously, not all creatures wear armor with set AC values, but instead they depend on their natural armor and/or dexterity. The article states, "regardless of the actual AC a piece of equipment provides its wearer, the apparent AC of that armor is the same for all armor of that type." This presents problems.

Suppose I wish to handle melee between a group of adventurers and a xorn. The xorn wears no armor, is not too quick on its feet, and (to the best of my knowledge) doesn't improve its AC value through any magical means. Thus its AC value of -2 must be enhanced by its natural stone-like shell. What is the apparent AC of stone-mail?

The same goes for the apparent AC of, say, Asmodeus. To the best of my knowledge he does not wear any armor. Since his AC of -7 is obviously enhanced by some means, what would his apparent AC be — 10? That can't be right.

This is mostly a minor complaint (since I'm sure there are many DMs out there who disregard AC adjustments altogether) but if there is any reasonable answer to this dilemma, I would be happy to hear it.

Rob Paige
Cheney, Wash.

We checked out this question with Tracy Hickman, who is on the TSR design staff was the creator of the Combat Computer. He told us what we expected to hear — namely, that no provision exists in the AD&D™ rules for taking AC adjustments in to consideration in cases like the ones Rob describes, which is why the Combat Computer didn't address the question.

The problem can't really be solved (short of an official addition to the rules), but it can be handled in one of two ways:

(a) Don't use any armor class adjustment for weapon type against creatures with an AC of better than 2, when that armor class can't be equated to an "apparent" AC, or

(b) Treat any "problem" AC as if the creature in question had an actual armor class of 2, which is as low as the armor class adjustment table in the Players Handbook goes. — KM

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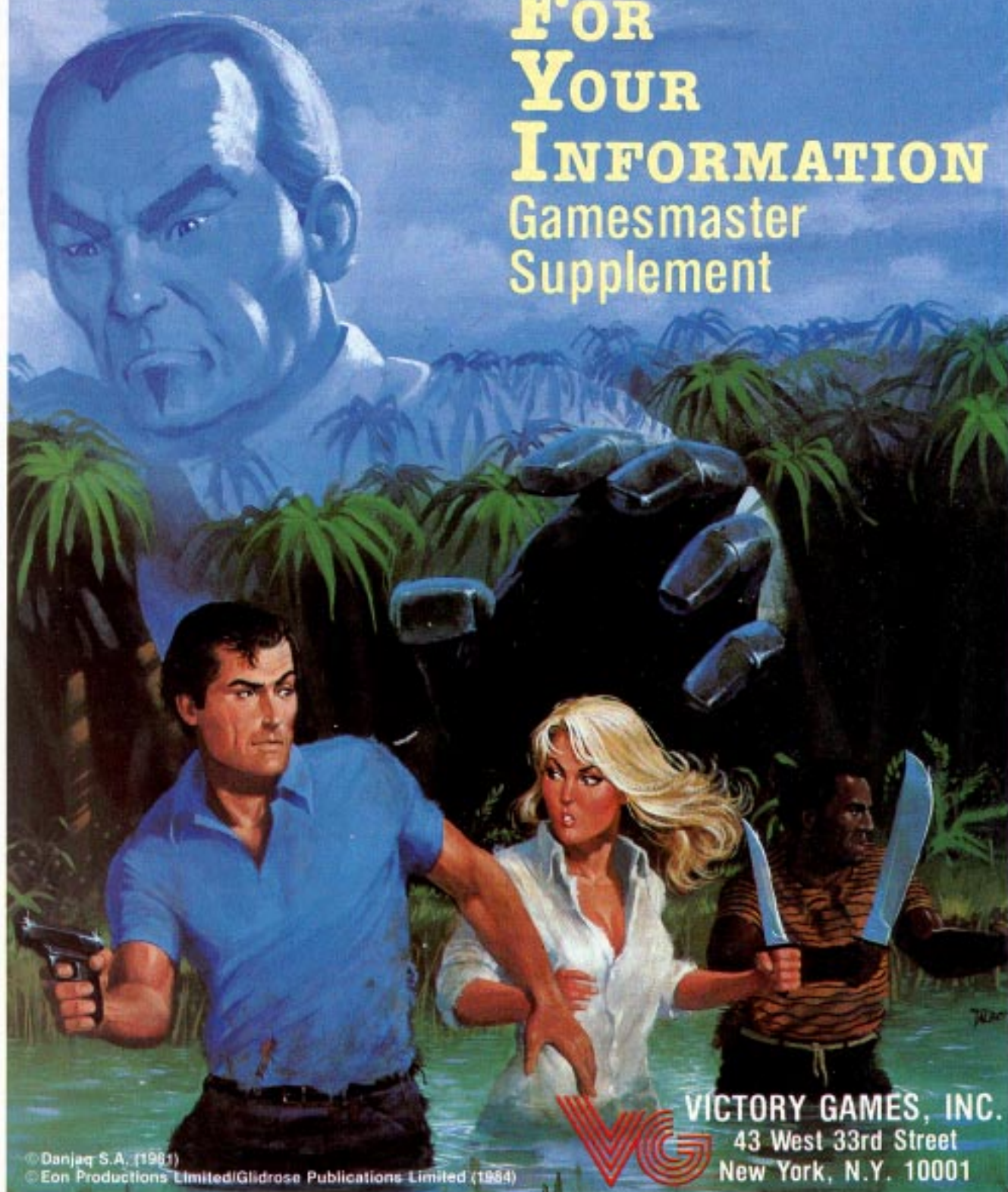
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The forum

Opinions and observations from our readers

I found some cause for disagreement in Katharine Kerr's December article, "Who lives in that castle?"

Contrary to what Ms. Kerr states, the average serf did not live in a constant state of near-starvation, except in times of drought and famine, when *everyone* tightened his belt. Serfs ate quite well, if somewhat monotonously. While the lord and his guests dined on such delicacies as peacock (very tough, I've heard, and served more for its looks than taste) and other game, rare foods and spices such as pepper, white bread, and sweets . . . his serfs were downing copious amounts of ye olde standbye — potage (pea soup), cassoulet (bean and sausage stew), porridge, bacon, eggs, black bread, and any small game he managed to poach without getting caught.

A smart lord would not take so much that his serfs would starve. After all, it's bad land management — a serf who is dead or otherwise too weak to work is not getting his lord any richer.

Nicki Perdue
Morgan Hill, Calif.

* * * *

Both EGG and Ed Greenwood have suggested that the Nine Hells be stripped of non-devil deities, which begs the question of where to put absolute lawful evil deities who aren't devils.

Actually, the problem extends through all the afterlife planes, inasmuch as there are far more pantheons of gods in any alignment than there are known planes. If we discard the basic axiom of the afterlife astral planes, however, we can easily dispose of the problem and not really affect the known planes too much in playability.

As it stands, there is one afterlife plane per major and/or minor alignment, with official stats given for 16 of the 25 possible alignments. If we remove this concept and say that there is (with exceptions) one afterlife plane per manifestation of godhead and these planes have alignments, the current problems disappear. In the case of the Nine Hells, those nine planes occupy only a part of what I call the *Astral Space* of Absolute Lawful Evil. Since the planes are determined by the intersection of the Good/Evil and Law/Chaos axes and are afterlife planes, it can be presumed that the third dimensional axis is the Life/Death line. (Astral continuums using the Light/Dark axis?) The plane which orcs and goblinoids battle for possession of lies parallel to the hells, stacked within the Astral Space of lawful evil, along with the planes ruled by other lawful evil deities.

Removing the one-plane-to-a-customer rule makes it easier to make the astral planes able to be consistent with established mythology. Olympus can and should be in the same astral space as either the Twin Paradises or the Seven Heavens. The Greeks and Romans had civilized (lawful)

societies, and their gods should reflect that.

It might be convenient to name the 25 spaces, but caution should be used to have names which do not reflect any particular inhabitant of the space. Mr. Greenwood used the phrase "The Infernal Regions" in his article when talking about the various hells of legend and literature, and I for one nominate it for the name of the Absolute Lawful Evil space.

S. D. Anderson
Whittier, Calif.

* * * *

I'm glad to hear you're allowing more space for readers' opinions in DRAGON. I'm also very glad to hear that you call such opinions "letters," as letters can be handwritten while other manuscripts have to be typed, and I hate to type. So, here's my opinion on one question — I trust it will be legible.

Why There's No Such Thing as an Anti-Paladin:

Gods differ greatly in how easy it is to serve them. The lawful good gods are the hardest to serve, since their service goes against so many of our natural instincts. A couple of examples:

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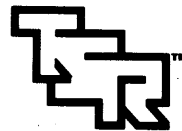
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HARNVIEW A 32 page overview of Harn including a historical narrative plus gamemaster tables on birthing characters on Harn, weather generation, and hazards/encounters.

HARNDEX A 64 page alphabetical reference, describing almost 1000 entries on the history, geography, religions, cultures, politics, and economics of Harn. Harnindex also includes numerous maps and illustrations.

EXPANSION MODULES

The first two expansion modules for Harn are now available. We must stress that these are not programmed adventure modules. They are re-usable environment backdrops which allow the gamemaster to add custom adventure details within a consistent framework. Gamemasters should also note that Harn is both a "magic-weak" and "money-tight" world where non-stop "hack and slay" is discouraged in favour of creative and realistic adventuring.

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shot yourself, you *don't* shoot. And if an evil man takes hostages and demands that you surrender or he'll kill them, you surrender. (Of course, you may negotiate, but not to the point where he kills one of them to add to the pressure.) A chaotic or neutral good character might argue that killing the hostage-takers, no matter what happens to the hostages, will ultimately be the better course in that it will deter future hostage-takers. A lawful evil or neutral character might argue that everyone is responsible for their own actions, so if the hostages were dumb enough to get captured, that's their worry; I'll just kill the villains. But neither of these is the lawful good way. For the lawful good character, defense of the innocent must come first; self-preservation is secondary.

Self-enrichment: Too much wealth in the hands of too few people is a hallmark of lawful evil — get all you can and hold onto it, and don't think about all the impoverished peasants who average your money out. Lawful good people can live comfortably, but any extra money goes to improve the lot of their less fortunate fellow creatures. Hoarding and "flaunting it" are alike evil traits; lawful good people take what they deserve and need, but no more. They are good as well as lawful.

I could go on — for one thing, I haven't touched on when killing (i.e., vengeance) is justifiable — but you should have the picture by now. Being lawful good requires great restraint and goes contrary to many of our basic instincts.

Therefore, the lawful good gods give considerable benefits to their more loyal followers, both as inducements to serve them by following this basically unnatural way, and as rewards for arduous services (suitable recompense for services rendered is definitely a lawful good virtue).

Now, consider how one serves the cause of

chaotic evil. It's a *lot* easier. If you have foes, you can kill them, torture them, enslave them, or do what you will. If innocent bystanders get you don't care. You can pile up all the money you want, not caring how many people get impoverished in the process. In short, being chaotic evil places you under no restraints whatever. It's *fun* (for those with the "right" — by which I mean *wrong* — mentality, of which there are very many). So why would the chaotic evil gods want to reward one for having fun?

And *that's* why there is no such thing as an anti-paladin (or an evil saint; see issue #79).

Ralph Sizer
Providence, R.I.

* * * *

While reading through my copy of DRAGON #81, I came across an article by David Hutton in the Forum section concerning the power of the character with two classes, and I felt obligated to express my feelings on the subject.

I feel that the current system of the character with two classes is very accurate and adds flavor to the game. I see no evidence in what Mr. Hutton has written that the character with two classes is so "staggeringly powerful," as he puts it. In the example he gives of an assassin of seventh level who was once a fighter of first level, I see a character who wasted two thousand experience points to gain the "benefits" of better armor in combat, which doesn't come in too handy if the NPC is attempting to sneak up and assassinate someone. If you examine the two characters, it is obvious that an assassin has a better chance to hit, an equal number of weapons (with just as many to choose from), and an equal non-proficiency penalty with his first level fighter part.

The only good which comes out of the whole deal is that this character can use all the magic weapons a fighter can use, instead of just most of them, which other thieves and assassins can use. And I would rather have an assassin in nice quiet leather armor with a girdle of fire giant strength than an assassin/first level fighter with a potion of the same name.

Also, if there is still a reluctance on the part of you DMs out there, consider this: the more the power, the greater the risks most players can and will usually take. In most cases, when characters die it is because they bit off more than they can chew. Your characters with two classes are just as likely to make ridiculous mistakes and blunders as are your "normal" characters. To enhance this swelling of pride is easy; a few peasants falling on their knees in front of the heroes pleading for salvation from the local dragon or wizard, or a king offering a nice, fat ransom to anyone who can infiltrate the castle of one of his enemies should blind the characters to all caution and send them headlong into doom, if for no other reason than to save their precious reputations.

One final point to consider: If the characters are that great, sooner or later some deity will call on them to give eternal service. Former player characters who have been divinely called *do* make great right-hand men and women for most Dungeon Masters. . . .

Eric Odgaard
Lincoln, Neb.

* * * *

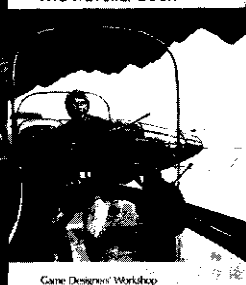
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(Turn to page 80)

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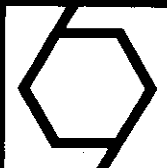
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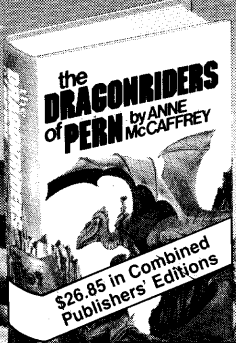
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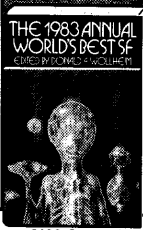
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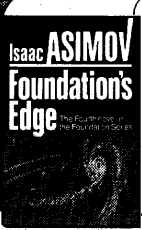
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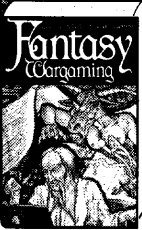
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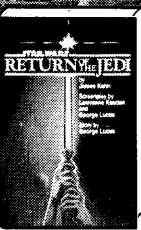
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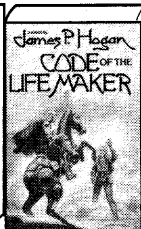
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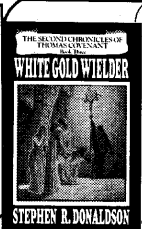
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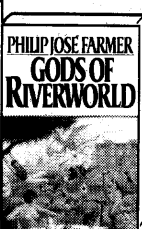
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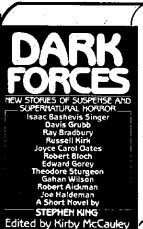
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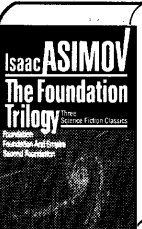
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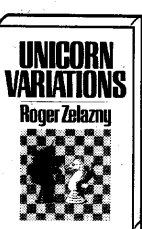
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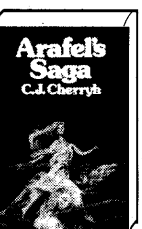
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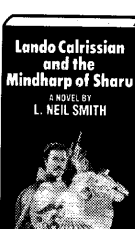
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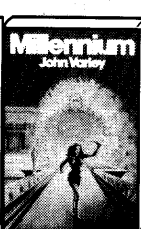
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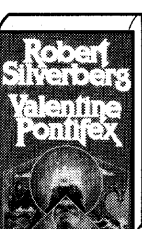
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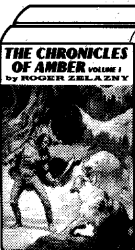
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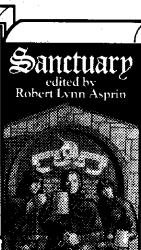
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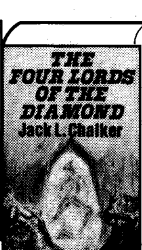
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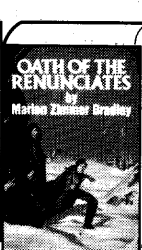
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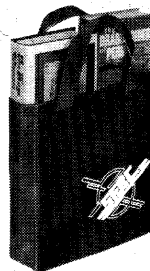
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The ecology of the peryton

by Nigel Findley

"Hearts!" The younger mage brought his fist down on the table with enough force to make the tankards jump. "Explain that to me! Why hearts?"

I maintained my aloof manner. "Strange creatures have strange habits," I remarked casually. "And what could be more strange than a beast with the head and antlers of a deer and the body and wings of a vulture?"

The young wizard's elder companion sniffed. "An answer that is no answer. We came to speak to Nex — Nex the Collector, Nex of the Arrow — and find that the famous bounty hunter is no more than a child of twenty summers with a disrespectful tongue."

I narrowed my eyes and allowed a half-smile to creep onto my lips. "A *man* of only twenty summers I may be," I said quietly, flicking my glance between the two of them, "but in that time I have seen — and slain — more varieties of creature than you can name, even with all your wizards' learning."

"But," I continued less coldly, "this is beside the point. Perhaps all your questions will be answered by the carcass of a peryton, which I can and will deliver to you for . . ." I paused, making it seem as though I was just now deciding on a price, when actually I had made up my mind as soon as I saw the rich cloth of their robes and the lavish gold chains around their necks. " . . . ten thousand pieces of gold." I leaned back and awaited the storm of protest that was sure to follow.

And, as I had expected, the face of the younger wizard stiffened and became flushed. But, to my surprise, his elder companion only hesitated a moment, then nodded slowly. "The Wizards' Guild is prepared to meet your fee," he said. "Ten thousand gold nobles for a specimen of an adult peryton."

I tried, somewhat unsuccessfully, not to smirk. This kind of dickering I liked; that fee was two times my usual price. "The deal is struck," I said. "Now, of course, that does not include my expenses. . . ."

"You hunt the peryton?" I turned to find the source of the rough, low voice that came from behind me. The man who had spoken wore a deep purple tunic of fine workmanship. On a chain around his neck hung a silver token of a bird. Though almost three times my age, he was well-muscled and seemed to carry himself with confidence. I had brought my hand to my sword hilt as I turned, but let it drop again when I noticed that he was unarmed.

"Yes, good cleric," I said, "or so I intend. If such matters are your concern, join us. My name is—"



"Nex. I know. I am Amhotep." He pulled up a chair and seated himself at the table. "And what do you know about the peryton that you can think of hunting it without showing any doubt or concern?"

I shrugged. "I know that the beast dwells in mountainous regions, such as the peaks two days' ride north of here."

"That hardly seems sufficient."

My voice hardened and I gestured toward my long bow, wrapped carefully in velvet and propped up in the nearby corner. "I also know that no creature lives. that I have seen over an arrow," I replied. "What more do I need to know?"

"Much more." The cleric's voice grew grim and cold. "Much. Knowledge is power, and ignorance can be death. Especially so if you intend to hunt the peryton with simple clothyard arrows. The arrows or any other weapons you may use — must be ensorcelled, and the magic must be strong, or they will simply glance off the creature's body."

I leaned forward and opened my mouth to comment, but he raised a hand to cut me off and kept talking. "Be still. There is yet more you should know. The peryton faces no such difficulty in slaying *its* foes. The creature's horns are hideously sharp and strong — some say they are magical, but I know better. They inflict terrible wounds, and the peryton wields them with skill worthy of a champion."

"You speak as someone intimately familiar with the beast," I put in.

If the cleric noticed the sarcasm contained in that remark, he gave no sign. "Familiarity comes through experience. When I was younger, I, too, hunted the peryton."

The two mages, who had been listening quietly to the cleric until this point, now turned to one another, exchanged glances, and murmured. I felt their attention being drawn away from me and toward the purple-clad cleric.

"Please continue," said the elder mage, and the cleric complied.

"My three brothers and I journeyed to those peaks you speak of," he said, turning slightly toward me with those words. "We also intended to return with a peryton as a trophy." He laughed mirthlessly. "My brothers — or, to be more exact, their bones — are still there, on those mountain slopes.

"For three days we searched diligently for signs of the creature, without success of any sort. But on the fourth day, the perytons — three of them — found us. We were traversing a treacherous rock face when their shadows passed over us, just as we heard the sound of their beating wings for the first time. Their shadows were as those of *men*, not beasts — a fact which we all observed, and which distracted us for a single fatal instant.

"By the time that instant had passed and we turned to fade them, the perytons were swooping down upon us from out of the sun." The cleric inhaled deeply, let the breath out slowly, and closed his eyes briefly as if in pain. "Two of my brothers died in that first pass, disemboweled by those flashing horns that ripped through leather as a sword through linen. By luck — or by the will of Thoth — my eldest brother and I evaded that first swooping attack. We began to descend the slope quickly, seeking cover, as the two beasts that killed them came out of the sky and landed near the bodies of our brothers.

"Though on the ground it may appear clumsy — almost comical — when airborne the peryton is a wonder to behold and a thing to fear. We were transfixed by horror at the sight of that third dark shape climbing, turning abruptly, making ready for another dive . . ." The cleric shuddered, and for a moment resumed the detached tone he had used earlier in his lecture.

"The creature maneuvers well; in a stretch of only about two hundred paces, it can turn a full ninety degrees while flying at full speed — and it can reach full speed in a mere minute after launching itself into the air. I have seen few creatures larger than a hawk that can equal it." During this interlude, the cleric's eyes were focused on me; now he turned his attention back to the two wizards and resumed the story.

"Running and scrambling, casting occasional glances backward and up at the sky, my brother and I were able to traverse less than one hundred yards down the slope before the third peryton went into another dive, with my brother as its target. And this time he was not so fortunate; though the slashing horns missed him, the peryton's body did not. The creature rammed into his upper body — whether by design or chance I could not tell. He was swept from the small plateau on which he had hoped to stand and fight, and he landed on a tiny ledge some thirty feet below.

"It would have been a blessing if the impact had killed him. As it was, my brother survived the fall, but both legs, and I believe his back, were broken. Unable to move or defend himself, he could still call to me for help that I was unable to give. And

he could scream — oh, how he screamed — as the peryton settled on the ledge beside him.

"I escaped with my life, for the simple and dreadful reason that three perytons, and not four or more, swooped down on us that day. And of all the visions that haunt me of that terrible day, the worst was the sight of that vicious third beast tearing my brother's heart from his still-living body."

The cleric lowered his head, brought one hand up to touch the bird-token around his neck, and seemed to be mouthing a silent prayer. The rest of us were silent as well. As much as part of me wanted to do so, I could not bring myself to utter a sarcastic comment, to try to get the wizards again thinking about me and the reason we had come together at this table in the first place.

Then the cleric raised his head and gazed vacantly out at the mages seated across from him. The younger one shifted uneasily, then ventured to speak. "Perhaps, then, you can enlighten us where others cannot. Why do these creatures require the hearts of their victims?"

"The answer to your question is brief," the cleric said. "For reproduction — that much any sage can tell you. But to understand that answer, first you must know some things about the background of the peryton."

By this time I had regained my normal demeanor, looking and acting bored and, I hoped, convincing the others at the table that I actually felt that way. "Explain, then, if you must, and stop leading us along like this," I told the cleric.

He continued in a tone as if I had never spoken. "The origin of the peryton is lost in the backwaters of time," he said. "Many of the wise say that the creature is the result of magical experimentation — but that is not so, though I do not say that there is no magic in the peryton. Rather, the beast is more akin to beings like the githyanki and the mind flayer, in that none of them are native to this world or the plane it resides upon."

The younger mage raised his eyebrows and exhaled a short puff of disbelief, but the cleric was oblivious to this reaction. "The peryton was the dominant race on its home world," he continued. "Though they are all naturally independent and harshly competitive, at one point in their history the creatures banded together to subjugate — or destroy — all that dwelt around them. Such an alliance among chaotic creatures like these could hardly endure, but it did persist long enough to win a world and send advance invasion parties — at least two, probably many more — to establish their outposts . . . elsewhere.

"It is said in the councils of the wise that the first such outpost was established on a great island nation called Atlantis, in a world similar to this one. Exactly what became of that nation I do not know. Perhaps the resistance to the perytons' attempted conquest was too great, or perhaps the perytons overstepped themselves. What-

ever the case, the entire island sank beneath the sea in a great upheaval. Though many others believe that this ended the threat of the perytons on that world, I have reason to doubt that stance. There still exists a prophecy that the perytons will bring about the eventual fall of one of that world's greatest cities, named Roma."

"Fascinating," interjected the elder wizard, but then his face took on a doubtful frown. "Yet, how could such a creature as the peryton travel the planes?"

"Through the powers of the mind," replied the cleric immediately. "By using the Talent, or what you might know as psionics. On their home plane, the perytons were possessed of the Talent, and it was through the Talent that the raiding parties intended to enslave this world and others."

"But —" The mage tried to break in, but Amhotep had anticipated his comment.

"Whether the perytons here lost their Talent gradually, over generations, or all at once, I know not, though I would suppose the latter to be true. This world is different from their own in so many ways. . . . The perytons that dwell in the mountain peaks of our world have lost their Talent, but they still possess their fierce, vicious nature and their scheming intelligence."

"What?" I blurted out, unable to control my surprise.

The cleric regarded me with a grim smile. "Oh, yes, my young hunter. They are as intelligent as most men, more so than many. They speak their own language, quite unlike that of any other creature. It is this intelligence, almost always unsuspected by those who would defeat them, that helps to make the peryton such a lethal adversary."

"All very interesting, good sir," said the elder mage, and he seemed to mean it. "But . . . the hearts?"

"That will soon become apparent," said the cleric, then resumed his narrative. "On its own world, the peryton eats nothing but the flesh of its prey. On this world — and, I suppose, others — the peryton is forced to broaden its diet to obtain the balance of elements its body needs. In addition to the flesh of creatures native to this world, it must eat plants and even some inanimate matter such as clay and soft ores.

"How these compounds are utilized by the peryton is, at the very least, interesting. In the same way that certain plants, on this plane and others, concentrate minerals from the soil in their stalks, the peryton assimilates iron and even heavier metals into its system, using these substances to strengthen and toughen its horns. The peryton's attack is not as deadly as it is merely because it is accurate, although the beast does indeed dive with terrible precision. The metals and minerals that the peryton consumes help to make its horns as hard as steel, able to take and hold a dagger-sharp point, unlike the antlers of normal creatures such as deer and elk, which are tapered but still rounded at the tips. A single slash, or a series of punctures, from those horns is enough to pene-

trate or push aside even metal armor, mortally wounding the flesh beneath it. It has been speculated that these metals also help to toughen the peryton's skin and feathers, which is why it cannot be wounded without enchanted weapons; however, I believe otherwise, since the peryton's coat of feathers is soft and downy to the touch. Quite possibly, its immunity to non-magical weapons comes simply from the fact that it is not a creature of this world."

Amhotep paused for two heartbeats, smiled, and nodded in the direction of the two mages. "And now to the hearts. The reason it craves hearts is, in essence, the same reason that it has such a varied diet: for mineral balance. The female peryton needs especially large amounts of the elements iron, potassium, sodium, and nitrogen to produce the metal-like shell of her eggs — if you find one, I dare you to break it open without the use of an acid, such as the one found in the albumen of the egg itself. As it so happens, the tissue of the human heart contains an abundance of these vital substances. Certainly there are other available sources, but none of the others so appropriately matches the peryton's ethos."

"Thank you for that, kind sir," said the elder mage. "We have been more than curious about that aspect of the beast, for reasons I daresay need not be explained to yourself. But a question remains, one you have raised yourself — the shadow."

The cleric smiled; it seemed to please him that the wizard had paid enough attention to remember that remark, and yet he began his response with a compliment that pleased the mage equally. "I would have been surprised had you not pursued that point. What I said, I meant quite literally: When the shadows of the perytons passed over me and my brothers, the shadows were those of men."

"When the sun strikes the body of a peryton, feet replace claws and arms appear instead of wings; the horns cannot be seen in the shadow, and the head rounds out to become that of a human — truly a sight that would be at least disconcerting, if it were not already so terrifying. And the shadow remains that way until the peryton has slain its chosen prey, whereupon the shadow it casts is that of its own body, and it then stays in that state until the creature has devoured and digested its prey."

"Whether this is some trick in the mind of the observer, or evidence of a higher power at work, I know not. Perhaps it is an unconscious remnant of their Talent, some power that projects through the creature's shadow the image of the prey it seeks the most — humans. Then, when the beast has killed a human, this instinctive need is fulfilled and, for a time, the peryton ceases to project the human shape. I cannot say which of these ideas is accurate; what I do know is that I myself have seen the change from man-shadow to beast-shadow, as it

took place upon the vile creature that slew my last surviving brother."

"Truly fascinating," said the elder mage. "You have our sympathy," he added, gesturing toward his companion, "and our respect. But, as you must have already guessed, another question remains. Whence comes all of this detailed information that seems beyond the ken of even the most learned of sages?"

The cleric touched, then caressed, the silver bird pendant he wore. "I am honored by a source of knowledge that is denied, by its very nature, to most of the sages of this land."

The lecture and the questions now seemed to be at an end, and I had to admit to myself that I had been as engrossed as the wizards were in the cleric's story of him and his brothers, and the other things he had to say about the peryton. But, in saying all of it, he had clearly stolen all of their attention — and perhaps their gold as well — from me. I decided it was time to act decisively, and I did exactly that.

"Here," I proclaimed loudly, "is *another* source of knowledge denied to most sages." I reached beneath the table and grabbed my sack, talking while I extracted its contents. "You are the first to see one of my more recent trophies; in fact, I just finished preparing it earlier today. Notice the fine, membranous finish to the wings, and the lifelike position of the arms and hands. A good job, wouldn't you say?"

All three of them stared at the tiny stuffed body I had placed on the table. The cleric was the first to speak.

"A sprite?" he asked, quietly. "But why? These creatures are the most peaceable —"

"And beautiful," I cut in. "Notice the color of the clothing, and the way I preserved the texture of the pale skin."

The cleric slowly rose to a standing position; his face took on an expression I could not read. "Perhaps you *are* the one best suited to hunt the peryton," he said.

Then, suddenly, before I could react, he reached out and rapped me hard in the center of my chest with his forefinger. "You have nothing in here that the peryton could desire."

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Wounds and weeds

Plants that can help keep characters alive

by Kevin J. Anderson

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is intended for use as a supplement for the AD&D™ game system. It is NOT intended as a guide to woodland plants for players to find and eat themselves! Eating strange plants is a very risky thing to do and is best left to experts; it should also be remembered that even experts can make dangerous or fatal mistakes.)

Delrael the fighter stumbled weakly through the dense forest, crawling and staggering through thickets which clawed at his wounds. Blood flowed from uncounted cuts into his mangled armor. Tattered scraps of bandages lay over some of his most serious injuries, no longer giving any benefit. Some of his wounds had stopped bleeding of their own accord, but were now becoming infected.

The forest grew darker, and by the pounding in Delrael's head and the buzzing in his ears, he knew that the darkness he sensed had nothing to do with the coming of nightfall. "I am done," he moaned softly through cracked lips.

Then he saw a light ahead, swimming in his unsteady vision, and as he stumbled closer he could make out the dim outline of a rickety hut. Delrael tried to cry out for help, but could not force any audible sounds from his throat. He collapsed with a crash into the thick underbrush near the hut. . . .

. . . And then he awoke to the acrid smell of strong vinegar, discovering at the same time that he had enough strength to grimace and turn his head.

"Hah! The vinegar always wakes 'em up!"

Delrael's gaze fell on what at first appeared to be a mushroom with eyes. Then, as his vision cleared, he saw it was the face of a withered old woman bending over him. She tossed a dampened rag off to one side and addressed him.

"Now then, what's happened to you?"

Delrael swallowed several times before he managed to speak. "My friends . . . all slaughtered by orcs. I escaped . . . hurt bad . . ."

"Well, didn't you bother to care for your wounds? How did you expect to get healed?"

"No cleric . . . killed . . ."

"Bah! Who needs a cleric? That's no way to heal wounds. You won't always have one by your side — as you now know."

"I tried to make bandages, from some clothing . . ."

"Humph! You call those bandages? I thought they were a new style of body deco-

ration — and they may as well be, for all the good they're doing! Did you soak those rags in wine to clean them before you slapped them on yourself? Did you even clean your wounds? No! You should have used mud for a bandage — it would have been cleaner than those filthy strips of cloth. Now your wounds are infected, on top of all the blood you lost."

"Please help me . . . get me to a cleric . . . " Delrael gasped.

"I'll get you into my house — that's the best thing anyone could do for you now. Well, come on! You don't expect these old bones to carry you, do you? Maybe some more vinegar in the face will get you going!"

Delrael groaned and began to move toward the old woman's hut. He made it almost to the doorway before fainting. . . . And awoke again, this time surprised to find himself stretched out on a wooden cot. The old woman had peeled off his armor, cleaned his wounds, and applied some sort of salve to them. Strange smells assaulted his nostrils as he turned his eyes toward the smoky fireplace, where a pot of clear brown liquid was bubbling and steaming. Bunches of dried herbs dangled around the mantle.

"It's about time you woke up! Bloodrust and battlerot! You'd think all you have to do is go to sleep, and everything will be fine when you decide to open your eyes. Here, drink this." The old woman shoved a cup of the brown liquid at him.

Delrael frowned and instinctively started to turn away from the foul-smelling stuff, which only made her more determined. "Drink! It's a decoction of adder's tongue — to help you heal quicker, get you out of my house."

While he drank, the old woman continued her scolding. "While you were thrashing about in the forest, you must have crawled over every sort of herb you could have used to help yourself. When you staggered toward my door, you ended up falling right on my best patch of comfrey. Anyone who travels in the forest should know that healing plants are all around — but you have to know them and know how to use them. And in my experience, human fighters have never been too bright."

Delrael held his tongue and kept sipping the herbal brew. The more the woman talked, the less gruff her tone of voice became.

"Well, one thing's for sure. Before you're well enough to leave here, you're going to learn how to help yourself when you're wounded in a forest. And you better go out

and teach some others, too — I've got enough to do without every beat-up warrior staggering up to my door to have his hurts tended to. And you don't have to worry — what I will teach you is not magic, and not the work of the gods. It's just ordinary common sense, as anybody's grandmother can tell you. It's about time common sense became a little more common in these parts! Go to sleep now, so your brain won't be added when we start our work."

Over the next few days Delrael learned quickly as he got stronger; he wanted to leave the old woman's house almost as much as it seemed she wanted to get rid of him. Now it was examination time, and she held up leaves for him to identify

"Woundwort," he said.

"And this one?"

"Marsh-mallow. Comfrey. Herb true-love." Delrael rattled off the names as quickly as she thrust the plants into his view.

"Ah," she said, "there is room in that thick skull of yours for a few brains after all. Now that you know how to tell what the important herbs are, this is how to gather them. For leaves, you must pick only the freshest and greenest ones, and cast away those that have begun to wilt; if you mix them in, they will weaken the healing power of the fresh ones. Pick the leaves carefully to keep from bruising them — save the heavy-handed maneuvers for when you're swinging that mighty sword of yours."

"Pick leaves from plants that have not yet gone to seed, or even begun to flower, if possible. If you want to keep them with you for when you aren't in a forest — I know you fighter types like to creep about in dungeons and caves and the like — then you must dry the leaves in the sunlight, not in the shade. When they are dried, do not let them get wet again, and keep them out of the sunlight after that. Now, did you understand all that, so I don't have to repeat myself any more?"

Delrael nodded.

"Now, sometimes you will want to use the flowers of a plant. Gather them in their prime, and during full sunlight, for then they'll be all the way opened and not tainted with dew. Dry these, too, in the sun, and they will hold their healing power as long as they keep their smell and color."

"And last of all, you will want to use roots. Clean them before you use them — I know that's only common sense, which is why I feel you need to be told. Don't use rotten or worm-eaten ones, either, and gather them during a dry spell if possible."

Dry out the soft roots in the sun, and the hard ones anywhere. Can you remember all of that?"

Delrael nodded again, anxiously this time because he felt the lessons were coming to an end.

"Fine. Now you only have one little task left — to memorize the ways that all these herbs and plants can be used. If we're both lucky, you'll be ready to leave here in just a couple weeks more."

Delrael groaned. . . .

* * *

The twelve plants described in the following text are the most common and the most potent of all the herbs the old woman taught Delrael about during his convalescence in her hut. If characters are actively searching

for healing herbs, the DM should assign a 50% chance of locating any given plant (roll once per hour of searching for each character involved), provided the search is being conducted in the proper terrain for the plant being sought.

Even if this "chance to locate" roll is successful, there is a possibility that an improperly identified plant has been found instead. The chance of proper identification of a certain plant is 80% for a character who has been specially instructed about the appearance of that plant, and only 20% for a character who has not had such instruction. This identification roll is not necessary for garlic and juniper, both of which are so abundant (in the proper terrain) and so distinctive that they cannot be misidentified. At the DM's option, the identification roll may be waived for druids, bards,

and rangers, who would always recognize these plants without fail, thanks to their training in their professions and/or their adventuring experience.

If a character fails to properly identify an herb, he has found something similar in appearance but which may have vastly different properties (as in the case of herb true-love). However, most "herb-imitators" are harmless, and recipients of "healing" will not usually be harmed if a character administers the wrong plant — but, obviously, neither will the injured or wounded person receive any of the sought-after healing properties. Members of some races will react differently to certain herbs; the DM, and any characters with extensive training in healing, should note the precautions mentioned in some of the particular plant descriptions.



AARON'S ROD

Scientific name: *Verbascum thapsiforme*

Other names: Great Mullein, King's Candle, Candlestick Plant

Appearance: Aaron's rod has many large, pale silvery-green leaves that feel like soft felt. These leaves surround a thick, tapered stalk of large flowers and smaller leaves, which grows to four or five feet in height. According to tradition, this prominent spike of flowers was dipped in suet and then burned as a ceremonial candle. The flowers are bright yellow, bearing five petals each. Aaron's rod has a long, white, wood-like root.

Location: Aaron's rod grows in rocky or clay soil, most often on sunny slopes, cliff faces, and terrain such as that found around rock quarries; sometimes it is found along roads. The flowers appear in mid-summer.

Uses: Aaron's rod is useful as a pain-killer. At least live flowers should be crushed and mixed with water or, better still, wine. This mixture is applied directly to fresh wounds and will deaden the pain from an injury.

Game effect: Since the pain itself is a critical part of an injury, this herb will restore 1-4 hit points immediately. These hit points will be lost again, however, within two hours — because the pain-killer has worn off. Aaron's rod can only restore hit points once every two hours; multiple applications before the first application has worn off are not cumulative.

Precautions: If a character uses this pain-killer to help him get back on his feet and fight again while still wounded, he will lose an additional 1-4 hit points when the solution wears off because he has aggravated his injuries in the meantime.



ADDER'S-TONGUE

Scientific name: *Ophioglossum vulgatum*

Appearance: Adder's-tongue has one large leaf, at the base of which rises a thin stalk covered with tiny bumps or knobs; on

closer inspection, this stalk is seen to be a spike of tiny, yellowish-green flowers.

Location: Adder's-tongue grows in moist meadows and shady clearings. It is most easily found in late spring.

Uses: This herb is used as a secondary treatment, to help wounded characters regain strength. Use four fresh leaves steeped in boiling water to make a potent tea which can be drunk three times a day. This helps reduce inflammation associated with wounds, and restores strength. Also, an ointment can be made by boiling the cut-up leaves in hog's fat and then straining out the sediment. This ointment is soothing and promotes rapid healing, so much so that it has been called the "green oil of charity."

Game effect: A character recuperating from injuries normally receives one hit point per day of rest. However, convalescing with the aid of adder's-tongue will allow a wounded character to regain 1-3 hit points per day (roll separately each day). Using the ointment made from adder's-tongue will restore 1-2 hit points immediately per application, but it can only be administered to the same character once a day.

BIRTHWORT

Scientific name: *Aristolochia clematitis*

Appearance: Birthwort is a bushy climbing vine that can grow to about three feet in height. The leaves are rounded and heart-shaped with a deep cleft at the top; the leaves are set on long stems. The flowers are thin and yellow, and tubular in shape.

Location: Birthwort grows wild along hedges and fences, and in thickets exposed to the sun. It flowers in mid-summer.

Uses: This herb has been used frequently all over the world. The Greeks and Romans valued it highly, using the leaves and roots boiled briefly to make a poultice which they placed on wounds that were healing poorly. The snake charmers of India and North Africa claim that the juice of the birthwort will instantly kill a snake, and if the juice is

rubbed into a snake bite, it will help neutralize the venom.

Game effect: If the leaves and stems of this herb are crushed to make a juice, and this juice is promptly (within 1 round) applied to a poisonous bite or sting, the character receives an additional +2 on his saving throw against the poison. This effect only works once on any particular poison attack. Using a poultice made from birth-



wort will insure that wounds will heal properly, without complications; the wounded character will regain one extra hit point per day for the first two days after application, and then will heal normally thereafter.

Precautions: All non-human characters have a 20% chance of suffering an adverse reaction to this herb. If a wounded character reacts badly to birthwort, he will become temporarily paralyzed. This paralysis is so severe that it is indistinguishable (by sight) from death, and it will last for 1-8 rounds beginning 2 rounds after application of the herb. This effect of birthwort is not common knowledge; even characters who are familiar with birthwort have only a 50% chance of knowing about this side effect before they experience it or witness it.

COMFREY

Scientific name: *Symphytum officinale*
Other name: Healing Herb

Appearance: Comfrey has large, hairy green leaves, and hairy stalks which can grow to 2-3 feet in height. The stalks are hollow, and the leaves have a gummy resin which is apparent if the leaves are chewed gently. At the tops of the stalks are small, bell-shaped flowers of a violet, or occasionally white, color that bear tiny black seeds. Comfrey has a large root system; its roots are black on the outside and white on the inside. The roots are brittle and are filled with a clear, nearly tasteless sap.



Location: Comfrey grows by ditches, watersheds, and moist fields. The plant flowers in mid-summer and goes to seed in late summer.

Uses: This herb can be employed as both an immediate first aid and a secondary treatment. Almost all of the parts of this "wonder weed" can be used. The root is most effective on fresh wounds — clean one root, bruise it so that the clear sap flows out, then bind it up against the fresh injury. This will bring about rapid healing. Similarly, the root dried and powdered can be sprinkled on a fresh wound. To use the herb as a strength-restorer, boil a dozen flowers (either fresh or dried) along with the leaves to form a tea, or mix the flowers and several leaves with wine, and drink the liquid twice a day.

Game effect: If comfrey root is applied immediately to a wound, roll 1d4 to see how many hit points the wounded character "never lost in the first place" and subtract this number from the damage done. If comfrey is used as a tea or mixed with wine during recuperation, it has the same qualities as adder's-tongue (see above).

GARLIC

Scientific name: *Allium sativum*

Appearance: Garlic has long, hollow leaves, dark green in color, on top of which appear large, spherical clusters of tiny white flowers. The entire plant has a very strong smell, which becomes doubly apparent if the leaves are crushed. Garlic is so well known and so easily identified by its distinctive smell that characters will always locate and identify it correctly if they search for it in an area containing suitable terrain.

Location: Other than in its garden habitat, garlic often grows on damp grounds, in meadows, and in sparse forests. The cluster of flowers appears in early to mid-summer.

Uses: Crushed garlic cloves, or diluted garlic juice, makes a strong antiseptic — so potent that garlic was used, along with sphagnum moss (see below), in field hospitals during World War I when other supplies ran short. Garlic also eases bites and stings from venomous creatures, and it can act as an insect repellent.

Game effect: The antiseptic properties of garlic are such that a wound will heal more rapidly, and without chance of infection. Wounded characters will recover 2 hit points per day for the first three days after application. If garlic is used as an insect repellent, the juice must be rubbed generously over exposed body parts. This repellent has a 50% chance of working against attacking insects, giant or otherwise. If used to ease bites and stings, garlic juice can be used one time per injury to restore 1 hit



point that was lost from either the bite/sting or the poisonous effect of that attack.

Precautions: Garlic has a bad reputation among herbal healers. Some claim it is a dangerous plant with many supernatural properties. However, in AD&D lore it is really only directly harmful to vampires. But if garlic is used for any remedy, especially as an insect repellent, the strong odor may give away the presence of the character using it and increase the chance of attracting wandering monsters.

HENBANE

Scientific name: *Hyoscyamus niger*

Appearance: Henbane has large, thick, soft leaves covered with hair and deeply cut. These leaves lie near the ground. Henbane also has many short and thick stalks, spread with branches bearing smaller leaves. These stalks have hollow yellow flowers with large sepals covering much of the petals; the petals are laced with purple veins. The flowers bear tiny gray seeds. The root is thick and branched, much like a parsnip root. The plant has a heavy, offensive smell.

Location: Henbane grows in clearings and along paths. It flowers throughout most of the summer.

Uses: This herb is a potent pain-killer,



deadening virtually all discomfort from a wound. Boil the leaves, seeds, or roots together in a small amount of water and apply as a poultice.

Game effect: Henbane applied to an injured character will immediately restore 1-6 hit points, similar to the effect of Aaron's rod; however, only 1-4 of these hit

points will "wear off" two hours later (along with the pain-killing effects), so the character has a chance of regaining more than just temporary hit points. If a character attempts to fight or engage in other strenuous activity while being affected by henbane, he will do so as if he were moderately intoxicated (as defined on page 82 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*), because of the numbing effects of the drug. When used against fever, henbane will restore 1 point of lost strength and constitution per day; this treatment can be used daily until the victim has fully recovered.

Precautions: Henbane is very poisonous if taken internally: If ingested in any form and any amount, the herb will cause 2-12 points of poison damage (save for half damage) in the round following ingestion, and the affected character will be unconscious for 3-6 turns thereafter. This herb also has hallucinogenic properties that may affect the character who prepares a poultice. While boiling the henbane plant, the character has a 40% chance of inhaling fumes that will act as a hallucinogen. If this happens, the DM may moderate the effects or, optionally, roll d6 to determine what happens: 1-2, the character sees imaginary enemies in the distance and runs off to fight them; 3-4, he becomes unaware of his surroundings and refuses to respond to any stimulus; 5-6, he sees other party members as enemies and attacks them immediately. The hallucinogenic effect will last for 1-6 rounds.



HERB TRUE-LOVE

Scientific name: *Paris quadrifolia*

Other names: Herb Paris, One-Berry

Appearance: Herb true-love has a small creeping root just below the surface of the ground, from which spring clusters of leaves, some of which have one star-like

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white flower or one blackish-purple berry. A leaf has four leaflets set at right angles to each other, in a cross pattern.

Location: Herb true-love grows in woods and copses, sometimes on the borders of fields. Clusters of leaves appear in mid-spring; berries are ripe in late spring.

Uses: This herb is useful as an antidote for poisons and as an antiseptic. If poison is suspected in a wound, the victim should eat at least three berries of herb true-love, or somehow ingest several leaves, either by eating them raw or (more effective) mixed with wine or as a tea. To speed healing and prevent infection in a wound, crush the leaves and use them to clean wounds, or boil four leaves in a small amount of water and use the broth so obtained as an antiseptic wash to rinse or soak wounds.

Game effect: The use of herb true-love will add +2 to saving throws vs. poison, +3 for halflings and dwarves, if it is ingested or applied to the affected area (depending on the type of poison) within 2 rounds of when the poisoning took place. As an antiseptic wash, herb true-love can be used once per injury to restore one hit point to a wounded character.

Precautions: If a character searches for herb true-love and fails to identify it properly, he has found another plant that looks very similar but is deadly: nightshade. If a poisoned character ingests nightshade as a remedy, he must make another saving throw vs. poison (in addition to the saving throw that was already required). Failure to make the save vs. nightshade means death; making the save means no damage. Nightshade will be harmless and ineffective if applied externally.

JUNIPER BERRY

Scientific name: *Juniperus communis*

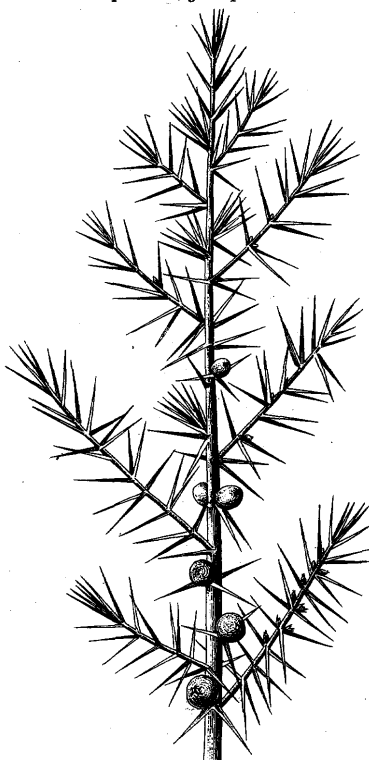
Appearance: Juniper is a bush with thick branches bearing short, scale-like needles similar to pine needles. The bark is rough and has a shredded appearance, and the entire bush is very fragrant. Clusters of berries are green in the first year of their growth, and turn dark purple when they ripen the following year. Each berry has a strong, distinctive taste. Like garlic, juniper is so well known that characters will automatically be able to locate it and identify it properly if they are searching for it in appropriate terrain.

Location: Juniper grows upon heaths and in sparse forests. It is an evergreen.

Uses: Juniper berries help to counteract all forms of poison, but not so effectively as herb true-love (see above). Most importantly, juniper is a powerful stimulant for those who are severely wounded and near death. If a character is able to, or can be forced to, eat two juniper berries, he may gain the strength to fight off some of the effects of shock.

Game effect: If a character is brought to zero or fewer hit points, and is unconscious, the stimulant effect of juniper berries will add 1-4 hit points to the character's total,

possibly bringing him back to consciousness, or at least out of a coma. A character revived in this manner cannot fight or engage in any other strenuous activity until he has rested long enough to regain as many more hit points as he "artificially" got back from the juniper. (Note, however, that hit points restored by juniper berries do not "fade," as with Aaron's rod.) If used as an antidote to poison, juniper berries will



add +1 to a victim's saving throw if they are eaten within 2 rounds of the poisoning.

Precautions: Juniper berries may have a strange effect on elves and half-elves. If a member of either of those races eats even one juniper berry, that character must make a saving-throw vs. poison or be affected by an uncontrollable attraction to the first member of the opposite sex that the character sees. The object of the character's attraction may be of any race as long as the elf's or half-elf's normal preference for that race is not hostile to begin with. This effect will wear off in 2-8 rounds, and does not negate the other, beneficial effects that the juniper berries will bring. An infatuated character may be too weak to do anything about the feeling, but will feel it nonetheless.

MARSH-MALLOW

Scientific name: *Althaea officinalis*

Other names: Mortification Root, Sweet Weed

Appearance: The marsh-mallow has soft, hairy white stalks that can grow up to 3-4 feet in height and have many branches. The wide leaves are soft and hairy, with serrated edges. The plant has many large pink flowers with purple centers, and an extensive system of long roots that are pliant and tough, whitish-yellow in color. The roots are filled with a clear, slimy juice that thickens



like jelly when mixed with water.

Location: Marsh-mallow grows abundantly in salt marshes, and in damp meadows near the seashore. It flowers during all the summer months.

Uses: This herb is effective both as an immediate treatment for burns, and also as a secondary cure for those severely weakened from loss of blood. The root is used for both applications: smash it, then dip the pulp into boiling water and use it as a poultice, binding it up against fresh burns. Or, crush the root and boil it in a pot of water until one third of the original water in the pot has boiled away, then drink this decoction once a day to help recovery from severe blood loss.

Game effect: Used as a poultice for burns, marsh-mallow speeds healing to such an extent that a character will receive 2 hit points per day for each of the first three days of rest following application, and will recuperate normally-thereafter. When the decoction is used to help counter the effects of blood loss, the victim will regain 1-3 hit points per day (as with Adder's Tongue and comfrey) instead of the usual one hit point.

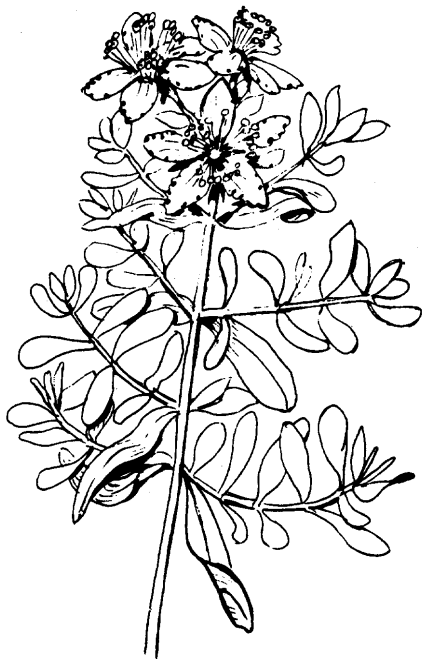
ST.-JOHN'S-WORT

Scientific name: *Hypericum perforatum*

Other name: All Saints' Wort

Appearance: St.-John's-Wort grows about knee-high, on hard, wood-like stalks. The leaves are smooth and oval, appearing in pairs from opposite sides of the stems so that they form a shape similar to a figure-eight. The leaves have very tiny holes, like pin-pricks, in them, which are visible only when the leaf is held up to the light. St.-John's-Wort bears large yellow flowers with five petals; the petals, when bruised, yield a reddish, resinous juice. The flowers bear small blackish seeds. The root is hard and wood-like and brownish in color.

Location: St.-John's-Wort is found in shady woods and copses, and also at the edges of forests. It flowers in mid-summer, and bears seeds by the end of the season.



Uses: The oil from fresh flowers is especially good for healing wounds; boil a dozen flowers in wine to make a tincture to be applied to injuries. This will help close wounds and help heal bruises. A teaspoon of powdered seeds drunk in a broth helps to combat the effects of venom.

Game effect: If a tincture of St.-John's-Wort is applied immediately (within 2 rounds) to a wound, roll 1d4 to see how many hit points the victim "never lost in the first place" and subtract this number from the damage suffered. When the broth is drunk as an antidote to venom within 2 rounds of the time of poisoning, the powdered seeds will add +1 to the victim's saving throw against the poison.



SPHAGNUM MOSS

Scientific name: *Sphagnum cymbifolium*

Other names: Bog moss, peat moss

Appearance: Sphagnum moss is a pale green in color, although it may turn yellowish or reddish. It consists of many tiny branches of leaves tangled into a clump of moss which grows into large cushions. It has no roots, but absorbs water directly through its leaves; this absorbent quality makes it almost as effective as a sponge.

Location: Sphagnum moss is found in wet, boggy spots. Sometimes the moss is so thick that it may appear to be solid ground — until someone steps on it and gets wet feet.

Uses: When sterilized, this moss is an ideal dressing for wounds; two ounces of it can absorb up to two pounds of liquid. Sphagnum moss must be collected beforehand to be used, then cleaned and dried,

and stored loosely in cloth bags.

Game effect: Getting a proper dressing on a wound is one of the most important steps in healing. If an injury is bound up with clean sphagnum moss, the victim will heal 25% more quickly; that is, lost hit points will be regained at the rate of four every three days, with that "extra" point regained on the first day of the three-day period. The dressing must be changed after three days and replaced with fresh moss in order to keep receiving this quick-healing benefit.



WOUNDWORT

Scientific name: *Stachys palustris*

Other names: Clown's woundwort, downy woundwort, marsh woundwort

Appearance: Woundwort has rough, slender green stalks, up to two feet high, bearing long and narrow dark green leaves covered with fine hairs. The leaves are pointed, with jagged edges. The flowers of woundwort are large and purplish-red, with white spots. The roots are long and stringy with small tubers growing among them. The plant has a strong, acrid smell.

Location: Woundwort grows in or near ditches, or by the sides of paths and in fields. The marsh woundwort, identical in healing properties, grows in marshy areas. The plant flowers in mid-summer.

Uses: This herb is very effective as an immediate treatment for all wounds, especially deep cuts such as those produced from sword thrusts. Woundwort is a remarkable styptic, staunching bleeding almost immediately and quickening the coagulation of blood to form scabs. To use it, bind enough fresh leaves up against the wound to form a dressing, or steep the leaves in hot water and apply them as a poultice.

Game effect: If applied immediately

(within 2 rounds) to an injury, woundwort will stop bleeding and prevent further weakness from blood loss. The wounded character will immediately regain 20% (round down) of the hit points he would have lost from the damage of the injury, reflecting the blood loss that "never took place."

Precautions: While woundwort will always stop bleeding and benefit its user as described above, dwarves will sometimes suffer an adverse reaction to it. If woundwort is used on a dwarven character, he has a 25% chance of becoming temporarily (1-6 rounds) blinded.

* * *

Despite her words to the contrary, the old woman seemed rather downcast when Delrael made ready to leave her hut.

"Now, my young fighter," she said, "you know how to care for yourself without the aid of a cleric." She wagged a finger at him. "Just think of those who struggle to survive in worlds where no magic exists."

"I have heard stories of such worlds," Delrael answered, "but I always thought them to be no more than fantasies."

The old woman began puttering with her herbs, looking away so he did not see the sadness in her eyes. "Ah, but one man's fantasy is another man's reality. Don't doubt it."

Delrael thought about that as he went off into the forest.



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Enhancing the enchanter

Changes and additions to DRAGONQUEST™ rules

by Craig Barrett

Of the twelve initial Magical Colleges in the DRAGONQUEST™ game system, the College of Ensorcelments and Enchantments is my favorite. So it makes me just a bit unhappy to realize that it's also the weakest of the twelve. In the interest of fair play — and not just because one of my favorite Primary Characters is an Enchanter — this article proposes a few minor changes, as well as a couple of major ones, in the DRAGONQUEST magic rules that will rectify this state of affairs.

Is the case on behalf of Enchanters overstated? Consider that while spells 36.T-1, 38.T-1, and 46.T-1 are all called "Witch-sight," the Enchanter's version of that Talent is the least powerful of the three, and it is the only Talent available to Enchanters. And that 36.G-4, "Spell of Walking Unseen," is less potent than its namesakes, 43.G-5, 44.G-9, and 46.G-3. And that Enchanters have only a single spell that in and of itself inflicts damage. "Poison Dust" (36.Q-4) can potentially cause damage, but it's a ritual, it's exorbitantly expensive for low-Ranked Adepts, and it isn't all that useful. These are just a few examples. Only Namers are as weak as Enchanters, and they have some compensating advantages.

All of which are marvelous, if prejudiced, excuses for this article.

Actually, the changes proposed here aren't all that radical. With two exceptions, they're all either clarifications or extrapolations already implied by the game rules themselves or by supplemental materials. Here goes:

"Concentration" spells

The question arises: Can an Adept invest (by Rule 32.3) a spell into an object when the duration of that spell is governed by the concentration of the Adept? Yes, he can, because in the supplement *The Palace of Ontoncle* (page 4) the character Loklar has a medallion invested with 42.S-4, "Web of Fire," a spell that has a duration of "Concentration." So, Enchanters can invest spells 36.G-7, "Mass Charming," and 36.S-5, "Web of Entanglement." And, logically, this advantage has to be extended to members of the other Colleges as well. But Enchanters do realize some benefit.

As to what the duration of such spells should be (separated as they are from the actual concentration of the Adept), where maximums are given, as in "Web," the maximum duration applies and is subject to deliberate reduction by the Adept himself. Where no maximums are given — 14 separate spells in the first 12 Colleges fall into this category — the maximum can be deter-

mined by comparing the spell with other, similar spells for which a maximum duration is given. Thus, 36.G-7, "Mass Charming," should be compared to 36.G-1 and 39.S-1, "Spell of Charming." Both of the latter spells have a multiple of one hour, and are targeted at a single entity. "Mass Charming" can be targeted at several entities, so it's reasonable to assume that its duration as an invested spell should be relatively shorter, perhaps "½ hour + ½ hour per Rank." In any case, the duration should be specified at the time of investment, not at the time of use, with the Gamemaster's judgment final.

Investing rules, 32.3 and 84.2-84.5

On the subject of investment, here's another extrapolation: The spells listed under Rules 32.3 and 84.2-84.5 can, generally, be invested in objects, using 32.3, just like any other spells (see 84.1). "Deathcurse," listed under 84.4, isn't covered by this rule, since the dying Adept isn't going to live long enough to go through an Investment Ritual. (See Rule 75, paragraph 20 for how a Deathcurse should be used, which in ultimate effect isn't so different from investment.) On the other hand, "Geas" (84.2) merely needs a change in its Range qualification in order to work as an invested spell. Here, it's the person rather than the caster who must be within communicating distance of the object in which the geas has been invested, and must be clearly able to see it. The geas, still couched in 25 words or less, is considered to communicate itself to the person through a kind of extra-sensory perception, which the person hears as audible words. The geas will have been invested with a number of charges equal to the Adept's Rank with the Investment Ritual (32.3), and each person who is "spoken to" by the geas in this fashion will exhaust one charge. When all the charges are exhausted, the invested object no longer contains the geas.

This kind of modification should be used on all aspects of all spells covered under this rule.

"Charge" control

A necessary condition of allowing the investing of Rule 84 spells is that Adepts of all the Colleges must have absolute control over the number of spell-charges they invest in an object. An Adept can't exceed the limitations of Rule 32.3, paragraph 3; however, he can invest as few charges as he pleases, because if investing a major curse (84.4) into an object is going to cost him a decrease in his Endurance value for each

charge he invests, he's going to want to control *exactly* how many charges he's investing. This ability is part of the Investment Ritual (32.3) and not something that has to be separately learned.

Activation instructions

Activation instructions are a vital part of investment. It's fairly clear from Rules 32.3 and 32.4 that two different sorts of activation instructions are possible, one for spells and one for Wards. Instructions for spells imply deliberate intent on the part of the person who activates the spell. Instructions for Wards imply lack of intent on the part of the person who activates the Ward. In practice, however, the distinctions tend to get a little blurred. For example, an Enchanter might protect his strongbox by investing it with 36.G-8, "Spell of Invisibility," with the instruction to activate if someone approaches within five feet unless that person utters a special word that prevents activation. The spell is still activated by the deliberate action of a person who approaches, but now possesses the characteristics of a Ward, in that the person did not intend to activate the spell.

Spell instructions are less detailed than Ward instructions. A Ward might be set to activate only when a particular person enters or exits, but a spell can never be so specifically personalized. Exactly how tricky an Adept can get with his spell instructions depends on his Investment Ritual Rank and on the GM's discretion. The GM might require a Rank of 5 for an Enchanter who wants to invest 36.S-7, "Enhance Enchantment," but who also wants to wait until the moment of activation before he decides which characteristic the spell will enhance. But, the desire to activate with a single whisper or gesture might be allowed at Rank 2.

Ward instructions require a much lower Rank in order to be sophisticated. Primarily, Rank will extend sophistication rather than enhance it. For example, an Adept who creates a Ward might be allowed to specify that its effect be delayed for 1 minute per Rank of the Adept. Or, a Ward might be restricted from attacking specified individuals (1 person per Rank of the Adept), but this instruction would endure only one hour per Rank and then the Ward would attack anyone who triggered it.

GMs ought to allow for great flexibility when players set up activation instructions. Remember, this is a kind of "verbal shorthand" in which a single word or gesture will mean just exactly what the Adept wants it to mean.

Anti-magic charms

In *The Palace of Ontoncle*, on page 20, three rings are described, each magically endowed as a charm against spells of the College of Fire Magics. Since counterspells come in pairs (Rule 31.3), each ring must have two spells in it. A single ring adds +5 to the Magic Resistance of whoever is wearing it, and an individual can benefit from the protection of only one ring at a time. But no limit is given on the number of times a ring can protect its wearer, so "spell charges" cannot be involved.

What are these rings, and who can control them? Obviously, each ring is a kind of amulet, similar in nature to the amulets created by the "Special Alchemy" Talent (46.T-3). As to who created them, the answer to this question leads to another rule extrapolation, added to Rule 32, "Special Magical Preparations":

[32.5] An Adept of any College can create an amulet against the magic of his own College by investing both of his College's counterspells into a single object.

A full 10-hour Preparation Ritual must precede two full 10-hour Investment Rituals (one for each counterspell) for a total of 30 hours expended, with one of the rituals performed on each of three successive days. The result is a permanent charm in the form of a ring that adds to the wearer's Magic Resistance against the spells of the Adept's College a number of points equal to

the Adept's Rank in whichever counterspell of his College his Rank is lowest in, providing the Adept has at least an equal Rank with the Investment Ritual. As with the *Ontoncle* rings, the effects of wearing more than one ring are *not* cumulative. A character can benefit from the protection of only one such ring at a time — from the strongest, if the other rings protect against the same College, or from the first one put on, if any of them protect against different Colleges. (See Rule 31.3, paragraph 7.) A ring-amulet is effective if worn on a chain instead of on a finger, but not if carried in a pouch.

Cost: The rings in *Ontoncle* are worth 2,000 Silver Pennies (SPs), but a large portion of that value would be for the rubies with which they are adorned. The rubies, by the way, would have no effect on the use of the rings, the coincidence of their color and their anti-fire effects simply a conceit of their creator or a convenient means of identifying them. A bare ring would weigh about two ounces (maximum weight for a ring), would have a high platinum content, and would cost about 50 SPs — part of the price would be due to craftsmanship and merchant's mark-up. On each of the three days of the ritual, the Adept would have to expend material worth 30 SPs x the ring's ultimate Rank. A ring-amulet offering +5 protection would therefore cost 50 + 450, SPs, or 500 SPs all told.

Adepts of the College of Naming Incanta-

tions can create ring-amulets against the magic of any College, and are unique in this respect.

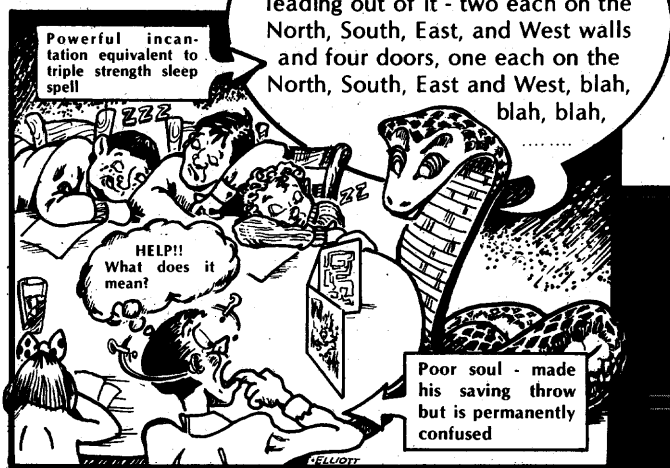
GMs should treat this formula as Special Knowledge. It is not properly speaking a ritual of its own, and it has no Experience Multiple.

Invest a ritual?

Ritual Spell Preparation (Rule 32.1) is a very valuable piece of Special Knowledge, but its use is somewhat restricted. Can it be made more flexible? Yes: Any Adept with Rank 10+ in Investment Ritual (32.3), or any Enchanter with Rank 5+ in Investment Ritual and Rank 5+ in 36.S-7, "Enhance Enchantment," can *invest* Ritual Spell Preparation into an object as if the ritual itself were a spell.

The procedure requires two Adepts of appropriate Ranks and compatible Colleges working together. While one is performing the Ritual of Preparation, the other performs the Ritual of Investment in an adjoining room, compartment or area. The moment both rituals are complete — and they must be completed within one minute of each other — one "charge" of Spell Preparation is invested in a given object. This "charge" will contain up to +30 Base Chance points (3 for each hour spent in the combined ritual, up to a maximum of 10 hours), and will be retained in that object for up to 10 days at full potency, at which time the charge will dissipate instantly.

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In effect, the object has been turned into a "storage battery" so that the Ritual Preparation can be executed ahead of time and its effects saved for when they're needed. The process is similar to that used by the character Aestus in the DRAGONQUEST supplement *The Blade of Allectus* (page 8) to store magical energies equivalent to 30 Fatigue points in his oaken-wood staff. And just as that staff is of use only to Aestus, so this object is of use only to the person the two Adepts designate at the time of preparation, which can be one of the two of them or someone else entirely, so long as the designated person was in the presence of one Adept or the other during the entire combined ritual.

When the "charge" is activated by the designated person, the points are applied to the Base Chance of any spell he casts in the same pulse. (See Rule 33, paragraph 2: When the character uses a full pulse in Pass Action to prepare a spell, part of the preparation is the activation of this "storage battery," so that in the next pulse both the spell and the "storage battery" will operate together. Activation instructions for the "battery" must therefore be very simple.)

In the process of the rituals, the two Adepts will each expend 100 SPs worth of non-recoverable materials.

GMs should treat this procedure as slightly less well-known than the Investment Ritual (32.3); that is, Adepts will be in a position to learn that this can be done when they reach about Rank 5 in that ritual.

All the modifications and extrapolations proposed so far have been of benefit to all Adepts, not just to Enchanters. But Enchanters, logically enough, have a special concern with enchantment (Rule 36), so it's reasonable to give them a few special advantages in the area of enchantments and investments, such as these:

Investing cold iron

For example, can cold iron ever be used as an *object* of investment, providing it isn't touched during the Investment Ritual? Read Rule 29.1 carefully (italics by the author): "A character may never *prepare* a spell or engage in ritual magic while in *physical contact* with cold iron. . . . The amount of cold iron that will *prevent* an Adept from using his powers is relatively small, but not minute. . . . The Adept must be in *direct contact* with cold iron for this stricture to apply. . . . An Adept cannot *prepare* a spell, use the special talents of his College, or perform Ritual Magic while wearing armor made of cold iron or holding weapons or tools made of cold iron. . . ." And finally, the second-to-last sentence of the rule: "A character is not protected from the effects of magic by wearing cold iron."

The intent of the designers is clear: Cold iron inhibits magic, to keep it from arising from its source (the Adept), but does not affect magic once it has arisen! Thus, the spells for enchanting weapons and the spells

for enchanting armor can be used to enchant cold-iron weapons and armor, not just *neutralized* cold iron. But also remember that Rule 56.3 requires a mechanic to silver a trap before it can be invested. Cold iron can accept the *effects* of an enchantment; however, when it comes to being the "surrogate source" of a spell, the non-neutralized cold iron even inhibits itself. So, under normal circumstances cold iron cannot be invested with a spell unless it is first neutralized.

Two pieces of evidence have yet to be heard, though: Rule 29.1 states that "a few ounces" of cold iron is enough to inhibit all but racial Talent Magic; and, under "Special Alchemy," 46.T-3, the sixth amulet is "of Iron." Obviously, Adepts of the College of Black Magics can use cold iron in working magic. And if a member of one of the other Colleges can do that, then Enchanters, with their special affinity for enchantment, ought to be able to do that as well.

So let's be generous and assume that "a few ounces" is four ounces, and that some quantity less than four ounces — say, three ounces or less — not only won't inhibit magic but also can itself be used for magic, provided one has the right formula.

The Adepts of Black Magic have one formula; the Enchanters have another one, which goes like this: An Enchanter first invests the spell "Enhance Enchantment" (36.S-7) into a non-metallic item — perhaps a piece of cloth. An object made of (non-neutralized) cold iron is then rested on the cloth while the Enchanter performs a full 10-hour Investment Ritual, using the spell of his choice and with no penalty because of the cold iron. During the ritual, one charge of "Enhance Enchantment" is activated. If the ritual succeeds, the cold-iron object is invested with the chosen spell at -20 to the Base Chance but +1 to the Base Chance per Rank of the "Enhance Enchantment" spell.

The procedure is a little lengthy, but can be very rewarding, particularly since only one "Enhance Enchantment" charge was used and the enchanted cloth can be employed at once for another cold-iron object. This formula has no cost other than that of the non-metallic and cold-iron objects used. GMs should treat this formula as moderately restricted. The knowledge that Enchanters can do this at all should be highly scarce among non-Enchanters.

Note: Spells can be invested in neutralized cold iron. Except for the case of Rule 56.3, however, the Cast Chance is penalized as described in Rule 29.1, numbered section #3.

The wyvern-horn amulet

Have you ever wanted to be able to detect the presence of magic before you stumble into it? An Enchanter, using this formula, can make it possible to do just that. And this formula doesn't break any of the DRAGONQUEST rules, though it may bend one or two of them.

The formula is based on the fact that

while a wyvern (see the rulebook, page 115) doesn't know any magic, it can obtain magical items and so must have some kind of affinity for, or attraction to, magic. Neither a picture nor a detailed description of the wyvern is offered, which makes it possible to suppose that the wyvern has a small, backward-curving horn growing near the tip of its snout. It's in this horn that the wyvern's affinity for magic is centered; and, on the principle of Sympathetic Magic, an Enchanter can use this horn to create an amulet that can be used to detect magical auras.

The horn itself shouldn't be enormously difficult to obtain, since wyvern horn has recognized medicinal properties in addition to its little-known magical-detection properties. A horn of the proper size will cost about 1,000 SPs. But to be of any magical use, the horn must have been cut from a living wyvern, since the trauma of death destroys its affinity. About 40% of the horns being sold will have come from living wyverns. (The "horn" is actually made up of horny hair fibers growing out from the skin, just like the horn of the rhinoceros; and experienced hunters know that if the wyvern is left alive in the wild after its horn and poison are harvested, in about a year its quickly growing horn can be harvested again.) An Enchanter can easily tell whether a horn has been cut from a living or a dead wyvern, simply by holding the horn in his hand.

Once the wyvern horn is obtained, the Enchanter uses it to create an amulet by performing the "Ritual of Creating Crystal of Vision" (36.Q-2), using the horn in place of a piece of crystal. This takes about three hours, and the total cost of creating the amulet is the cost of the horn plus the cost of the ambergris used, in all about 2,000 SPs.

The amulet can be employed in two ways. In the simplest procedure, a character holds the amulet in his hand and recites whatever activating phrase the Enchanter has built into the amulet. For one minute thereafter, the character will be able to recognize any magical aura — spell, Ward, amulet, etc. — within his field of vision, providing he continues to hold the amulet, though he will be unable to distinguish the nature of the magic (the kind of spell or Ward it is, its purpose, how it's triggered, etc.). This procedure can be used one time each day, +1 time per Rank the Enchanter has with the "Ritual of Creating Crystal of Vision."

In the second procedure, the Enchanter performs an Investment Ritual (Rule 32.3) on the amulet and invests it with "Wizard's Eye Spell" (36. S-10). When this spell is activated, the character will not only be able to recognize magical auras as in the first procedure, but if he has the Witchsight talent (36.T-1, 38.T-1, or 46.T-1, but not the 44.G-7 spell) he can also learn something about the nature of the magic. Base

Chance for success in this is the same as the Adept's normal Base Chance with Witchsight, with no penalty for failure. If the Adept succeeds, the GM should tell him one fact about the magical aura he is investigating, such as the name of the spell or Ward involved, or its effects, or its activation instructions, or what College is involved (and whether General or Special Knowledge), etc. Exactly what piece of information the success yields is up to the GM. The Adept has only one opportunity to learn one fact about each magical aura he investigates while the "Wizard's Eye Spell" is in effect. Using a second "Wizard's Eye Spell," he can re-investigate auras he failed to learn anything about, but he can learn nothing new about auras that he has already succeeded in investigating.

GMs should treat this formula as not very widely known, about as difficult for an Enchanter to obtain as the "Wizard's Eye Spell" itself — and even less well-known to non-Enchanters. The availability of appropriate wyvern horns can also be restricted.

An attendant danger in carrying a wyvern-horn amulet is that wyverns tend to notice such things and then react in an unfavorable manner. In fact, it's not impossible that a wyvern's trove of magical items could contain a wyvern-horn amulet taken from some unwary and unfortunate Adept.

Gryphon-fur amulet

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make also follows the principle of Sympathetic Magic: Since gryphons (see the rule-book, page 109) have a talent for locating buried treasure, they can "contribute" a key ingredient for an amulet that can be used in treasure hunting. This key ingredient is a lock of fur taken from the gryphon's chest — specifically, the black lock that always grows nearest the heart. Since the death-trauma would destroy the magical value of the lock, it must be taken from the chest of a living gryphon, and if this is done it will grow back in about 18 months.

Once the lock is obtained — on the open market its cost will vary but should never be less than 1,500 SPs — the Enchanter uses it to make an amulet by performing the "Ritual of Creating Crystal of Vision" (36.Q-2), using the lock in place of a piece of crystal. This takes about three hours, and the total cost of creating the amulet, including the lock of gryphon fur, the other materials for the amulet, and the ambergris that is burned, is at least 3,000 SPs. When the amulet is completed, the Enchanter then invests it with the "Spell of Location" (36.Q-6), which can be used in the normal fashion.

The treasure-hunting aspect of this amulet depends on the presence of the "Spell of Location" but does not require the use of any of that spell's charges. So long as a single charge of the spell is present in the amulet, the treasure-hunting aspect will work. When the last charge has been used,

however, the amulet becomes dormant until it is re-invested.

When a non-dormant amulet is brought within 10 feet (+5 feet per Rank with the "Ritual of Creating Crystal of Vision" of the Adept who fashioned the amulet) of any buried, hidden, or secret treasure of any kind, a special arrow will automatically appear to the Adept without any special activation on his part, providing the amulet is touching some portion of the Adept's anatomy. This arrow is visible only to the Adept himself; its presence will neither interfere with his combat efficiency nor distract him from concentration; and, so long as the Adept remains within range, the arrow will direct the way to the treasure. This use of the amulet has no limit on duration, and since it doesn't depend on magical charges, it can be used any number of times.

The Adept need not have encountered, or studied, or even known about the treasure in order for the amulet to activate itself. In addition to direction, the amulet will also indicate distance to the treasure and the treasure's "strength," which might be a clue to its value, size, or some other aspect of its nature. The Adept will also be able to tell if he has previously encountered or studied the treasure, but the amulet will tell him nothing more.

If two or more separate treasures are within range, the amulet will indicate all of them at once, or each in order as it comes within range, and the Adept must determine which one he wants to hunt before the amulet will guide him any further. If too many treasures are present (GM's discretion), the amulet will "blur" and won't guide the Adept toward any of them, but will merely indicate to the Adept that he's in a treasure-rich area. The amulet will never blur if a specific target has been selected, or if the Adept is hunting a particular treasure that he knows to be in the vicinity. The blurring will clear if the character approaches within 10 feet of a specific treasure; and, given leisure to accomplish it, an Adept can always voluntarily reduce the amulet's range at a rate of five feet every 30 seconds in an effort to eliminate the blur, thus perhaps getting a fix on the nearest treasure.

"Too many treasures" might be defined as five or more treasures hidden in separate places, or an area of "dispersed" treasure — perhaps, a gold mine. Just what is meant by "buried," "hidden" and "secret" is open to wide interpretation by GMs, as is "treasure" for that matter. In his enthusiasm for the "blur," the GM should beware of so-called "Monty Haul" dungeons, but should also remember that one man's treasure is another man's junk.

The primary use of this amulet is to discover hidden treasure troves within a limited environment, such as a palace, a castle, a lair, and so forth. Should an Adept take such an amulet into room c05-A of *The Palace of Ontoncle* (page 20), for example, it would immediately point out to him the

trove buried in the corner of the lair.

The GM should treat the formula for this amulet as restricted knowledge, similar to the wyvern-horn amulet and just about as difficult for an Enchanter to obtain. It is almost completely unknown to non-Enchanters.

There they are: nine rule modifications. Nothing startling, nothing outrageous, just simple extrapolations from information the DRAGONQUEST rules had already offered. But what follows is in a different category: new rules, the creation of which is motivated by the simple feeling that they ought to exist. On that basis, consider the following:

Rule 32.3, paragraph 3, states: ". . . a particular object may never be invested with more than one spell at the same time." And we already know from experience that once a spell is totally discharged from an object, the object becomes normal once more, without magical value. Which means that mages in the DRAGONQUEST game can produce precious few enduringly magical objects. Well, Enchanters ought to be an exception to this rule. So, for the purpose of this article's argument, below are given two ways in which Enchanters can get around the general rule.

To support these exceptions, the rules offer this evidence: We've already seen how two counterspells can be put into the same amulet (the platinum rings), so the phenomenon of two spells in a single object does exist. Among the amulets made by Adepts of the College of Black Magics (46.T-3-C) is the "Amulet of Luck" (#3) which more clearly than the others employs the effects of two separate spells. And finally the supplements *The Palace of Ontoncle* and *The Blade of Allectus* have examples of objects containing multiple spells, though admittedly some of these may have been (and probably were) created outside the purview of the twelve Colleges.

With all this in mind, it should come as no surprise that Enchanters, with their famous affinity for enchantments (Rule 36), can invest more than one spell into an object. Here's how they do it:

[36.7] Special Knowledge Rituals

1. Ritual of Multiple Investment (R-1)

This ritual is precisely the same as the Investment Ritual (32.3) in all except three respects: First, during the ritual, the Enchanter must burn a special incense costing 100 SPs. Second, the ritual is performed upon an object into which a spell has already been invested, with the purpose of investing an "extra" spell. Third, when the ritual is complete, the additional spell(s) will have charges of its (their) own equal to the Enchanter's Rank with this ritual.

At Rank 1, the Enchanter must be dealing with an object into which he himself has already invested a spell, and he can add only a single "extra" spell to the object.

At Rank 5, the Enchanter can also begin

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dealing with objects into which another Adept (of any of the Thaumaturgical Colleges) has invested a spell. To do this, however, the Enchanter must have full knowledge of what the spell is and how it is activated, or the ritual will fail. He can also begin investing an "extra" spell into *magical items*, such as the products of rituals 36.Q-2, 36.Q-3, 36.Q-4, etc., providing he has full knowledge of the other ritual. Such objects can never have more than a single "extra" spell added.

At Rank 10, the Enchanter can perform a second 36.R-1 Ritual on an object that already contains two spells, in order to invest a third spell. However, the second and third spells invested into the object must both be the Enchanter's own, and must share between them the "extra" charges that his Rank with this ritual allows. (This is another reason why it is so important for an Enchanter to be able to govern the number of charges he's investing; otherwise, he can't determine which spell has how many charges. See "Charge control" above.) Three spells is the maximum number that can be invested in a single object using this ritual.

At Rank 15, the Enchanter obtains the skill to use the spells of other Adepts of any of the Thaumaturgical Colleges as the "extra" spells, providing that at least one of the three spells in the object is his own. To use the spell of another Adept in this fashion, that other Adept must be present and cooperating during the entire ritual, and the cost of the incense burned during the ritual increases to 200 SPs. The maximum number of "extra" charges remains equal to the Enchanter's Rank with this ritual, and the Enchanter governs how they're shared out.

Since the investing Adept controls how his spells' charges will be activated, an Enchanter using this ritual can specify that the spells will activate separately on given commands, or in a particular sequence on a single command, or even simultaneously. This allows for numerous variations, depending on the GM's judgment of whether or not the Adept has the necessary sophistication with this ritual, in terms of Rank, to set up sufficiently complex activation instructions. Whatever the activation instructions, Cast Chance, range, and other aspects are determined separately for each spell.

This ritual can never be used with non-neutralized cold iron, no matter how small the amount. It can be used with neutralized cold iron, with two "extra" spells allowed if truesilver was used, or one "extra" spell if gold or silver was used; the Cast Chance penalties of 29.1, numbered section #3, apply.

The GM should consider knowledge of this ritual to be only moderately restricted among Enchanters, with few non-Enchanters even knowing it exists. This ritual cannot be used on Spell Containers (see below).

Note: The existence of this ritual should not be allowed to discourage or inhibit the

imaginative use of non-ritualized spell combinations. For example, the parts of an object are just that — part of that object and not subject to separate investment. The threads of a shirt cannot be invested separately from the shirt itself. But the chain that holds a medallion can be invested separately from the medallion. The jewel in the pommel of a sword, provided it is properly insulated from the cold iron, can be enchanted separately from the sword. And the pouch that holds a Crystal of Vision can certainly be invested with its own spell.

(Note: In the DRAGONQUEST rules, the words "enchantment" and "investment" are sometimes used interchangeably (see 56.3) and sometimes not. Players and GMs should pay careful attention to the context in which these words are used.)

At the end of this process, the object is still essentially non-magical, merely invested with magical charges. To create actual magical items, the following Special Knowledge Ritual available to Enchanters is used.

2. Ritual of Creating Spell Containers (R-2)

An Enchanter can create a permanent Spell Container out of any object by subjecting it to this ritual. The effect is to create in the object intangible "spell compartments," in each of which are a number of "charge-niches" that can be occupied by spell charges when the com-

partment is "filled." This ritual, however, does not actually "fill" the compartment — that requires a subsequent Investment Ritual (32.3), using a specific spell. Each time the 36.R-2 Ritual is performed on an object, it creates a single spell compartment that contains one charge-niche for each Rank the Adept has with the ritual. Each compartment holds only one kind of spell at a time; each niche contains a single charge, and any invested charges that do not find an empty niche to occupy are lost.

To construct a Spell Container, the Enchanter must purchase materials worth 1,000 SPs (+1,000 SPs more for each compartment already in the container) for use in the ritual, and these materials will be unrecoverable whether the attempt succeeds or fails. A full 10-hour Preparation Ritual (32.1) must be executed the day prior to the 36.R-2 Ritual, and the 36.R-2 itself takes 10 hours. Base Chance for success at the end of the ritual is 50%, +1% per Rank, plus the Adept's Magical Aptitude. However, magical "static" makes it dangerous to keep adding spell compartments to a container, and each compartment already existing in a container attaches a -10% penalty to the Base Chance. Failure of the ritual means that the object will literally disintegrate, immediately discharging any and all spells it contains, with appropriate effects on anyone nearby.

The experience multiple for Ritual 36.R-2 is 500.

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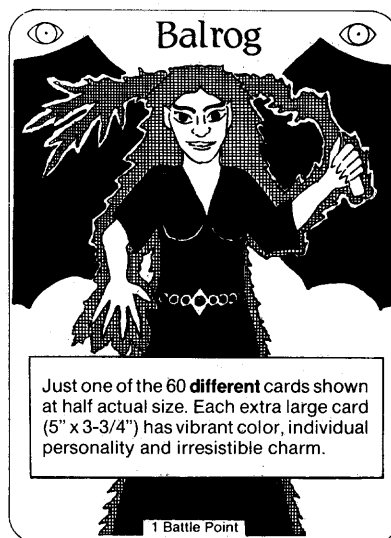
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The number of compartments that can be created in a single object depends on two factors. The first is "real presence," which for simplicity will be considered as equal to the object's weight. Although compartments are intangible, their existence creates a kind of magical "static" that can be injurious to physical reality. A very small metal object, such as a one-ounce silver coin, can safely contain no more than one spell compartment. A larger metal item, such as a three-ounce silver throwing dart, might contain two compartments. But as compartments are added, the requisite size of the container will increase by a factor of 3 until a seven-compartment container has a requisite weight of 729 ounces, or a little more than 45 pounds. Obviously, containers designed for personal use will seldom have more than four or five compartments. Cold iron, even if neutralized, cannot contain spell compartments at all, unless truesilver was used in the neutralizing — if so, treat the object as if it were organic. Inorganic materials can generally contain more compartments than organic materials, on a 3-to-2 scale by weight, rounding down. Items already possessing magical power — amulets, Crystals of Vision, etc. — can never be made into Spell Containers.

Exactly how many compartments a given item can contain is a matter for the GM to decide, and the player of an Adept character should consult the GM concerning specific objects. It's no fun to go to the trouble and expense of enchanting a Spell Container, only to have the GM announce, "That container has been jammed with too many compartments, and the static has just caused it to disintegrate, releasing all its spells with the following effects on everyone in the vicinity. . . ." The initial decision of the GM should be considered final, however, since Enchanters are expected to have a very accurate "feel" for how many compartments an object can contain.

The second factor governing the number of compartments is the Enchanter's Rank with this ritual. At Rank 1, an Enchanter can create one compartment in an object that has no compartments already. At Rank 3, he can create a second compartment in a container that already has one compart-

ment. At Rank 6, a third compartment can be added; at Rank 10, a fourth; at Rank 15, a fifth compartment. At Rank 20, an Enchanter can create as many compartments as he pleases, but seven compartments should be considered a strict functional maximum because of the increasing danger, expense, and size requirements.

Once a Spell Container has been created, it is sufficiently flexible to entirely offset the difficulties and limitations involved in its creation. It can be invested by Adepts from any of the Colleges, and a multiple-compartment container can even hold spells from different Colleges without regard to alignment. When the charges in a particular compartment are all expended, the compartment can be refilled with the same or a different spell from any of the Colleges. When using a container, an investment can fail but it cannot backfire; and simply because a container is being used, +10 is added to the investment's Base Chance. A container created by one Enchanter can even have compartments added to it by another Enchanter. Also, an Enchanter can use the 10-hour 36.R-2 Ritual by itself to increase the number of niches in an existing (but empty) compartment, each use of the ritual adding niches equal to his own Rank with the ritual, up to a maximum of 20 niches per compartment. When used to create new niches in existing compartments, the cost of materials for the 36.R-2 Ritual is only 200 SPs, with no "static" penalties.

An Adept uses the Investment-Ritual (32.3) to store charges equal to his Rank, as usual. But if one Investment Ritual isn't sufficient to fill the compartment in question, the Adept can keep repeating the Investment Ritual until the compartment is filled. Since investment in a container is subject to almost complete control, if the container has more than one empty compartment, then the Adept can direct his subsequent investments with the same spell to fill niches in a different compartment, thus putting the same kind of spell into two different compartments. It's also possible to use the Preparation Ritual (32.1) as an "investment" to increase the Base Chance of a spell in a specific compartment. Since the Preparation Ritual must be applied to all the spell's charges, divide the Preparation bonus by the number of charges present to determine the net effect on the spell's Base Chance. In this connection, 36.S-7, "Enhance Enchantment," can be used to enhance a stored spell in a similar manner. Charges subsequently added to the compartment adopt the Base Chance and other characteristics of the charges already in that compartment, whether higher or lower.

There's a limit to how much enhancing and recharging an Adept can do with a stored spell, however. From the moment a spell is invested in a compartment, the compartment begins to "close"; once it's closed, no one can tamper with the stored spell in any way, not even Namers. Only the Adept's own mind can act as a wedge to

keep the compartment from closing, and over a period of days he can continue to work on the spell he has just invested. But the moment the Adept turns his mind to some new endeavor, the compartment will close, and neither changes nor new charges can be added until the spell is completely expended and a new one is stored. The degree of continual concentration required of the Adept is analogous to "walking meditation." The Adept can perform minor tasks — preparing and eating food, dressing and undressing, sleeping — without breaking this concentration, but the moment he actually turns his mind to another task, such as combat or conversation, the concentration is broken and the compartment will close.

Activation of spells stored in a container can be handled in three ways: The Enchanter who creates the first compartment, and thus the container, can direct that all spells are subject to the same activation instruction and can use this chance to establish permanent personal control over the container. Or, each compartment can be given a separate activating instruction. Or, the investing Adept can stipulate the activation instruction of the spell he is investing at the time of investment. Proper activation instructions could make it possible to discharge from several compartments simultaneously, or in predetermined succession, or from any particular compartment selectively. Under most circumstances, a given compartment will release its charges only one at a time.

Finally, a container can be destroyed by any action that would damage the object's integrity. An enchanted bow would be unaffected by a broken bowstring, but its compartments would be irreparably ruptured if the bow itself were broken. In this case, any stored spells would be dissipated, not released. Fortunately, container objects are about 20% more difficult to damage with physical force than similar non-container objects, and they resist direct magical attack to their integrity as if they were persons with a total passive Magic Resistance of 75 (see 31.1).

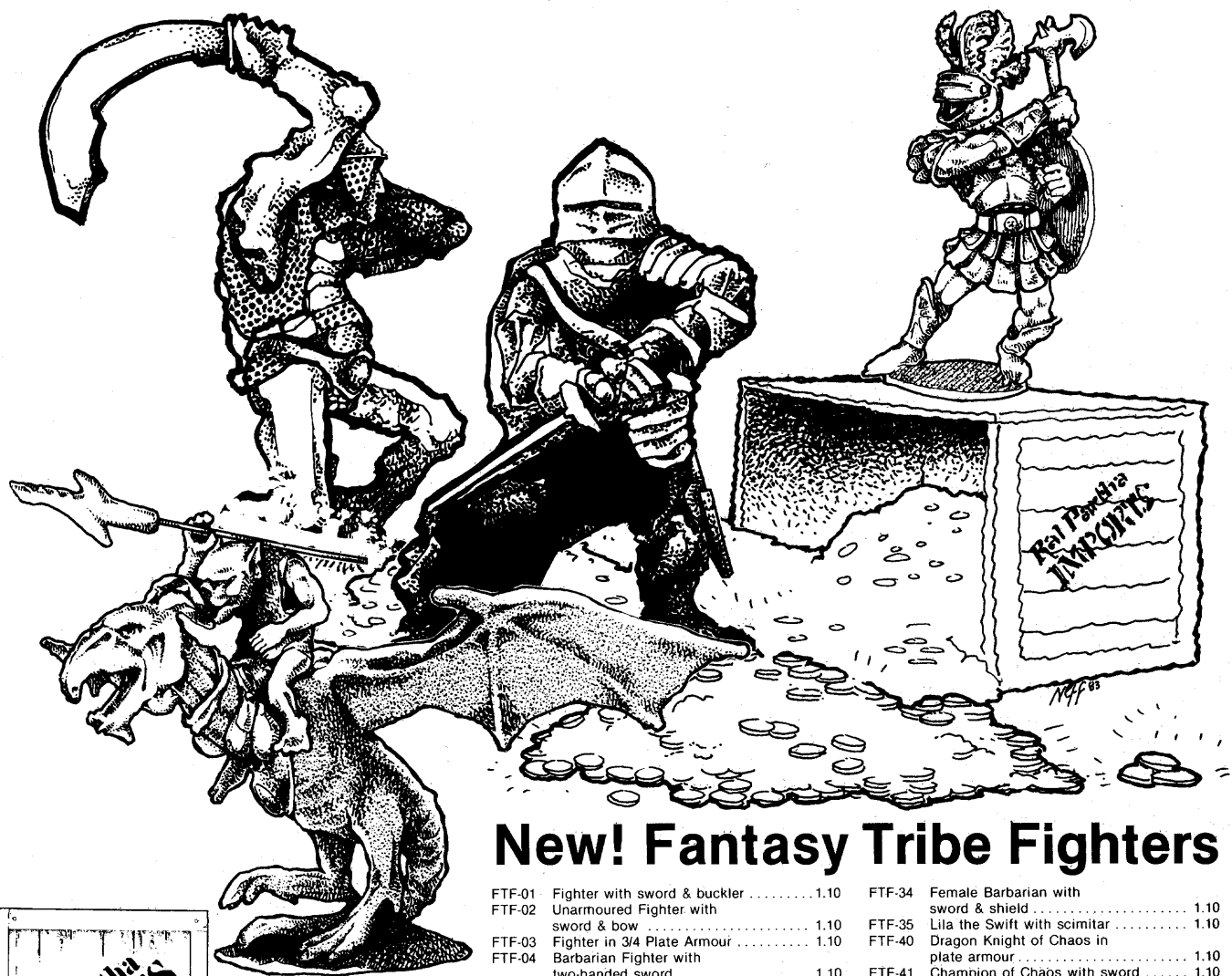
GMs should consider the 36.R-2 Ritual to be highly restricted information. Among non-Enchanters, few people even know such devices can be created. Among Enchanters, an Adept must have reached Rank 10 with at least ten magical abilities (at least two of which are rituals) before he can even comprehend the principles involved in 36.R-2. Each container should have its own chart to record compartments, niches, spells, activating instructions, and other details of its nature.

That completes the list of alterations and extrapolations. None of them are startling or dramatic; no new spells or weapons are added with which an Enchanter can clobber the opposition. With proper use, however, these changes will turn the Enchanter into at least a marginally more formidable character than he was before.

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Rings that do weird things

Thirteen pieces of jewelry not from the DMG

"Here now, what's this?" Grumble stopped shoving armfuls of gold coins into his magical bag. "It's a ring! " He bent down to pick the tiny object out of the mound of treasure before him.

Dimwall hurried over. "Ye gods! Perhaps it's a protector, or a fire resistor. What else do you think it could be?" He pulled out a yellowed scrap of paper that he had torn from an arcane volume. Then he began to read aloud. "Table III. C, Rings. Contrari-ness, Delusion, Djinni Summoning . . ."

Sound familiar? Adventurers can get pretty tired of finding the same old magic rings in a treasure hoard, especially if the players have read the Dungeon Masters Guide treasure charts from front to back. Once in a while, then, the DM can surprise everyone with something new to keep the players — and their characters — guessing.

Below are a baker's dozen of rings that AD&D™ players have sent in to DRAGON® magazine as suggestions for new magic items. They have not been previously published, and are offered here for your gaming entertainment. Unless otherwise stated, all magic rings have the same appearance, are usable by characters of any class, and will radiate magic if a *detect magic* is performed.

1. Ring of Liquid Identification

by Craig Stenseth

If the wearer passes this ring within 1" of a liquid, the ring's rock crystal will change hue, identifying the liquid. At least 4 oz. of liquid must be present. The stone turns to one of nine hues; see the chart below for the meaning of each. If no liquid is nearby, or the fluid in range is not included on the chart below, the crystal remains colorless.

Color	Liquid is:
red	poison, potion, or magical oil
orange	oil or other flammable liquid
yellow	contaminated water
green	acid or other strong corrosive
blue	pure water
indigo	brine
violet	wine, ale, beer, or other alcoholic drink
white	holy water
black	unholy water
XP value: 750	
GP value: 4,000	

2. Ring of Infravision

by Thomas Zarbock

This ring bestows infravision upon the wearer, as per the spell of the same name, out to a 60' radius. A few rings of this type

(10%) allow the wearer to use ultravision as well; in this case, the user can concentrate on only one type of vision per round. Ultravision enables a character to see radiation in the ultraviolet spectrum. At night, ultravision extends out to 100 yards, as clear in quality as vision during the day. Shadowy, less clear ultravision extends to 300 yards. Cloudy nights reduce ultravision by 50%. Underground (in caves and dungeons), the wearer will only have clear ultravision within a 3' radius. Any sort of light, including that given off by magic items, will tend to spoil ultravision, blinding the character to dimmer items. Ultravision works as the spell; for more information, see DRAGON issue #67, p. 58.

XP value: 1,000 (1,500 w/ultravision)

GP value: 5,000 (7,500 w/ultravision)

3. Ring of Awareness

by Thomas Zarbock

This ring heightens the senses of the wearer so greatly that he can only be surprised 1 time in 20. However, for every consecutive hour this ring is worn, there is a cumulative 1% chance that the wearer will become temporarily afflicted with paranoia, as per the Dungeon Masters Guide. This paranoia will persist for a number of rounds equal to the number of hours the ring was worn (unless cured by magical means), and cannot be negated by removing the ring after the paranoia has taken effect. If the wearer is not already afflicted, the cumulative chance of paranoia drops to zero when the ring is removed and begins again at 1% when it is put back on, even if the removal only lasts for a moment.

XP value: 1,200

GP value: 6,000

4. Ring of Light

by Thomas Zarbock

This ring allows the wearer to cast a *continual light* spell three times per day; this light cannot be dispelled except by a cleric of 9th level or higher. In addition, the ring automatically dispels all *darkness* spells within 60' of the wearer as if the wearer were a 9th-level cleric.

XP value: 1,000

GP value: 5,000

5. Ring of Icebolts

by Charles C. Craig

When a special command is spoken, this ring will fire a bolt of solid ice at any target within 100'. The wearer chooses the target. The icebolt causes 2-12 points of damage to the target, half that if a saving throw vs. wands is made. Creatures or beings who use fire or are fiery in nature (salamanders, fire giants, red dragons, etc.) save at -4 against this effect; creatures who are cold-

users or cold-resistant (frost giants, white dragons, etc.) save at +4. Each ring possesses 3-30 charges when found, and cannot be recharged.

XP value: 2,000

GP value: 7,500

6. Ring of Jolting

by Charles C. Craig

At a word of command, the wearer of this ring can cast a beam of energy out to 100', at any single target. This energy beam does no hit-point damage, but will stun the target for 3-12 rounds. When stunned, a target can only defend himself and will not gain initiative to perform any action. No psionic or magical powers may be used by the stunned character or creature during this time. If a saving throw vs. paralyzation is made, the victim will only be stunned for 1-4 rounds.

XP value: 1,000

GP value: 5,000

7. Ring of Bladeturning

by Charles C. Craig

This ring can deflect attacks made with metallic weapons. The wearer can deflect one such attack per round, provided he is defending himself and not simply aiding someone else. To use the ring, the wearer declares that he wishes to deflect an attack, and which attack he wants to turn back, if more than one opponent is involved or if an opponent has more than one attack per round. The wearer must declare his intent *before* the opponent's "to hit" roll is made. The attack, whether it would have hit or not, is immediately turned aside. Each of these rings has 3-30 charges when found, and cannot be recharged. Note that the ring cannot deflect an attack if a "to hit" roll has already been made by the opponent; if the attack hits, damage must be taken, and one of the ring's charges is used anyway, even if it misses.

XP value: 1,500

GP value: 7,000

8. Ring of Invisibility Negation

by Richard Lucas

Some years ago, a wizard invented this ring because he disliked invisible surprises. When it is worn, the ring continually generates a powerful magical field 60' in diameter that negates *invisibility* within its confines. Any creature with natural or induced invisibility will immediately become visible upon entering this field and will remain so until leaving it. Furthermore, the creature will become outlined with an eerie *faerie fire*, a green luminous light that gives opponents a +2 chance to hit. The effects of *potions of invisibility*, *dust of disappearance*, and spells of *invisibility* will



I. NORTHAVEN WHARF—The Golotha Fishmarket is very casual and unorganised. Fishermen bring in their catches, by cart, barge or raft to sell them. The wharf is a wooden, piling-supported extension of the island, as is much of the district north of Chafin Street and west of Khi Way. There is a minimum twenty five foot clearance

under the wharf at low tide, and about ten feet at high tide. Several of the buildings above are accessible, by trapdoor, from underneath the wharf. Dozens of small vessels, many used as homes, tie up beneath the wharf. This "underground" is even more dangerous than the city streets. Kalphor Wharf has a similar colony.

II. VILLAGE OF SHIETRA—A village of semi-urban poor folk who are mostly involved in Thay's fishing industry. Shieta is under the jurisdiction of the city: property holders pay (reduced) property taxes. A few villagers have vegetable plots on the south side of the settlement. About half of them graze goats or other livestock on the commons.



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be negated and dispelled as soon as the creature using them enters the magic field. Potions, dust, or spells possessed but not being used will not be affected.

The normal form of this ring is called the "clarifier." In addition to this, there are two variations. The first, the "killer," does 2-5 (1d4+1) hit points of damage per round (no saving throw) to creatures in the magic field whose invisibility was affected. The second variation is the "destroyer." It drains the magical properties of any invisibility-related device that remains in the magic field for more than one round at one time. The magic item in question is allowed a saving throw vs. disintegration at +5 to avoid being de-magicked.

For random selection of one of the three rings, roll percentile dice:

Roll Ring	XP value	GP value
01-80 clarifier	1,000	12,000
81-95 killer	1,800	20,000
96-00 destroyer	1,300	7,000

9. Jhessail's Silver Ring

by Ed Greenwood

This ring confers upon the wearer protection from mental attack. No *control* magic will work upon the wearer, and all successful *charm* spells will work upon the caster instead of the wearer.

For example: A magic-user attempts to *charm* the ring wearer, and the wearer fails his saving throw. Then the *charm* is turned upon the magic-user — who gets no initial saving throw — placing him under the control of the ring wearer. Any being thus charmed gets a saving throw to break the *charm* once every 7 turns, and is instantly freed if the ring is taken off or destroyed. If the ring wearer makes his saving throw vs. the initial attack, the spell merely fails, and the ring has no effect. Note that this property extends to gaze *charm* attacks, and is a magical property rather than a physical "reflection."

The ring wearer also gains a +4 saving throw bonus against stunning, *confusion*, and *feeblemind*. In addition, the wearer gains +4 on rolls to disbelieve illusions. The ring acts as a *Tower of Iron Will* (defense strength of 77 points, no attack strength) against psionic attack.

XP value: 3,000

GP value: 11,000

10. Ring of Lore

by Ed Greenwood

This appears identical to other rings, but when worn it can be commanded to exercise various powers if the correct command words are known.

The ring can act as a *legend lore* through mental visions to its wearer. This power can be called for only once per week, and the visions require the wearer's total concentration over a period of 4 turns after the ring was commanded. If concentration is not maintained, all visions will be lost. The ring must be touched to an item, or a name of a person or place must be spoken over it as the command is given; otherwise, the

visions will be random, having no common focus or theme.

The ring will also act as a *stone tell* once per week, upon being touched to stone while the command "Speak!" is uttered.

Upon the command "Shine forth!," the ring will cause any *symbols*, hidden runes, or powerful *dweomers* within 1" to glow visibly. This power will only work once per day.

The ring can also endow the wearer with a power identical in effect to psionic *sensitivity to psychic impressions* once per week. This power is not infallible; there is only a 40% chance it will be effective. Even if the attempt fails, the ring will still not operate this way again for a week. The psychic power is activated silently, by will, and it requires the wearer's complete concentration to work.

All of the ring's powers have durations identical to the spells or effects they resemble. Any and all of them may be used in quick succession (but not simultaneously); the use of one has no effect on the others.

Every time the ring is used, there is a 5% chance it will vanish forever from the wearer's finger without operating as desired.

XP value: 3,500

GP value: 23,500

11. Rings of Lycanthropy

by Jerome Mayard

Each of these rings features the head of some were-creature, engraved in bas-relief. With the utterance of the proper command word, the wearer is transformed into the were-creature engraved on the ring. This transformation is possible only once per day, and the duration of the change is only 1 turn. To discover the command word, the bearer of the ring must wear it under a full moon, at which point the word will come to mind. The command can also be discovered if a cleric blesses the ring before an *identify* spell is cast upon it.

The wearer, while transformed, gains the hit points and abilities of the were-creature but retains his original alignment. Lycanthrope-form hit points are considered separately from the wearer's usual hit points; if the were-creature's hit points are reduced to zero, the character is instantly transformed back into his previous form, and his normal number of hit points is retained. There is a 1% cumulative chance per use that the wearer will be permanently transformed into the were-creature (including its alignment), and not even a *wish* will negate this change.

These rings are found in the following proportions: 50% wolf, 25% rat, 10% bear, 10% boar, and 5% tiger.

XP value: 2,500

GP value: 7,500

12. Ring of Spell Holding

by Jeff Abbott

This ring, usable only by those able to cast spells, has the ability to indefinitely increase the duration of any spell cast upon the wearer by himself, until the effect is

ended by removal of the ring or the casting of *dispel magic*. In order to take advantage of its powers, the ring must be removed; then the desired spell is cast upon the wearer, and then the wearer must replace the ring before the spell's duration is exhausted. The removal of the ring afterward will end the spell immediately. Only one spell at a time may be continued in this manner, since the ring must be taken off before the new spell to be continued is cast. Note: The ring cannot continue an *invisibility* spell during an attack. It does not work on spells with a duration of "permanent"; for instance, a *cure disease* spell cannot be continued to give the ring wearer eternal immunity. And, as noted above, it only works on spells that can be cast by the ring wearer upon his person.

XP value: 2,000

GP value: 10,000

13. Wizzo's Ring of Compulsions

by Bill Birdsall

This type of ring, when worn, may compel the wearer to perform certain unexplained actions. It can be removed easily at any time — but the wearer will not *want* to remove the ring for any reason. Anyone wearing one of these rings will become extremely possessive of it and will not voluntarily allow anyone else to touch it. Anyone who wants to see the ring will be suspected of wanting to steal it, and the wearer will either attack that character or attempt to flee, depending on the circumstances. (Assign a 50% chance for either outcome if random determination is desired.) A *remove curse* spell halts the compulsion long enough for the wearer to remove the ring or allow it to be removed.

There is a 5% chance per waking hour that the ring will compel its wearer to do something. Listed below are the compulsions that the ring may cause (roll d10).

1. Sleep for 1-6 turns.
2. Act intoxicated for 1-6 turns.
3. Act in an amorous fashion toward the nearest character of the opposite sex, or the next such one encountered, for 1-4 turns.
4. Fight for 1-6 rounds against the nearest character.
5. Wander about, looking at the scenery for 1-6 rounds.
6. Take a bath.
7. Cook and eat a good meal.
8. Talk for 1-6 rounds.
9. Change clothes.
10. Find and insult the nearest monster over 3 HD (the search, and the compulsion, will last for no more than 10 minutes).

While under compulsion, the ring wearer will not do anything except try to fulfill the compulsion. If interrupted, the wearer will become very hostile.

These rings function primarily as other commonly found rings, e.g. *free action*, *protection*, *water walking*, etc. That is, the compulsions provide an unusual variation for otherwise common magic rings. Experience point and gold piece values are the same as those for the common rings.

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New avenues for agents

A preview of the TOP SECRET® Companion

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The information you are about to read has been obtained by this magazine with absolutely no difficulty whatsoever. It is not classified or restricted, except that you need the original TOP SECRET® rules to make full use of what follows. These charts and descriptions were composed by Merle Rasmussen, who also designed the game. This information, and a lot more, will be published in the TOP SECRET Companion scheduled for release later this year. In the next few issues of DRAGON® Magazine, we'll bring you previews of some of the major sections of the Companion. That is all . . . for now.

NEW BUREAUS AND DIVISIONS

Two new bureaus and six new divisions, or subclasses of bureaus, have been added to the TOP SECRET® game. The two new bureaus are Technical and Operations. The six new divisions are listed below, according to the bureaus to which they are attached:

- Section 1 — Administration Bureau
(Special Operations Division)
- Section 2 — Investigation Bureau
(Infiltration Division)
- Section 3 — Confiscation Bureau
(Logistics Division)
- Section 4 — Technical Bureau
(Specialty Division)
- Section 5 — Operations Bureau
(Analysis Division)
- Section 00 — Assassination Bureau
(Protection Division)

Section 1, Administration Bureau:

Level	Designation	Experience Points*
1	Junior Case Officer	0
2	Case Officer	2,979
3	Senior Case Officer	6,857
4	Substation Chief	11,713
5	Station Chief	17,625
6	Office Director	24,750
7	Division Director	32,500
8	Bureau Director	43,000
9	Assistant Administrator	58,000
10	Administrator	80,000

* — The agent must have at least this many total points, and the agent must have points in all four of the other bureaus (not including the Assassination Bureau).

40,000 experience points must be earned for every level above 10th.

Section 1, Administration Bureau, Special Operations Division:

Level	Designation	Experience Points *
1	Meddler	0
2	Tamperer	745
3	Interloper	1,714
4	Intruder	2,928
5	Adjuster	4,406
6	Problem Solver	6,188
7	Avenger	8,125
8	Pragmatist	10,750
9	Expediter	14,500
10	Special Operator	20,000

* — Total experience points, in any bureaus.

10,000 experience points must be earned for every level above 10th.

Section 2, Investigation Bureau, Infiltration Division:

Level	Designation	Experience Points
1	Snitch	0
2	Foist	1,000
3	Inside Man	2,500
4	Plant	4,000
5	Ringer	6,000
6	Contact	8,000
7	Insinuator	11,000
8	Penetrator	14,000
9	Subversive	17,000
10	Infiltrator	20,000

10,000 experience points must be earned for every level above 10th.

Section 3, Confiscation Bureau, Logistics Division:

Level	Designation	Experience Points
1	Bearer	0
2	Carrier	444
3	Messenger	1,333
4	Courier	2,666
5	Cut-out	4,444
6	Runner	6,666
7	Bootlegger	9,333
8	Smuggler	12,444
9	Contrabandist	16,000
10	Logistician	20,000

10,000 experience points must be earned for every level above 10th.

Section 4, Technical Bureau and Specialty Division:

Level	Designation	Experience Points
1	Trainee	0
2	Clerk	79
3	Tinker	157
4	Hobbyist	313
5	Apprentice	625
6	Journeyman	1,250
7	Master	2,500
8	Academician	5,000
9	Consultant	10,000
10	Technician	20,000

10,000 experience points must be earned for every level above 10th.

Section 5, Operations Bureau and Analysis Division:

Level	Designation	Experience Points *
1	Guide	0
2	Leader	979
3	Boss	2,857
4	Supervisor	5,713
5	Chief	9,625
6	Principal	14,750
7	Superior	20,500
8	Commander	29,000
9	Director	41,000
10	Operator	60,000

* — Total experience points, from at least three bureaus.

30,000 experience points must be earned for every level above 10th.

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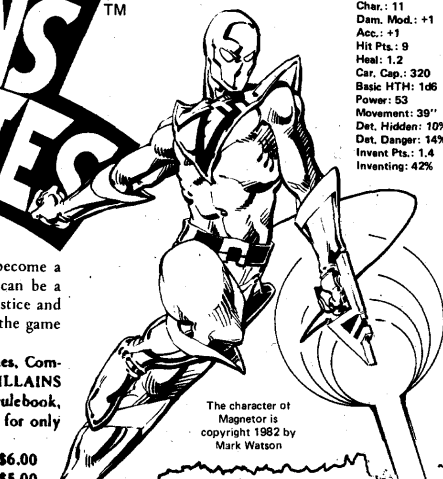
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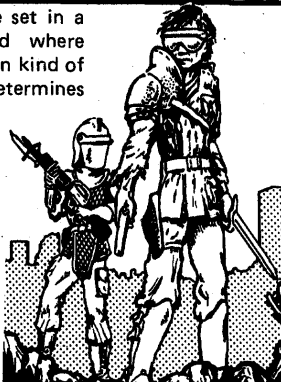


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2. Life Support Device: 30 charges. PB = 1 per hour.
3. Heightened Senses Device: Nightvision goggles, full detection scores in darkness.

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Section 00, Assassination Bureau, Protection Division:

Level	Description	Experience Points
1	Lookout	0
2	Watchperson	2,222
3	Picket	4,444
4	Sentry	6,667
5	Ward	8,889
6	Human Shield	11,111
7	Bodyguard	13,333
8	Guardian	15,556
9	Defender	17,778
10	Protector	20,000

10,000 experience points must be earned for every level above 10th.

Explanation of Bureau and Division Classifications

No specific role is all-encompassing, nor should it be. Each agent brings particular talents to a mission that often overlap another agent's talents. In the course of a mission, it is best to let the most qualified individual perform any particular task.

ADMINISTRATOR: This is not officially an agent's role unless the admin has a character in the field or positioned where action can take place. Administration is, theoretically, where agents who have worked under all bureaus come to retire. Having survived at least four missions to get into administration, the agent/player should have plenty of ideas on how to design and moderate missions. Administrators often contact an operator to assemble a team of agents for a particular mission. The admin then uses agency resources to supply and pay the chosen operator, who in turn supplies and pays the selected (or surviving) agents.

SPECIAL AGENTS: Special agents work directly under an administrator without an official operator. They act as troubleshooters, blunt instruments (see below), and internal investigators, among other things. They often work alone or in small, tightly knit groups. Special agents may be assigned to groups including confiscators, investigators, assassins, or technicians, but generally do not reveal their unique classification. Special agents are generalists who earn experience as if they worked under the four bureaus, but they do not gain any bonus experience points or payments. Like technicians, they are allowed the use of special devices before they reach fourth level.

INVESTIGATOR: This agent is the eyes and ears of an espionage body. Primarily an information-gatherer, an investigator observes, inquires, and examines the situation or target systematically, often using surveillance equipment. An investigator needs a good memory, and high Charm, Knowledge, and Observation values. Investigators should be proficient in electronics, languages, photography, and tailing. They generally report to their personal or team operator instead of an admin.

INFILTRATOR: Infiltrators are a subclass of investigators. Infiltration goes beyond surveillance; an infiltrator must become part of a group or organization in order to uncover its goals, aims, and secret activities. They usually report their findings to an operator. Infiltrators may eventually be called on to subvert or destroy the group from inside.

Infiltrators need fewer experience points than investigators to gain a level. Experience points earned for infiltration do not apply toward investigation, and vice versa.

CONFISCATOR: This agent is the hands of an espionage body. A confiscator's main concern is seizing property. Most confiscators are well-coordinated and familiar with all types of valuable goods and security systems. Security detection and deactivation are a confiscator's strengths, with picking pockets and gambling as side-lines. Confiscators generally report to their personal or team operator instead of an admin.

LOGISTICIAN: Logisticians are a subclass of confiscators. They are equipment handlers; the logistician's job is to procure, distribute, maintain, and replace agency equipment and personnel. A logistician may need to perform the opposite of a confiscator's job: altering and returning stolen items without being detected. Travel documents, tickets, ammunition, and the necessities of life are supplied by the logistician. When agents need to flee as quickly as possible along the shortest route, a logistician is the person who knows where to go and how to get there.

TECHNICIAN: The technician is a generalist who usually is seen only in support roles, and rarely is placed in the field. Technicians often earn their first experience by attending espionage classes. Those few who are assigned to work with assassins, confiscators, and investigators can expect an equal share of the hazards and difficulties. Many technicians carry no weapons, relying on team members for protection. The technician operates equipment, bandages injuries, analyzes compounds, or studies special devices.

Technicians are allowed the use of special equipment before reaching fourth level. Technicians also get a +100 experience point bonus for courses completed in espionage college.

SPECIALIST: Specialists are a subclass of technicians. Specialists are highly trained in one specific field of study. They are limited to this one job, which they perform very well. In other skills, specialists will have average training at best. A specialist chooses a specialty when the character is created, and is called on to perform only that function. The specialist is extremely dedicated. Specialists will rarely be allowed to leave their low-profile desk jobs to accompany a team of agents on a mission. They are, however, experts in their fields and hence may be called on to perform a specific function.

Specialists advance on the same experience point schedule as technicians.

OPERATOR: In the field, an operator is the boss. The operator leads the team, pays its members, enforces team regulations, and reports directly to the administrator. Most operator duties are mundane and bureaucratic, such as recruiting and training new agents. Many operators, tired of the constant danger of field work, strive to become administrators, whose lives are safer. An operator is personally responsible for the actions of agents under his control. An operator also is responsible for the proper use and care of expensive or valuable special equipment borrowed from the agency. An operator may be a resident of the area where a mission is being carried out.

ANALYST: Analysts are a subclass of operators. Their job is to examine and interpret bits of information or physical evidence. Analysts rely on their memory and observation to assemble clues into useful knowledge. Analysis is primarily a desk job; analysts rarely venture into the field to collect their own data. An analyst in the field is a talking encyclopedia, and may have inside information that other agents are not aware of. Analysts should have a high Knowledge value and several Superior Areas of Knowledge, and should be able to speak several languages. Experienced analysts may become kidnapping targets of enemy agencies, because they can be pumped for information.

ASSASSIN: The infamous yet regrettably necessary assassin is primarily a cold-blooded murderer of prominent persons and secret agents. Rating high in Physical Strength and Willpower, these agents perform dangerous, often suicidal, tasks in the line of duty. Assassins are experts in explosives, poisons, firearms, and unarmed combat. Assassins generally report to their personal or team operator instead of to an administrator.

PROTECTOR: Protectors are a subclass of assassins. Instead of killing and destroying, protectors try to prevent such acts. They are trained in assassination and sabotage techniques in order to better protect against them. Protectors of live targets are called bodyguards, and are trained to use their own bodies as shields to protect other agents or VIPs. Protectors of installations, vehicles, or valuable objects are called guards.

Special classifications

Agents can work under one of four bureaus: Investigation, Confiscation, Assassination, or Technical. When a character is created, the player decides which bureau the agent will work under for the first mission. A character can work under only one bureau at a time. All experience points earned on a given mission must be applied to that bureau only. At any time between missions, a character may change to another bureau. Experience points apply only to the bureau in which they were earned. All beginning characters and characters working under a new bureau for the first time are considered 1st level with zero experience points in that bureau. A character may return to a bureau he left previously; new experience points earned in that bureau are added to the experience points the character earned in that bureau previously.

All rules that apply to bureaus also apply to divisions beneath the bureaus. An agent who is working in a division is also considered to be working in the bureau to which that division is attached. For example, an agent who has worked in the Infiltration, Logistics, and Protection Divisions has worked in three bureaus. If an agent has worked in the Investigation Bureau, the Infiltration Division, and the Logistics Division, he has worked in only two bureaus.

Characters who have earned experience points in more than one bureau are valuable agents. They are given a special classification which defines their combination of talents. The agent's level in the special classification equals the lowest level the character has reached in any of the bureaus where the agent has earned experience. For example, a character who is a 3rd level Investigator and a 2nd level Confiscator qualifies as a 2nd level Magician. "Membership requirements" are as follows:

Magician: Investigation or Infiltration, plus Confiscation or Logistics.

Hunter: Investigation or Infiltration, plus Assassination.

Sleuth: Investigation or Infiltration, plus Technical.

Saboteur: Confiscation or Logistics, plus Assassination.

Wizard: Confiscation or Logistics, plus Technical.

Mechanic: Technical plus Assassination.

As an example of how special classifications work, assume that Shadra, a new recruit, has decided to work in the Technical Bureau. She pays the school entrance fee out of her own pocket, and completes the Pyrotechnic Chemistry and Duplication course in 9 weeks. She earns 90 experience points, plus 100 bonus points for working under the Technical Bureau. She now is classed as a 3rd level technician. On her first field mission, Shadra decides to work in the Confiscation Bureau, and she miraculously gains 455 experience points. She now is a 2nd level confiscator besides being a 3rd level technician. Her special classification is a 2nd level Wizard.

MAGICIAN: Masters at sleight of hand, confidence games, and deception, magicians are welcome on any missions that are conducted in public view. Magicians are escape artists, masters of disguise, and alluring entertainers all in one. A magician generally reports to an operator.

HUNTER: Not necessarily a killer at all, a hunter traces the movement of prey, learns its habits, its strengths, and its weaknesses. The hunter is often a loner who blends in with the shadows, tries to find the target, and often fascinates or forces the surprised target out into the open. Once this occurs, other agents can investigate, confiscate, or assassinate the target. A hunter generally reports to an operator, but can organize a manhunt personally if necessary.

SLEUTH: As information experts, sleuths are valuable assets on highly technical missions where quick, clear thinking is a must. Brilliant, systematic, charming but never assuming, sleuths often solve the problems they pose. Sleuths are cautious yet surprising, and often fool those they come in contact with. Wiretapping and codebreaking are two of a sleuth's strong points. Sleuths generally report to a team operator.

SABOTEUR: Not mad bombers or political terrorists, saboteurs are dazzling, fast-acting experts with a toolbox. Not only must sabo-

teurs know how to stop a machine or a process, but they must know how the mechanism should work properly. To sabotage a series of machines, saboteurs must remove or destroy the same part on each, so a few of them cannot be repaired by cannibalizing parts. Saboteurs work well with mechanics (see below). They usually report to a team operator.

WIZARD: At one time wizards were seldom more than safecrackers, but modern technology has expanded their role. Wizards can deactivate security systems, hot-wire vehicles, find hidden openings, and withdraw information from computer files in seconds. These agents nearly always use tools, and are welcome on delicate missions with time restrictions. Wizards work well with sleuths (see above) and generally report to a team operator.

MECHANIC: Mechanics are agents whose role is to create "accidents." Like wizards, mechanics rely on tools and are concerned with subtlety and secrecy. Often working alone with explosives, gases, poisons, and special devices, mechanics must rely on technical knowhow. While mechanics occasionally aid assassins, they perform many other jobs as well. Mechanics work well with saboteurs and hunters. They usually report to personal or team operators.

Special agents

An exception to the special classifications system is the Special Operations Division of the Administration Bureau. Special agents can begin working in the Special Operations Division without having worked in four other bureaus first. They may only work in the Special Operations Division and may not transfer to any other bureau. Special agents gain experience and are paid as if they worked under all four of the other bureaus. They may never collect a +100 Experience Point Bonus or a +\$25 Base Job Payment Bonus. Like technicians, special agents may use special devices before they reach the 4th level of experience.

Contracts and free-lance work

Agents may choose to go independent and become private "spooks." Individuals and corporations hire such individuals for security and, occasionally, for espionage. Contracts are often verbal, to reduce the number of (possibly embarrassing or incriminating) connections between the contracting parties. Most contracts specify exactly what the agent is expected to do (who, what, where, how, and when) and how much the agent will be paid. Seldom will the true reason (why) be explained. It also is commonly understood that if the target offers better pay than the contractor, the contract may be broken and any advance payments made to agents will be returned to the contractor.

The enemy agent

Normally, an agent is loyal to the agency that employs him. An agent who is loyal to one agency while pretending to be loyal to another is an enemy agent. For example, agent X is employed by the CIA as an analyst. Agent X, however, is loyal to the KGB, and is passing information to it. Agent X is an enemy agent. Or, consider agent Z, who works for the CIA and is loyal to the CIA. Agent Z has convinced the KGB that he is loyal to the KGB, and is passing on misinformation about the CIA. Agent Z also is an enemy agent. Enemy agents can work inside or outside the agency they oppose.

The admin should be aware of the enemy agent's plans, and can use the enemy agent against other player characters. An enemy agent who knows the layout of an enemy headquarters could give false directions to a confiscation team invading those headquarters. An enemy agent could sabotage team equipment or assassinate team members. In general, enemy agents look for actions that will weaken the enemy agency and protect their own agency without jeopardizing their cover. Discovered enemy agents usually are given the option of becoming double agents or being prosecuted. Agent provocateurs are enemy agents.

The double agent

An agent whose loyalty shifts covertly from one agency to an opposing agency is a double agent. For example, agent X, the KGB

enemy agent working inside the CIA, is caught passing CIA secrets. To avoid prosecution, agent X agrees to become a double agent and pass false information to the KGB contacts. Or, CIA enemy agent Z may grow tired of taking orders from Washington and ignore the false information being issued to him, instead passing on actual CIA secrets.

Double agents caught by their first employers usually are given the option of becoming a triple agent or being prosecuted.

The triple agent

An agent whose loyalty has covertly shifted from one agency to an opposing agency, and then back again to the original agency, is a triple agent. For example, agent Z, who gained the confidence of the KGB by becoming a double agent, and has gained access to sensitive information, now secretly shifts loyalty back to the CIA, using the new confidence to pass information out of the KGB.

The triple agent is in a precarious position. If the deceived agency unmasks the agent, the agent probably will be prosecuted.

The deep penetration agent

An enemy agent who has worked for a long time developing a near-perfect cover is a deep penetration agent. The agent advances to a position of authority so he will be trusted with confidential information. Deep penetration agents can work into any government agency or private industry. Many such agents become respected members of their communities to enhance their image as anything but a spy. A deep penetration agent inside another intelligence agency is known as a "mole."

The blunt instrument

In an age of economic cutbacks and world recessions, certain espionage activities may be curtailed or abolished by bureaucrats and politicians. Disgruntled field operators and administrators often retain certain agents as unrestrained troubleshooters, or "blunt instruments." For example, an agent previously issued a license to

kill in the line of duty may have "officially" lost that license. However, in the eyes of his immediate superiors the license has been retained.

The independent

A self-employed professional, agent who works for the highest bidder is an independent. These extremely mercenary agents usually work for money only, prefer verbal contracts, and do not like being set up or sold out. In the past, an agent who quit an agency was considered a defector. Now, "going private" and becoming a corporate spook is a more respected option for agents who resign or are dismissed by their agency. (Espionage is not as financially secure as it once was.) Private individuals and corporations find an increasing need to hire persons with espionage training and experience.

The sleeper

An agent ready for immediate use but currently inactive is a sleeper. Retired agents and recently recruited agents without a first mission are considered on reserve. Retired agents restored to active duty may resent their new status. On the other hand, recent recruits are often eager to take on any assignment.

The security risk

An agent who knows too much is a security risk. The agent cannot be allowed to resign or retire, lest agency secrets are accidentally or intentionally revealed. The agent cannot be eliminated because someday he may decide to reveal all of the information he has gathered about the opposition. The agent has the dubious honor of being too dangerous to let go and too valuable to eliminate. A security risk is followed and watched closely by members of all agencies; the opposition would like to capture someone with so much information, and the friendly agency needs to prevent a kidnapping or defection. Of course, opposing agencies must realize that their own operations could be jeopardized if such a knowledgeable agent was captured, and then returned to his home agency,

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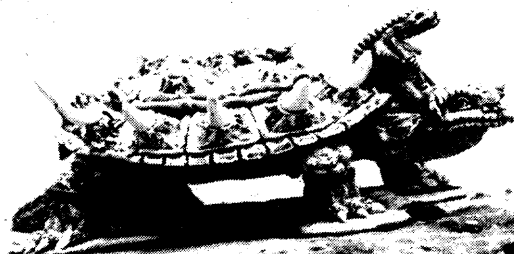


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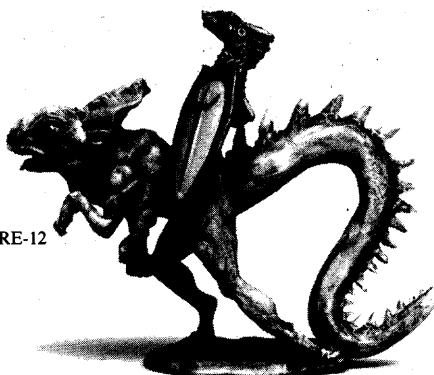


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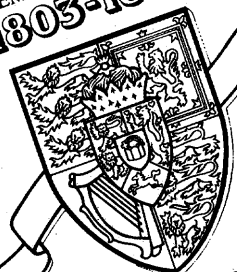
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The Baton Races of Yaz



A soggy, silly game for two players

GRANDFATHER'S STORY

A warm drizzle soaked the few seats in the grandstand that had not yet been occupied. The way the crowd was still coming in, it was certainly going to be another full house. The crowd was happy, because this

was perfect weather for the Baton Races of Yaz, and on this day all differences were forgotten — Flibdill welcomed Tarnose, Skadingle made room for Luggant, as members of all of the races of Yaz prepared to celebrate together.

One infant Tarnose, still in his birthfuzz and full of questions, sat propped on his grandfather's knee.

"Grandfather, why are the Baton Races today, and not yesterday or tomorrow?"

"Because, little one," replied the old and

(relatively) wise Tarnose, "it was on this day, hundreds of rains ago, that our planet escaped the tyranny of the dreadful Floydds."

"Who were they?"

"They were slave-masters who came from the skies. See that bulge they're putting in place over there? Five of your grandmothers spent the last two greks making that one just for this race. The ships that the Floydds came in were shaped like the bulges, only much bigger, and they shined even at night."

"Why do the others have to play? Why can't we just have a Tarnose race and let them have their own races?"

The little Tarnose didn't notice as a Skadingle sitting nearby turned slightly and glared at the questioner and his grandfather. The old Tarnose phrased his answer carefully, to satisfy the infant and the skittish Skadingle at the same time.

"Because it took all of the Yazzites, working together, for Yaz to become free again," he said. "Tarnoses are important, yes, because only we can carry the baton through the swamps. But don't start feeling like you're better than other folks. Skadingles can run much faster than we can, and Luggants can throttle."

A Flibdill, sitting right behind the old Tarnose, ruffled her feathers but said nothing. Next thing, she thought, the old gramp will be telling the child that it was a Tarnose who came up with the idea that freed Yaz, when she and all her friends *knew* it was a Flibdill. . . .

. . . And the Skadingles say it was a Skadingle who came up with the idea. Pride plays a part in such things. Only the dim-witted Luggants make no claim to such a prestigious ancestor — they've always been much better at throttling than thinking anyway.

Actually, it was closer to nine thousand years ago that the Floydds came, not "several hundred rains," as the grandfather said. (Every year on Yaz, it rains constantly except for one day; so, for some reason, the Tarnoses keep track of time by counting rains instead of years. Every race has a

different way of marking time, and no one has bothered to come up with a decent calendar since Yaz only has one season.)

It was on a day like any other that the Floydds came to Yaz, bringing with them to the Yazzites the knowledge that Yaz was not alone in the universe. Unfortunately, that was not all they brought, for the Floydds knew technology and slavery. In huge spherical ships they landed, disgorging many small hovercrafts and Floydds with stun-guns. The defenseless Yazzites were quickly forced into submission. But by making the Yazzites work for them, the Floydds brought about their own downfall by forcing the races of Yaz to work together for the first time in their soggy history.

Legend has it that the beings of Yaz shared a simple language even before the Floydds came. Thus, interracial communication had been *theoretically* possible. In practice, however, it is likely that such dialogues were no more sophisticated than "Outta my way, chicken-head" and "Take a hike, mud-mouth," and so forth. The races of Yaz have never actually fought each other, but they sure did (and still do) know how to quarrel and insult one another. And all four of the races got along better than ever before — or since, for that matter — when Floydddian slavery forced Yazzites of all races to work together in crews.

For the first time, Flibdill worked beside Skadingle; Luggant toiled with Tarnose. Each race became aware of, and learned about, the special talents of the other three. And as if they hadn't done enough already, the Floydds added another incentive to cooperate: Harsh punishment was doled out to any Yazzite who didn't work hard or who caused friction between members of the slave crew. The Yazzites certainly didn't like this arrangement, but they benefited from the tough, universal Yazzite pride that they all developed.

The Floydds weren't very happy with Yaz, either. They had hoped to start a large mining operation, stripping the planet of its natural resources, and they got pretty ornery and disgusted when they finally came to the conclusion that Yaz didn't *have* any natural resources — just drizzle and mud,

with an occasional cloudburst to break the monotony. So, most of the Floydds departed for a better climate, and Yaz became only a repair station for Floydddian ships.

The Yazzites would never admit it, but they had a lot in common. One thing was their slavery under the Floydds; another was their inability to quickly recognize a good thing when they saw one. Most of the Floydds were gone; only guards and mechanics remained on the planet. And security was very light because the Yazzites still seemed to be energetic and loyal slaves; after all, the Floydds still had their stun-guns, and all the Yazzites had was their mud.

Then it was time for that famous but unknown Yazzite to come up with a planet-saving idea: The slaves would throw off the Floydddian yoke by staging a gang uprising. Now, this itself was not a new idea; probably every Yazzite had had the same thought at one time or another. But this unknown leader proposed that the revolution be spread by a group of messengers.

Time was the critical factor. The forces of Yaz had to be roused and unified quickly. The members of the first crew, the one containing the brilliant leader, would all dash off in different directions to alert the crews nearest to them. Then each one of those messengers, exhausted, would direct a fresh messenger to alert another crew. And the revolution would spread, faster than the outnumbered and surprised Floydds could run for their ships. . . .

"Grandfather, what are they doing with those pretty sticks?"

"Those are the batons, little one. Each side is placing the other's baton on one of the bulges, so the races should soon begin. Don't fall asleep now!"

"But what is the baton for? What does it mean?"

"The baton is a symbol, little one, which means that it stands for something else. The batons stand for the message that was carried to the different camps. And that message was, 'It is time for Yaz to be free!' Now — look! One side has already broken a bulge! The Races have begun!"

THE RULES

Object of the game

The *Baton Races of Yaz* is played by two opposing teams of Skadingles, Flibdills, Tarnoses, and Luggants. The object of the ceremonial race is for one team to break all of its bulges with its baton before the other team can do so.

The playing field

The race takes place on a field that looks just like the rest of the surface of the planet Yaz. Some of the areas are *mud* (orange hexes, the closest thing Yaz has to "clear terrain"); others are *muck* (brownish hexes with bubbles in them); and the rest are *mire* (greenish hexes that look like swamp). As

explained below, certain races can only move through certain types of terrain.

The playing pieces

The strip of cardboard on the edge of the playing field contains all the counters and markers needed in the race (plus extra pieces in case some of them get lost). The bulge markers are shaped like trapezoids, so that two of them will fit into one hex on the playing field. The other counters include baton markers and the members of the Yazzite teams.

Each Yazzite can be recognized by the illustration on the counter — and by an appropriate initial, in case you don't already know what Yazzites look like: "S" for Skadingle, "F" for Flibdill, "T" for

Tarnose, and "L" for Luggant. Numbers and dots on the counters identify the movement rate and terrain maneuverability of each race:

For example: An "S" counter indicates a Skadingle, which can move up to 6 hexes per turn. However, each Skadingle counter has only one dot, which means it can only move in *mud* hexes.

All other counters have more than one dot, which means that those Yazzites can move in other terrain as well as mud. Flibdills can enter *mud* and *muck* hexes, while Tarnoses and Luggants can move through all three types of terrain and thus can go anywhere on the playing field.

Except for the differences explained above, Skadingles, Tarnoses, and Flibdills

have the same characteristics and abilities. Only the Luggants are different, and they will be explained in more detail later.

The scenarios

The Baton Races of Yaz can be conducted as a Basic or an Advanced scenario. Beginning players, or those who want to play a less complex (but not necessarily shorter) version, should play the Basic scenario. The rules are the same for either version.

Basic scenario: Each side has 1 baton, 2 Skadingles, 2 Flibdills, 2 Tarnoses, 4 Luggants, and 6 bulges.

Advanced scenario: Each side has 1 baton, 3 Skadingles, 3 Flibdills, 3 Tarnoses, 6 Luggants, and 9 bulges.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

I. Setting Phase

The *game* starts before the *race* actually begins. During the Setting Phase, players decide where the pieces will be located on the playing field. *All* pieces are placed before *any* pieces are moved.

A. Bulge Placement — One of the two players is designated as the “setting player”; this can be determined randomly or by mutual agreement. The setting player takes all of his bulge pieces (either 6 or 9, depending on the scenario) and puts them on the playing field, one to a hex, subject to these restrictions:

No bulge may be placed adjacent to any other bulge.

One third of the bulges must be placed in each of the three types of terrain; for the Basic scenario, this means two each in mud, muck, and mire hexes.

For your first game, place each bulge at least four hexes away from any other bulge. (The farther apart the bulges are placed, the longer the game; it's best to learn by playing an extended game, and try to set up shorter races later.)

When the setting player is finished, the other player puts his bulge pieces in the *same* hexes, so that opposing pieces fit together inside the hex. Once they are placed, bulges stay where they are until they are broken (see “Breaking bulges” below). The hexes containing bulges are referred to as *bulge hexes*.

B. Yazzite Placement — Players now alternate putting their Yazzite counters on the playing field, one counter at a time and in any order the player desires, with the setting player going first, subject to these restrictions:

No Yazzite may be placed in a bulge hex.

No Yazzite may be placed in a hex with any other Yazzite, friendly or otherwise.

No Yazzite may be placed in a hex of a terrain type not permitted to that counter; for instance, no Flibdills can be placed in mire.

C. Baton Placement — The setting

player puts one baton counter in each hand, and the other player chooses a hand. The baton that is revealed is placed first — by the *opposing player* — and then the second baton is placed, by the other player, subject to these restrictions:

Batons can be placed only in bulge hexes.

Both batons may not be placed in the same hex.

II. Movement Phase

Now the race begins! Players alternate turns, with the setting player going first. Each player, in turn, can move as many of his Yazzite counters as desired, up to the limit of each counter's movement number, and taking the Yazzite pieces in any order the moving player desires. (To keep track of which pieces have been moved so far in a turn, it is a good idea to place all the Yazzites facing the same way and then rotate them 180 degrees — so that they are upside down from the viewpoint of the owning player — when they have been moved, or when it is decided that they will not be moved on this turn. On the following turn, reverse the facing so that after two turns, all of a player's counters are right side up again.) Of course, the terrain restrictions explained above must be followed. The other restrictions on movement and where Yazzites can finish their moves are these:

At the end of a player's turn, no hex can contain more than one Yazzite belonging to the same side. (In other words, no stacking is allowed.)

At the end of a player's turn, no hex can contain Yazzites from opposing sides unless at least one of the pieces is a Luggant (see the following section).

Once a player has stopped moving a Yazzite counter, that counter cannot be moved again until the player's next turn. (In other words, “splitting” a move is not allowed.)

Yazzites may move *through* bulge hexes and hexes containing other Yazzites; they may also *end* their move in a bulge hex, as long as doing so does not violate one of the above restrictions.

LUGGANTS

The sluggish and powerful Luggants have a unique role in *The Baton Races of Yaz*. They are the only Yazzites *not* allowed to carry the baton (see “Baton movement” below), and they are the only Yazzites that can *throttle* opposing Yazzites.

Only Luggants are allowed to end their move in a hex occupied by an opposing Yazzite (of any race, including other Luggants). When this happens, the Luggant counter is stacked on top of the opposing Yazzite, and the bottom counter is *throttled* — it cannot move as long as the Luggant is sitting on top of it. No more than two counters can ever occupy the same hex at the same time; that is, two Luggants cannot be used to “double-throttle” an opposing piece.

The Yazzite being throttled can get out of this predicament in one of two ways. It can be freed if the Luggant doing the throttling is moved in a subsequent turn — or, the Luggant doing the throttling can itself be throttled by an opposing Luggant that moves into the hex. If this happens, the Yazzite that was originally throttled is “popped out” and free to move again, while the first Luggant is now throttled.

A popped-out Yazzite is placed in any hex adjacent to the hex where the throttling took place, subject to terrain and movement restrictions (and, of course, the edge of the playing field). If it is not possible to place a popped-out Yazzite in accordance with these rules, then it may be placed in any legal hex that is two hexes away from the site of the throttling. The popped-out Yazzite is placed by the player who owns the piece. The popped-out Yazzite may move in the same turn in which it was popped out, and the original pop-out movement of one or two hexes does not count against its movement allowance.

Notes: Since a player is not required to move all of his Yazzites on every turn, a Luggant may continue to throttle an opposing Yazzite for as long as the throttling player desires.

Yazzites of either side can move through a hex where a piece is being throttled. (Hexes are actually a lot bigger than Yazzites.)

When a Yazzite carrying a baton is throttled, the baton cannot be passed as long as that Yazzite remains throttled. (See “Baton movement” below.)

Special note: Because they are slow starters, Luggants may *not* throttle on either player's first turn!

BATON MOVEMENT

Any Yazzite except for a Luggant can carry the baton belonging to that Yazzite's team. At the start of the race, each side's baton is located in one of the bulge hexes and must be retrieved by a Yazzite from that side. From that point on, the baton can be carried continually by a single Yazzite (which is legal, but not very efficient), or it can be passed between friendly Yazzites — but remember that Luggants can *not* carry the baton. Once the baton is picked up, it always remains in the possession of a Yazzite; it cannot simply be dropped (for instance, to keep the baton from being throttled along with the baton carrier).

The baton may be passed from one (non-Luggant) Yazzite to any other friendly Yazzite in an adjacent hex. Passing the baton can be done as often as the player wishes and at any time during his turn. Neither passing nor carrying the baton uses up any of a Yazzite's movement allowance.

A Yazzite may pass or receive the baton before starting its move, after completing its move, or at any time during its move. It is possible for a Yazzite to receive and pass the baton without moving at all; however, as explained above, a throttled Yazzite may not receive or pass the baton.

BREAKING BULGES

When one player's team breaks all of its bulges, that player has finished the game — but that player may not necessarily be the winner. (See the following section.)

Whenever a Yazzite carrying the baton moves onto or through a bulge hex, the bulge of the same color is broken, and that bulge piece is removed from the playing field. There is no limit to the number of bulges that can be broken in one turn.

At the start of the game, the Yazzite that picks up the baton automatically breaks the bulge of the same color in that hex. Other bulges can be broken in any order.

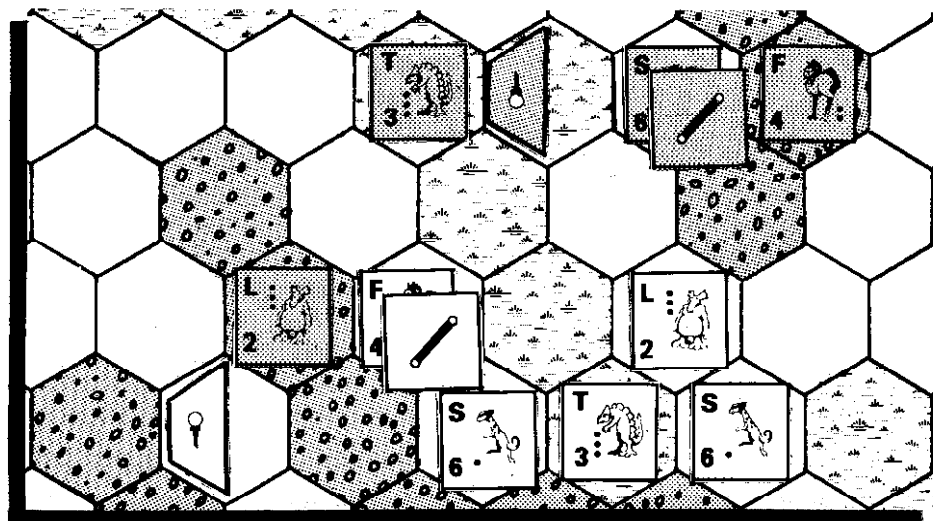
Even if a bulge hex is occupied by an opposing Yazzite, the bulge in that hex can be broken as long as the baton carrier has enough movement ability to move *through* the hex. Note that terrain restrictions apply to bulge hexes just like any other, so that a Yazzite can only break a bulge if it is able to move through the terrain of that hex. It is possible to move *through* a bulge hex by moving into it and then moving back out of it, into the same hex that the Yazzite just left (in some cases, that may be the only hex adjacent to the bulge hex which that Yazzite can enter).

FINISHING THE RACE

When *The Baton Races of Yaz* are conducted for real, both sides move simultaneously, and the first side that finishes is the side that wins the race. But in the game, players must take turns to keep things orderly — and, as a result, finishing the race first is not always the same as *winning*. To keep the setting player from having an unfair advantage, follow these rules:

An anticipated finish must be announced.

A player may not break his last bulge unless he has announced to the opposing player — *before* he has moved any Yazzites



It's the middle of a game, and the red team (shaded pieces) has a problem. The Flibdill carrying the baton is the last blue piece to move in this turn. What it should do is rush over, break the blue bulge, use the rest of its move to return to the hex it is in right now, and then pass the baton to the Skadingle next to it. On the red team's following turn, it would be a bad idea to throttle the baton-carrying Skadingle -- because it would be popped out two hexes on the next turn by the blue Luggant, since the Skadingle cannot move into any of the hexes around it. The red team also has an opportunity to break a bulge, but in order to do it, the Skadingle will first have to move next to the Tarnose and pass the baton. Then the Skadingle can finish its move by going back to the hex it started in; the Tarnose can pass the baton back to the Skadingle after breaking the bulge, and the Skadingle can hand it over to the Flibdill to get it across the muck hex.

— that he will finish on that turn. If a player miscalculates and announces a finish but is *not* able to finish on that turn, then that player automatically loses.

Both players get an equal number of turns.

If the setting player announces an anticipated finish, both players should keep track of how many Yazzites the setting player moves in order to bring about that finish. The non-setting player then takes his last turn, and if he can break his last bulge by moving fewer Yazzites than the setting player did, the non-setting player is the winner of the race.

If the non-setting player announces an anticipated finish before starting his turn

and then breaks his last bulge on that turn, he is the winner, because at that point each player has had an equal number of turns.

If both players finish with an equal number of turns and an equal number of Yazzites moved in their last turn, the game is a draw.

CREDITS

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Strategy tips and extra rules

The rules for playing *The Baton Races of Yaz* are rather simple; the most challenging part of the game is learning how to strategically place your counters before the race actually starts, and how to develop and stick to a game plan. Much of this strategic knowledge can be gained from simply playing the game, but beginning players may find these observations helpful.

Placing Yazzites

The initial placement of Yazzite counters is the main thing that sets one side apart from the other. (The placement of the batons is the only other difference.) Each side's bulges are located in all the same hexes, and each side has the same number of Yazzites of each type. Many games are won or lost because of how each player deploys his Yazzites before the race begins.

In general, you should try to get the most out of your Yazzites, placing them and later

moving them so as to take full advantage of the movement rate and terrain maneuverability of each type. It is often a good idea to place Yazzites so that any counter is within range of at least one bulge hex that it can enter. By doing this, you'll be "covered" no matter where your opponent decides to place your baton; at least one Yazzite will be able to get to the baton, and break the first bulge, on your first turn.

When placing and moving your Yazzites, keep in mind that the best way to break as many bulges as quickly as possible is by using your Yazzites as a chain. The baton carrier should be able to use all or most of its movement before passing the baton to another Yazzite that has not yet been moved, and so on. By doing this (when circumstances and your opponent's strategy permit it), you can cover a lot of ground in just a turn or two.

The placement of Luggants requires a

different kind of outlook. Since Luggants can't carry the baton anyway, they don't have to be "chained" for maximum efficiency; in fact, the opposite is generally true. Luggants work better in pairs or small clusters, so that one or two of them can throttle opposing pieces while another one lurks nearby, waiting to pop out one of the other friendly Luggants that gets throttled by the opposition, or to re-throttle an opponent that was popped out on the previous turn but couldn't move away quickly enough.

Most of the time, it's wise to place your Luggants on the playing field as your last few moves in the Setting Phase; by then, you'll know the general layout of your opponent's pieces, and you can put Luggants where it looks like they'll be the most effective in ruining or delaying his plans. Keep your Luggants within range of bulge hexes, if you have no other specific purpose

for them; that way, they'll be in a good position to throttle a baton carrier if it approaches that bulge. When you're choosing targets for throttling, keep in mind that it's sometimes more effective to throttle a Yazzite that doesn't have the baton, instead of the baton carrier, especially if that maneuver leaves the baton carrier stranded without a teammate to receive the baton. (This can work particularly well when the baton carrier is one of the slower-moving pieces and the piece being throttled is a speedy Skadingle.)

Placing bulges

Strategy isn't nearly as important in the placement of bulges as it is in the placement of Yazzites, but how you (as the setting player) choose to do it can have a marked effect on how the race is run. For a wide-open, relatively long game, you can disperse the bulges loosely over the entire playing surface. For a game that will *probably* be shorter, you can place bulges close together (but remember that two bulges cannot be adjacent). In the rules, it is suggested that you place bulges no closer than four hexes away from each other when you're learning the game. This recommendation is intended to give you a chance to see how the game mechanics work by making your first race a relatively long one; after you've learned the game, feel free to experiment with "bulge clusters" and see how that tactic affects the placement of Yazzites — by both you and your opponent.

You can reduce the threat of the speedy Skadingles by placing bulges in mud hexes that are almost surrounded by other types of terrain, so that a Skadingle can only get to that hex by going the long way through a narrow corridor of mud hexes. This will force your opponent — and you — to place

Skadingles close to those hexes in the setting phase, so they don't have to move too far to get to the bulge later, or else it will force you to rely on Flibdills and Tarnoses to cross through muck or mire to break the bulge in the partially isolated mud hex.

Placing the baton

The suggestions on this subject are centered around one basic strategy: Make it as difficult as you can for your opponent to get to his baton, or for him to make great strides with it immediately after it is picked up.

If your opponent has left a bulge hex isolated (no potential baton carriers within range of it on the first turn), that spot is a good place to consider putting his baton, since he won't be able to get to it until at least his second turn.

If your opponent has "covered" all the bulge hexes with Yazzites in range, consider placing his baton on a bulge that is close to one or more of your Luggants; even if he is able to retrieve the baton on his first turn, your Luggants will be threatening to throttle the baton carrier on your following turn. This strategy works especially well if you are the setting player, since you will get your second turn (and be able to start throttling) before your opponent gets his second turn and moves his endangered piece(s) too far away from the Luggant(s).

If none of the bulge hexes is a good location for one of these two reasons, you should look toward placing your opponent's baton in a muck or mire hex, so that it can only be retrieved by one of the slower-moving Yazzites. Allowing a Skadingle to pick up the baton right away is liable to turn the race into a runaway, especially if your opponent has a good chain of Yazzites set up.

other opposing Luggant later in the current turn.

A passenger may not split its move, using part of it to get to a Luggant's hex and the remainder after it has been carried in that turn; any movement points that remain unused when a passenger jumps on a Luggant are lost.

Dropping the baton

If you use this rule, it is legal for the baton carrier to drop the baton in an unoccupied adjacent hex. This maneuver can take place before, during, or after the baton carrier's move in the current turn — but not during the opponent's turn.

A dropped baton can be picked up by any friendly Yazzite that is permitted to carry it — or by an opposing Luggant. The only way to get the baton away from an opposing Luggant is for the larcenous Luggant to be jumped on by a Yazzite from the other team. When this happens, the baton is "popped out" into an adjacent hex (chosen by the player owning the baton). If the pop-out hex contains a Yazzite that is permitted to carry the baton, it is considered to be

Throttling tips

There is no defense against throttling — if it's going to happen, it's going to happen — but by thinking ahead, you may be able to make throttling as painless as possible. If one of your Flibdills or Skadingles is in immediate danger of being throttled and you can't do anything about that, try to move the piece into a hex that is partially surrounded by terrain that it can't move into, forcing your opponent's Luggant to do the throttling at that location. Then, on your next turn, you can move one or more pieces adjacent to the "throttling hex," occupying all the hexes that your piece would be able to "pop out" into. On the same turn, you must be able to bring up a Luggant to re-throttle, so that when you do that, the popped-out piece will be forced to pop out a distance of *two* hexes instead of the usual one. That single hex of difference can, in certain circumstances, mean the difference between winning and losing.

Of course, the situation described above won't occur very often, but you should look for ways to take advantage of a popped-out piece sometimes being able to move two hexes. Popping out *over* a hex of forbidden terrain may be a lot better than only popping out one hex and then having to take the long way with normal movement.

Obviously, the converse of this suggestion holds true if you're the one doing the throttling. Unless the situation demands it, you should not throttle a piece that might be able to pop out two hexes on your opponent's next turn. It's generally not a good idea to throttle any piece that can be popped out on your opponent's very next turn; all that does is waste your Luggant's move for the current turn, and give the popped-out piece an extra hex of movement besides.

picked up immediately, and the new baton carrier can move with it or pass it in the same turn.

If the Yazzite that pops out the baton is a Luggant, then the opposing Luggant is throttled, just as if that maneuver had taken place without the baton involved. If the Yazzite that jumps on the baton-carrying Luggant is not another Luggant, then the piece that rescued the baton is throttled (earning a place in Yazzite martyrdom).

If you use this rule in addition to the preceding one, you should not allow a Luggant to carry the opposition's baton at the same time it is carrying a friendly Yazzite. And, a Luggant lugging around a baton cannot use it to break any bulges, of either side.

The first one last

In this variation, each player gets to decide during the Setting Phase which bulge his opponent must break *last* — the same one where the baton is placed. After a Yazzite retrieves the baton, it cannot be used to break the bulge it was placed on until all of that side's other bulges are broken. 

OPTIONAL RULES

After you've played *The Baton Races of Yaz* a few times, you may think of some ways to add to or alter the rules — and that's fine, as long as none of your optional rules seriously harm the balance of the game. Here are a few suggestions you might try, or that might get you thinking about other alterations:

Carrying friendly Yazzites

If Luggants are big enough and strong enough to throttle Yazzites, they also ought to be able to carry them. If you use this rule, any Luggant is allowed to carry any friendly non-Luggant (including the baton carrier), usually as a means of enabling the "passenger" to get through terrain that it cannot enter. The Luggant does not suffer a movement penalty while carrying a passenger, but it cannot carry and throttle at the same time. If a Luggant and its passenger are jumped on by an opposing Luggant, the carrying Luggant is throttled and the passenger is "popped out" to an adjacent hex — but it cannot move any further until its next turn, and it may be throttled by an-



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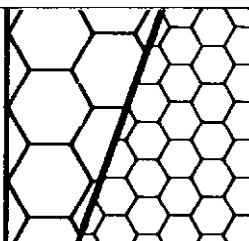
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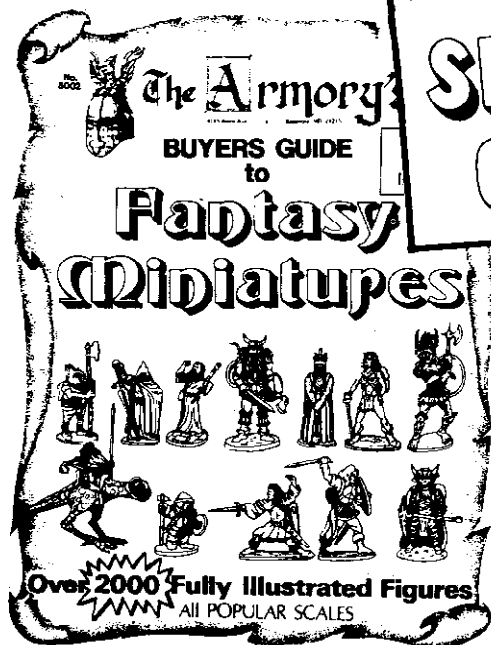
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Curing the Monty Haul malady

by Roger E. Moore

The following passages were taken and edited from letters received by DRAGON® Magazine in the last year. As you read through them, ask yourself if some of them describe situations that have occurred in your own AD&D™ campaign.

"My players have characters who have created spells that propel them through time and space at tremendous rates. They have looted the future and brought back devices that could destroy Greyhawk and many of the planes. They own several Battlestars, and they also have a large stock of AT-AT Walkers from *The Empire Strikes Back*. How do I keep them from destroying Greyhawk and creating an incredibly boring campaign?"

"One player I know in an AD&D game has a human character who has changed his race and class several times, and is now multiclassed in four classes. He decided his character would kill Orcus, and after that his character became the new prince of the undead, with an unlimited amount of any undead to control, even an unlimited number of liches. The character also has some star destroyers he uses to fly around in space or to destroy planets. This character

has a permanent prismatic sphere around him that even moves with him. He says he made it by wishing a couple of thousand times. How does one deal with this kind of player in a campaign?"

"I have a 65th level cleric character, and want to know if he can get more spells or magic items. Also, how many times can my character use his spells at will (if high-level characters can use several spells at once)?"

"I knew a character in an AD&D campaign who was able to slay the god Thor by using a push spell on him, knocking him off a tall wall. The hammer Mjolnir did not fall off the wall and the character got it."

"Our Dungeon Master has a campaign in which a 4,000th level magic-user/cleric runs a magic shop, in which characters can buy artifacts and relics for the prices listed in the DMG. If a character walks in with the right amount of money, he can get anything. Is it possible to have an NPC like that, and is it advisable?"

My first reaction upon reading these letters was frank disbelief. AT-AT Walkers marching across Greyhawk? Prince of the undead? Killing Thor with a *push* spell? 4,000th level characters?

After reading through a pile of letters like these, however, I remembered AD&D games that I refereed long ago, and characters that I once played. When I began as a DM in 1977, I ran adventures in which the characters met 20 dragons, of all colors, in a single day (by "random roll," of course). My group was started on a quest for the Silmarils of Tolkien fame, and met preposterously huge dragons and other gargantuan beasts guarding the various treasures. Other characters in an old campaign of mine were able to find things like Captain America's shield, Excalibur, and other assorted artifacts after cutting their way through the minions of a 30th-level lich to do it.

As player characters, I've run a minotaur demi-god/demon-prince who attacked other deities on impulse (though not successfully), and once I played a gold dragon who had three female henchdragons named Farrah, Kate, and Jacqueline. You get the idea. . . . As much as I'd like to whitewash my past abuses of AD&D and D&D® games, it cannot be done (my friends would remind me of them, for one thing). The memories come in handy, however, when reading letters like those above.

The AD&D game system is a very complicated one. Dungeon Masters have to absorb many rules to run a game well, and the prospect of running a campaign can be very intimidating. Most DMs want to run adventures that keep the players challenged and happy; killing off characters, even when done fair and square, is intimidating, too. Some players will pout for days if their characters get killed or don't get what they want, and this can be rough on everyone. These problems can put lots of pressure on the referee to start altering the scope and balance of the campaign. If my best friend Bob really wants his character to have Odin's rune wand that badly, well, maybe there's a way . . .

The hidden problem, of course, is that giveaway games like this pale very quickly. Soon no one feels challenged by anything the DM throws at them, people get bored, and the game folds. Sometimes one or two players are shown exceptional favoritism in a campaign by the DM, and everyone else gets shafted. No matter how you do it, giveaway games like those described above will produce nothing whatsoever but a sorry, frustrating mess.

Players generally enjoy running characters who are powerful and garner respect from other characters in the game. Few people want weak or incompetent characters in any role-playing system. The motivation to have a strong character sometimes leads to cheating (altering die rolls and ability scores, writing down magic items the character never gained, or DMing one's own

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characters). Players often put demands upon the DM for less powerful monsters and more treasures, and get caught up in a race for the "bestest with the mostest."

Unfortunately, this only brings the end of the game closer at hand. If the gods can be slain without trouble, what is there left to do? The game was supposed to be fun, but soon it isn't. Is there something wrong with the game?

No, the game is fine. It takes time to establish balance in an AD&D campaign, and it is frankly impossible for anyone to run a campaign for any length of time without having the game get out of balance at some point or another. In other words, it is normal to have problems somewhat like those described at the start of this article — normal, but not desirable.

When a gaming group starts out, the chances of the game getting out of balance rise considerably if everyone wants to fiddle with the rules right away. The more alterations, the further out of whack the game goes. By the time everyone is aware of the problem, it is far too late to change anything without dumping the campaign and starting completely over — with first-level characters, and using the rules as they are before you start altering anything.

"What about my 65th level cleric?" Well, either the cleric goes or the game goes; the game can exist without the cleric, but the cleric can't continue to exist without the game, so . . .

The value in starting over is that now everyone has at least some idea of how the game works (and how it isn't supposed to work). The sour taste of a runaway campaign makes players that much more reluctant to repeat the mistake again. Second campaigns are generally more balanced than their predecessors, and most players I've known (myself included) have found them more fun to play in.

Not everyone may get tired of a Monty Haul campaign at the same time. A gaming group may split up into ultra-level gamers and those who begin, with a fresh campaign and characters. It usually seems to happen that the group starting over again will acquire more game-players than the other group, and the Monty Haul group will dwindle in membership. The willingness to start over again is a mark of maturity and flexibility, and this will attract players who admire and practice those qualities.

"But I like playing high-level characters!" So do I, but I find that building a character up to high level is more entertaining when starting from the lower levels and working him up by the rules. Characters run in this manner are more believable, more colorful, and have more interesting personalities than those slapped together in a Monty Haul campaign; their flair and liveliness make them more fun to play. The minotaur demi-god character I used long ago was not as much fun to play as my 5th-level fighter/7th-level thief gnome character,

Cyragnome de Bergerac. Cyragnome is obnoxious, speaks with an outrageous French accent, and gives everyone who meets him severe heartburn. The minotaur just hacked and killed. Dull, dull, dull.

When I suggest starting over again and using the rules as they are, I am not saying that everyone should play only "official" AD&D games. All AD&D and D&D gamers eventually develop peculiar systems that they use in their campaigns with reasonable effect, though such systems (like critical hit tables, new monsters and magic items, new character classes and races, and so forth) are not official at all.

However, the more closely one works with the rules and the more often they are used, the better one understands how they work together in the game. In time, one can judge whether a particular rule change will throw a campaign out of balance or whether it will (for the players concerned) improve the enjoyment of the game. Understanding the rules and knowing them is the key to designing a game that keeps DM and player alike happy.

There is no crime in letting a campaign get out of control. The only crime comes in not learning from one's own mistakes. The best DMs and players are those who don't claim to be perfect, and who look for ways to improve the game for everyone's benefit.

A fresh campaign may be the answer you're looking for. It makes a pleasant change from killing gods with a push spell.

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SF/gaming convention calendar

EMCON '84, Feb. 4

To be held at the University of Oregon Ballroom in Eugene, Oregon, this convention will feature fantasy role playing, board games, and miniature competition. Emcon will also offer seminars on gaming and a science-fiction/fantasy art show and sale. For more information, send a S.A.S.E. to: Emcon '84, 2180 Ohio, Eugene OR 97402.

WARCON X, Feb. 10-12

The Nova Committee of Texas A&M University invites everyone to its upcoming convention. The fantastic lineup of activities includes AD&D™ campaigns, naval miniatures, Traveller® competition, and much more. The convention will be held at the Memorial Student Center. For more information, contact: WARCON Committee, P.O. Box J-1, College Station TX 77844, or call (409)845-1515.

EXPLORERCON MAINE, Feb. 11

Sponsored by Explorer Post 315 and the University of Maine's D&D® Club, this event will take place at Orono High School in Orono, Maine. A variety of games for different skill levels and age groups will be available. Contact: Dan Belyea, Chairman, Explorercon Maine, 474 Stillwater Ave., Old Town ME 04468, or telephone (207)827-2215.

WISCON 8, Feb. 24-26

Noted writers Jessica Amanda Salmonson and Elizabeth A. Lynn are guests of honor for this SF/gaming event at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wis. Memberships are \$11 until Feb. 1, or \$16 at the door. Children under 12 are admitted free if accompanied by an adult member. Contact: WisCon 8, P.O. Box 1624, Madison WI 53701, phone (608)251-6226 (days) or (608)233-0326 (evenings).

EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY CONVENTION XIII, March 3

This one-day convention is sponsored by the gamers of Michiana, and is Indiana's oldest gaming event. It will be held at Hall A of the Century Center in South Bend, Ind. Activities will include major role-playing tournaments, miniature events, board gaming, and a flea market. Advance registration is \$5.75; cost at the door is \$6.25. Contact: R. Hagerty, 123 W. Hively Ave., Apt. J118, Elkhart IN 46517.

WINTER FANTASY and SPRING REVEL, March 3-4

These mini-conventions have been combined into a single event, and will be held at the Americana Resort in Lake Geneva. Seminars, demonstrations and an auction will be part of the convention's activities. Contact: GEN CON® Office, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

GOLD-CON II, March 3-4

At the Omni Auditorium, Broward Community College-North, Pompano Beach, Fla. Gaming events, films, and Civil War re-enactments are among the scheduled attractions. Advance registration is \$4; admission at the door is \$5. Contact: John Dunn, Library, B.C.C.-North, 1000 Coconut Creek Blvd., Pompano Beach FL 33066, or telephone (305)428-8832.

COASTCON '84, March 9-11

This seventh annual SF/fantasy gaming convention will again be held at the Royal d'Iberville Hotel in Biloxi, Miss. The organizers anticipate attendance of more than 1,000 persons. Authors Robert Adams (guest of honor) and Andrew Offutt (toastmaster) will be among the celebrity guests. Continuous film and video shows, a 24-hour game room, an art show, and a "meet the guests" party are some of the scheduled offerings. Memberships are \$10 through Dec. 31, \$12.50 after that until March 8, and \$15 at the door. For information, write to CoastCon, Inc., P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

GEN CON® SOUTH VIII GAME CONVENTION, March 16-18

All aspects of contemporary hobby gaming will be featured at this event, co-sponsored by the Crawford Dragoons and TSR, Inc., to be held at the Thunderbird Resort Hotel in Jacksonville, Fla. For details: GEN CON South Information, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

MIDSOUTHCON 3, March 16-18

Guests of honor at this SF/fantasy convention will include author C. J. Cherryh, Margaret Middleton, artist Steven R. Dodd, and toastmaster Daluan Coger. Memberships are \$10 through Feb. 1, \$15 after that date, and \$8 at the door. This convention will be held in Memphis, Tennessee, and will feature a masquerade, video room, art show, auction, and a 24-hour convention suite. Send all inquiries to: Midsouth Con 3, c/o Richard Moore, Jr., 1229 Pallwood, Memphis TN 38122.

ORCCON 1984, March 16-18

Touted as one of Southern California's largest strategy gaming conventions and expositions, this event will take place at the Sheraton-Anaheim Hotel, located next to Disneyland in Anaheim, California. Wargame, science-fiction, fantasy, sporting, and family-oriented game tournaments will be featured. Also, industry exhibitors will be there, and many special events will be offered. Prepaid admission to the convention is \$15.50 for all three days; prices at the door are \$17 for the entire weekend and \$13 per day. Advance pre-registration must be postmarked no later than Feb. 24, 1984, per

mitting tournament pre-registration at this time. For further details write to: STRATEGICON PR Dept., P.O. Box 2577, Anaheim CA 93804.

TRI-CON II, March 16-18

A SF/gaming convention to be staged at the North Carolina State University campus in Raleigh, N.C. For more information, send a SASE to: N.C. State Gaming Society, P.O. Box 37122, Raleigh NC 27627.

ALASCON V, March 17-18

The organizers of this convention call it the biggest and best gaming convention in Alaska. A tournament dungeon, miniature painting contests, and more will be featured at the event. The convention will take place at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks campus. For more information, write: ALASCON V, c/o Ken Mayer, P.O. Box 82374, College AK 99708.

MUGG-CON I, March 23-25

A benefit SF/gaming convention to be staged at the Interlaken Lodge in Lake Geneva, Wis., sponsored by the Multi-Universal Gamers' Guild (MUGG). An AD&D™ tournament, nearly 100 other gaming events, and other special attractions are on the schedule. All proceeds from the convention will be turned over to the American Red Cross. For more information, send a business-size self-addressed, stamped envelope to MUGG-Con Convention Committee, c/o Jan Carlson, P.O. Box 265, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

STELLARCON 9, March 23-25

A science-fiction and gaming event to be held at the University of North Carolina's Greensboro campus. Contact: the Science Fiction and Fantasy Federation, Box 4, Elliott University Center, UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro NC 27412.

NOVA 9, March 24-25

Free movies, gaming, an art show and auction, a costume party and contest highlight this convention, to be staged on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester, Mich. For registration information and other details, send SASE to: The Order of Leibowitz, P.O. Box 61, Madison Heights MI 48071.

AGGIECON XV, March 29 - April 1

This science-fiction convention, featuring L. Sprague de Camp and Catherine de Camp as guests of honor, will be held on the campus of Texas A&M University. Among the other personalities scheduled to be present are Don Maitz, James P. Hogan, and Wilson "Bob" Tucker. For further information about this convention, write to AggieCon XV, P.O. Box J-1, College Station TX 77844, or call (409)845-1515.

CAPCON '84, April 6-8

This seventh annual gaming convention will be staged at the South Terrace of the Ohio Union on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus, Ohio. Cost is \$2, for Saturday and Sunday only. Events include miniatures battles, and fantasy and historical gaming. Contact: Paul T. Rigel, c/o War Game Designs, 6119 E. Main Street #202, Columbus OH 43213, or call (614)863-6635 between 2 p.m. and midnight.

CAROLINA CON, April 6-8

This event will be held at Russell House University Union, USC Campus, Columbia, South Carolina. These three days of tournament and fun will include fantasy, science-fiction, historical, and adventure gaming. For information, contact: USC Wargamers, Box 80138, USC, Columbia SC 29208.

MASSCONFUSION: Technicon, April 6-8

To be staged at the Jonas Clark Building at Clark University in Worcester, Mass., this event will offer over 32 different fantasy, adventure, and strategy games. Ben Bova will be the Guest of Honor and will participate in a writing workshop and a special space development symposium featured at the convention. Preregistration costs are \$7.00 for the entire weekend; admission at the door is \$4.00 per day. Contact: Ego-Trip Enterprises, 587-C Park Ave., Worcester MA 01603, or call (617)792-3003.

NORTHEASTER 2, April 6-8

Sponsored by Rutgers University Gamers, this second annual event will be held at the Rutgers University campus in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The convention will feature fantasy role-playing, wargames, boardgames, miniatures, and other gaming events. To run a gaming event or attend as a participant, send all inquiries to: NORTHEASTER 2, Box 101, R.U. Student Center, 126 College Av., New Brunswick NJ 08903. Inquiries from hobby dealers are invited.

APRICON, April 7

This convention will feature science-fiction and fantasy role-playing games, board games, and miniatures and fantasy art contents. Preregistration costs are \$4.00; registration costs at the door are \$5.00. For more informations about this event, send SASE to Richard Howes, 390 North Ave., Rockland MA 02370.

GAME FAIRE '84, April 28-29

This year's Game Faire will take place at Spokane Falls Community College. Inexpensive housing and breakfasts will be provided by local gamers. The school's cafeteria will be serving food, and snacks will be available at concession booths. Admission is \$5 a day or \$7 for a prepaid weekend pass; the weekend pass will cost \$9 at the door. All proceeds will go to the Spokane Guild School for handicapped children. Events include AD&D™ and Runequest Tournaments,

miniatures painting contents, game instructions and classes, computer gaming competition, and fighting demonstrations by the Society for Creative Anachronisms. For more information, contact: Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane WA 99201, or phone (509)325-3358.

NIAGARA GAMEFEST & COMPUTER SHOW '84, May 4-6

For more information about this third annual gaming event in Ontario, Canada, contact: Niagara Gamers Association, 223 St. Paul Street, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2R 6V9.

ONOCON '84, May 4-6

Described by the organizers as the largest SF/gaming convention in the central New York area, this event will be held at the Sheraton Inn Convention Center in Syracuse, N.Y. Guests of honor will include Frederik Pohl, L. Sprague de Camp, Randy Elliott, Carl Lundgren, and Jay Jay Klein. More information is available by sending a SASE to: OnoCon '84, P.O. Box 305, Syracuse NY 13208

TRI-STATE CON 1984, May 4-6

This gaming convention will be staged at the Cincinnati Technical College in Cincinnati Ohio. For further details, contact: Tri-State Cin '84, c/o Boardwalk, 1032 Delta Ave., Cincinnati OH 45208, or call (513)871-2110 or (513)351-9920.

TEXARKON 3, May 11-13

This science-fiction/fantasy convention will be held at the Tall Timbers Resort and Inn in Texarkana, Arkansas. Guests of honor will include Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Sturgeon, Phil Foglio, and Robert Asprin. An art show and auction, video room, D&D® and costume contests, and a dealers' room will be featured at this event. For more information, send a S.A.S. envelope to: Texarkon, 1021 East 29th) Texarkana AR 75502.

KEYCON '84, May 18-20

To be held at the Delta Winnipeg Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, this convention will be highlighted by such events as an art show, video programs and movies, various sf/fantasy role-playing games, seminars and workshops, a masquerade ball, and a Sunday buffet. Robert Asprin will be the convention's Guest of Honor, with Phil Foglio as Artist Guest of Honor and Nick Burns as Comics Guest of Honor. Registration costs are \$15 until April 15, and \$20 at the door. For more details, write to: KEYCON '84, P.O. Box 165, Westwin P.O., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2R 0Y0.

MIGS V, May 27

The Military Interests and Games Society cordially invites our readership to its fifth annual gamesfest. This will be a FREE day of wargaming, in all its myriad forms. Various wargame tournaments and events, as well as

a miniatures painting competition, will take place. The event will be held at the Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre, R.R. 2, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada. The hall will open at 10:00 a.m. and close at 10:00 p.m. For further information, contact: Chris Goldsmith, Secretary, 100 Lorraine Drive, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8T 3S3.

CON-JURATION, June 1-3

Gaming tournaments, a trivia contest, figure painting competition, films, and a masquerade will all be part of this event. Guest of Honor will be Jack Chalker; special guests will include Edward Bryant, Glen Cook, Warren Norwood, and Mike Resnick. Lunch with the guests and a writer's workshop have also been planned. This year's convention will take place at the West World Inn in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Admission is \$8 until May 4, or \$10 at the door. For more information, write to: Con-Juration, P.O. Box 690064, Tulsa OK 74169.

WILCON, June 23-25

Fifty free events will be featured throughout this convention, which will be held at the Civic Center in Wilmington, Illinois. Memberships are \$4 per day, or \$10 for the entire weekend. For more information about this gaming convention, contact: Donald Heck, 1790 Vista Drive, Wilmington IL 60481, or phone (815)476-7385.



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Back issues of NEXUS are available for \$5.00 each. Subscriptions are \$8.00 for four issues (one year) and \$14.00 for eight issues (two years). Remittance in US funds must accompany order. Foreign orders except Canada add \$3.00 per issue for postage. Canada add 75¢ per issue. Send check or money order to:

**NEXUS MAGAZINE — DEPT. DR
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One-of-a-kind game aids

Unusual but useful role-playing accessories

Dozens, if not hundreds, of role-playing aids are on the market; among them you'll find adventure scenarios, tournament modules, hex sheets, character record sheets, and more. Each of them is different, but in most cases, when you can find one product, you can find several more just like it.

However, a few one-of-a-kind role-playing aids do exist. They may not be indispensable, but they certainly make gaming more convenient and enjoyable. A selection of these products is reviewed below. You won't find them in many shops, so the name and address of the manufacturer has been included in each review for mail-order purchasing.

BATTLEMATS™ and MEGAMATS™

\$8.98 and \$19.50; plus
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Berkeley Game Company
P.O. Box 4045
Berkeley CA 94704

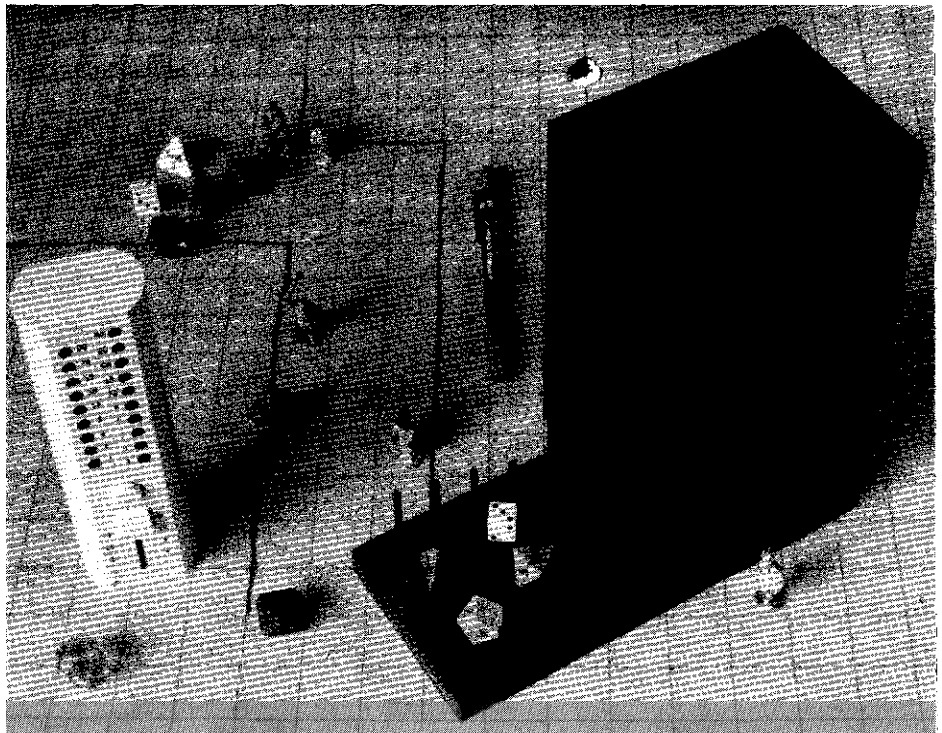
(Shipping to Canada \$2;
Calif. residents add sales tax)

Role-playing games can suffer from imprecision and confusion — not to mention pure sloppiness — if a board and playing pieces are not used to mark the locations of objects and creatures. You can try grids drawn on posterboard, square-gridded linoleum, or printed versions of boards and dungeon walls. You can also buy ready-made floor plans — attractively printed squares that you cut into rooms and corridors. But unless you invest a lot of time and money, these commercial aids can restrict the size and variety of the locations you depict.

The ideal product for illustrating a role-playing situation would be a gridded white material that could be erased without moisture — something like the material used on erasable "whiteboards." This material would be bonded to a stiff backing. Using colored markers, you could draw walls, furnishings, and areas affected by spells. The ink would be wiped off after the encounter has ended.

Unfortunately, no such aid is commercially available. But Berkeley's BATTLEMATS and MEGAMATS come very close to this ideal. These two products are fabric-backed expanded vinyl gaming mats. Light brown grids are superimposed upon cream-colored mats. Using water-soluble transparency pens, you can draw virtually anything on the mats, and erase it with a wet cloth when you're done. (In an emergency, saliva will smear the lines enough to "erase" the drawing.)

The BATTLEMAT measures 23½" by



The FAIR SHAKE Dice Device is at right, the DRAGONBONE at left, with THE D4 THAT ROLLS in the foreground between the two. A

25mm BATTLEMAT serves as the background, Miniatures and other dice are included for size comparison. (Photo by Lew Pulsipher)

26", and it retails for \$8.98. Grid patterns available include 21mm and 25mm squares — aligned, or staggered like bricks — and hexagons in 21mm, 25mm, and 16mm sizes.

The MEGAMAT measures 32" by 48" and sells for \$19.50. It is available with the 21mm and 25mm squares and hexes (staggered squares in 25mm only), and hexes also in 16mm. Numbered hexes are available in a 30mm size, printed on a black mat.

The fabric of these mats is light but strong; you can roll the mats up and carry them. I took one mat on a camping trip, where it survived perfectly, despite having spent an entire night hanging out of the car, closed in the door. This abuse merely made the fabric backing dirty. The fabric is a bit too flexible to use on a "mushy" surface, such as a deep pile rug, but you can mount the mat on a board if you want to make it more stable.

BATTLEMATS and MEGAMATS are nearly ideal; their only shortcoming is that you have to use water to erase them. Two or three of the Battlemats, or one Battlemat and one Megamat, make for extremely efficient battle organization. You can place one mat against another to extend the playing area. A narrow border surrounds the square grid, but you can cut this off if you want to join two mats together.

Bill Lamb of the Berkeley company warns that ink from the marking pens may not erase completely, especially the red, if you leave the drawings on overnight. Personally, I haven't had any trouble in this respect. Transparency pens are available from Berkeley in four colors (red, green, blue, and black) for \$.90 each.

For further illustrative ability, Lamb suggests the use of plastic "report covers," which come in a variety of colors. They're easy to cut into shapes, and you can mark them with permanent felt-tipped pens. You can stick the covers to the mats by using rubber cement (let the cement dry before you apply the covers). The covers peel off quickly. I suggest you test the rubber cement to make sure your brand doesn't damage the materials.

If you're interested in other gaming mats, Berkeley also makes mats for Go and chess. Inquire at the address above for details.

DRAGONBONE™ electronic dice wand

\$25.95, postpaid
DB Enterprises
14030 S. Laramie
Crestwood IL 60445

A friend of mine is a good referee, but he loses things during a game — pencils,

papers, and especially dice. This product from DB Enterprises is made for referees just like him — ones who won't, or just can't, master handfuls of dice.

DRAGONBONE is a compact electronic device that generates die rolls. It comes in one of two colors, bone or charcoal. It's plastic, more or less cylindrical, and it rests nicely in the palm of your hand. The device measures 6¼" x 2" x 1½".

The "cylinder" shape has two broad, flat sides. On one side is a sliding selector, which can be moved to indicate 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 20, and % — the type of die/dice being rolled. A button is pushed to initiate the selected roll.

Near the selector are two rows of small red LEDs (light-emitting diodes). The lights are marked 1 - 10 in increments of one (1, 2, 3, . . .) and 20-00 in increments of ten (10, 20, 30 . . .). When a selection is made and the button is pushed, one of the LEDs, or one from each column, lights up to show you the result of the "roll." The LEDs remain lit for 10 to 30 seconds, or until you press the button again.

In other words, DRAGONBONE is a "superdie" — quick and easy to use, portable, very fast in response, and usable one-handed unless your hand is quite small. You don't need a dice-rolling surface, and you don't even need to worry about turning the device on and off; it shuts off automatically. While a home computer is most of these things, no home computer could match the combination of speed and convenience that the DRAGONBONE offers.

DRAGONBONE comes with the required 9-volt battery and instructions for when and how to replace the battery. I haven't used the product long enough to vouch for its durability, but the manufacturer guarantees against any defects due to materials or workmanship for one year after purchase, and the product (or its predecessor) has been on the market for at least a couple of years.

As a test for accuracy, I dutifully "rolled" 400 d8s on the machine over the course of several days. The frequency range that resulted was 45% to 55%, compared to a "perfect" 50%) for each number. This measures favorably against rolls that a computer generates, and must be at least as good as ordinary dice.

I don't feel comfortable using the electronic dice when I play a character; in any case, it offers more "power" than a player needs. For what it's worth, it is indeed easier to cheat with this device than it is with ordinary dice. It's impossible to tell from a distance where the slide selector is placed, while dice can be recognized by size and shape.

When I heard about DRAGONBONE, I thought of it as a toy. But now I've found that it saves my time as a referee both before and during a game. I expected my conservative dice-losing friend to resist using this product, but at our latest 16-hour weekend gaming session, he took to it immediately and never rolled a die. Others

who have seen the DRAGONBONE have been impressed; it's time-saving, and it's a fascinating gadget. And it costs little more than the bagfuls of dice that many referees haul around.

FAIR SHAKE™ Dice Device

\$12.95 plus \$2 shipping/handling

JandeL Products, Inc.

P.O. Box 28243-1

Kansas City MO 64118

Some gamers, among them John Scarne, say that they can consistently affect the results of dice throws. I don't personally know anyone who makes this claim, but I have seen D&D® game players experiment with ways to control a throw, especially using a pyramidal four-sided dice. The FAIR SHAKE dice device, as its name seems to suggest, is for any referee who feels he must prevent cheating, and doesn't trust his players. The device is also amusing in its own right, even if you don't worry about satisfactory dice rolls. In addition, the FAIR SHAKE is a boon for the player who simply can't roll dice without throwing them off the table.

The product looks a little bit like a square gate-tower from a castle, with the drawbridge down. You feed one or more dice into the large opening at the top, and an instant later it rolls out the "gate" and onto the "drawbridge." Inside the device, the dice strike at least two surfaces at acute angles before they roll out. A little "parapet" on the drawbridge confines the die to the "drawbridge" display area.

Cheating is impossible. I carefully fed the device a standard d4 to see if I could get a skewed result, but I failed.

When compared to the standard anti-cheat device, a capped glass jar containing a die, the FAIR SHAKE is much gentler on dice. And you can roll several dice through the FAIR SHAKE at once, compared to one or two at a time in a jar.

The product is constructed with sheets of wood 1/8" to 1/4" thick, glued together and finished nicely with a dark stain. The FAIR SHAKE is 7½" tall, 3 3/8" wide, and nearly 8" long including the drawbridge area. The tumbling dice make a pleasant hollow sound when they fall through the chamber. The device is sturdy, but probably won't support a person's weight, so I wouldn't put it where someone could step on or sit on it.

The FAIR SHAKE does have disadvantages. Although it keeps the rollers honest and the dice on the table, it isn't practical for everyone to use it if the players are sprawled all over the living room. It's also cumbersome if the playing group has more than five players, unless you use several of them. A referee could use it for himself, but it's easier for him to use the DRAGONBONE or computer-generated random number lists, or just throw dice against books on a table. Unless you have small hands, picking dice out of the drawbridge area could become exasperating.

THE D4 THAT ROLLS

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For years I played the D&D® game without four-sided dice, because they're seldom needed, and pyramids are awkward to roll. Instead, I rolled a d8, divided the result by two, and rounded up. But finally, someone has produced an eight-sided die that's marked twice with the numerals 1 through 4. Now I don't have to divide by two any more.

To differentiate this eight-sided d4 from the standard d8, Kilendale has blunted all six corners. This allows their d4 to roll better (and farther, if you're not careful) than a standard d8. The only fault I can find is speculative: The plastic appears to be the same kind that TSR, Inc., originally used for its dice, which are notorious for excessive wear. I haven't used THE D4 THAT ROLLS long enough to judge wear, but the blunted corners should be less vulnerable to damage than the sharp ones on TSR's dice.

THE D4 THAT ROLLS comes in a wide range of colors, including black, deep blue, green, orange, red, and white. And at \$.30 per die, the price is on the mark.

— Reviewed by Lew Pulsipher



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Pavis package adds a flair . . .

Slowly, the world of Glorantha is being defined by means other than magazine articles. The emphasis in Chaosium's material for the RUNEQUEST® game seems to be on the frontier areas, particularly Prax. Last year's *Borderlands* scenario pack covered the eastern plains and the valley of the River of Cradles. Now comes PAVIS: *Threshold to Danger*, a supplement covering the city which is the only "metropolis" of the region, and providing the first RQ city for campaigning.

The city of Pavis began as Robcradle, established as a base for intercepting the floating cradles carrying giant infants down the Zola Fel river to the Rozgali Sea. In 850 ST, the hero Pavis finished his conversion of the city to his liking and left the world. In the following centuries, his city was attacked by giants, nomad barbarians, and trolls, and was ultimately reduced to ruins. Within the mostly intact walls are some 25 square miles of "The Rubble," housing a variety of inhabitants of uncouth ilk. Outside the wall, built up against it and enclosed in a lower wall of its own, is the town of New Pavis, founded by Sartarites in 1550. This is the Pavis treated in this package. The setting of the scenarios is about the year 1617, or within ten years of the time the Lunar Empire conquered the town.

The package, priced at \$18, contains three books, plus an 11"x 34" map of the Zola Fel (River of Cradles) and the surrounding territory, and a 22"x 34" map of New Pavis at a scale of about 25 meters to the inch, with streets, courts, and many buildings marked by name. With the exception of a bribery table printed on a separate sheet, all other information is included in the three books.

The 40-page book "Common Knowledge" contains information that an adventurer might come by after a few days in the town. This includes a history of Pavis, the

current political situation, short descriptions of significant NPCs in town, a summary of the Lunar garrison, a brief essay on Gimpy's Tavern, and four cult descriptions. These are Pavis, the city deity (this cult description supercedes the one in *Cults of Prax*); Flintnail, a Pavis associate cult; Lanbril, god of thieves; and Zola Fel, the local river deity.

The 40-page "City Guide" contains information which should be the "property" of the gamemaster and passed out as needed to the players. It includes a history of the civilized parts of Prax (essentially the river valley), including a fairly detailed treatment of the town of Corflu at the mouth of the river, and of the Yelmlio Sun Dome County downriver from the Rubble. It is primarily concerned with New Pavis, however. It includes a physical description of the town, broken down by neighborhoods, with every building numbered. Also included are a summary of the economic system, the ins and outs of politics, and an intriguing selection of rumors.

The last booklet, "Episodes," is the heart of the package. The other material is background, and can of course be used to make home-brewed scenarios, but these episodes are the base. "Welcome to the City" is a sequence of short encounters for a party of adventurers arriving at Pavis. They have the chance to encounter beggars outside the city and guards and bureaucrats at the gates; to find lodging and temple affiliations; and perhaps to run afoul of local law and custom and as a result learn more than might be desired about Lunar jurisprudence, with a foray into the Rubble tossed in. "Burglary at Raus House" is a single episode, and represents a chance to acquire wealth from a Lunar noble whose town-house servants have become a bit lax in their lord's absence. The bulk of the booklet is made up of a four-part scenario, "The Cradle." This is a relatively restricted

scenario, in that the GM is exhorted to make the action conform to the script as much as possible, even to the extent of allowing infusions of fresh player characters to keep players in the game as their characters are killed off. The situation is intriguing: After many centuries, another giant cradle is heading down the river, and the Lunar authorities are determined to catch and loot it. Ideally, the players will be recruited to help defend the cradle and speed it safely to the sea, but at times they may get to play Lunar allies — especially if their own characters have been killed off; the mortality rate is estimated at 80% or more, with even Rune level characters feeling the pressure. The GM must try to guide things along so that the four sections of the scenario can logically follow from the events that occur. Plenty of opportunities are given to reinforce the cradle defenders with fresh bodies, so unless the players are totally feckless, the scenario should unfold basically as presented. In addition, the book contains a page of "scenario hooks," ideas on which to base other adventures or missions in a campaign.

The physical quality of the package is of the high level typical of Chaosium, as is the design. The contributors to this package are too numerous to list in a short review; this is a major group effort, and is well coordinated and integrated despite that fact.

Pavis is the definitive, but not exhaustive, treatment of New Pavis as a city and setting for role-playing. It is a source of information for campaigns not directly connected to the city as well, and it is ultimately an action-oriented set of scenarios. Combined with *Borderlands*, it defines a significant portion of Glorantha and as such is a major contribution to the growing body of literature on that subject. It is well worth obtaining for any lovers of RQ or for Gloranthan scholars.

— Reviewed by Steve List

. . . Big Rubble completes the pair

BIG RUBBLE: The Deadly City is a RUNEQUEST® scenario package from Chaosium. The package provides 25 square kilometers of territory to delve through, including above-ground ruins, secret dungeon-tunnel complexes, and an elf-dominated wood with hidden defenses. The inhabitants of this vast expanse are nasty humans, terrible trolls, malevolent monsters, and chaotic creatures — enough to keep any adventurer in action for quite a long time.

Big Rubble is the companion package to

Pavis: Threshold to Danger. The package duplicates some of the material from *Pavis*, and you don't need *Pavis* to use *Big Rubble*. Still, the two packages do complement one another.

The setting for the Rubble surrounds the small town of New Pavis, a somewhat young settlement built next to the walls of a ruined city. New Pavis serves as a base for explorations into the ruins.

The ruined city, Pavis, was named after its founder, a hero who is now deified. A troll army conquered the city about four

hundred years ago. Pavis lies by the banks of the River of Cradles, which gives it a prime location in the otherwise arid Plains of Prax. Because of this location, the city has never been abandoned.

Within the ruins of Pavis live the descendants of the city's original citizens. The descendants are mostly humans, but some are elves and dwarves. They share this territory with a variety of invaders, most of whom are trolls and Chaos-spawn. To the descendants, the Rubble is Home. To the invaders, it's just a vast pile of loot, there

for the picking. The arrival of the conquering armies of the Lunar Empire has not impeded the looting; it has merely added another layer of bureaucracy that regulates the business of rummaging there.

The *Big Rubble* package comes in a flat box, as have other recent Chaosium products, For \$18 (the suggested retail price), a buyer receives three booklets totaling 144 pages and a 17"by 22" map of the Rubble. Smaller and sometimes less-detailed copies of this map are included in the books.

The smallest booklet is a 16-pager entitled "Common Knowledge for the Players." Before adventurers enter the Rubble, they must each fill out three Lunar Imperial forms; half of this booklet contains copies of these forms. Another quarter contains a description of the Yelorna cult, which is a group of warriors — mostly females — who ride unicorns. The rest of the booklet describes the Rubble and gives instructions on how to complete the Lunar forms. Also included is a map that shows Pavis within the continent of Genertela, along with a nice panoramic view of New Pavis and the old ruined city. If you already have the *Pavis* scenario package, you will find that only the cult and some portions of the Rubble constitute new material.

The second booklet is the 32-page "Guide for the Gamemaster." Descriptions within the guide are far more detailed than those the players receive in their booklet. In addition, nearly half of the guide provides space for an encounter table along with statistics for NPCs and monsters. The guide contains maps that depict the valley surrounding the River of Cradles, duplicating material from the *Pavis* package again.

At the heart of the *Big Rubble* package is the 92-page booklet, "Episodes for the Gamemaster." The book contains seven different episodes; some have independent subsections, and some can be played with different "twists." Eight authors designed these scenarios, so each one differs in style as well as content. Some scenarios feature combat and action, while others force the players to think rather than fight. Several are designed to reward those players who favor role-playing over dice-rolling.

"Griffin Gate," one of the episodes in the book, is actually a series of related scenarios. These scenarios might be encountered by a party searching for the lost axe of Balastor. Balastor was the last king to rule Pavis, and his axe is still a powerful weapon. But more importantly, the axe is a potent religious and political symbol, and the PCs are not the only characters who want it. The Lunar governor, the Pavis Temple, and the entire dwarf community would also like to get their hands on this weapon.

"Wolfhead's Lair" is a shorter episode that can be incorporated in many ways into an adventure. Wolfhead and his lady friend, Griseld, have been involved in a phony map swindle (as detailed in *Pavis*). They are now stowed away in the Rubble, lying low until the pressure is off. If unwary adventurers

happen to stumble across their hideout, a desperate Wolfhead and Griseld might mistake them for a posse, and take whatever measures might be necessary. . . .

"Raid on Yelorna" sets up the Yelorna cult temple and proposes two alternate scenarios. In the first, adventurers try to kidnap two of the temple's occupants. The kidnapping victims are wanted by the adventurers' prospective employers. In the second scenario, the power groups that are harassing the cult sponsor a vandalism raid. In addition to these two scenarios, fifteen more are outlined, each involving the temple and its NPC occupants. These outlines provide seeds for the GM's imagination.

"The Devil's Playground" requires straightforward dungeon exploration. Adventurers must delve through a Chaostainted complex of underground tunnels. Some interesting side trips are involved, demanding detective work and good role-playing by both players and GM.

"Krang's Table" seems like a fairly run-of-the-mill foray into the Troll Stronglands to recover a magical butcher table. That is, it seems like it's run-of-the mill. . . .

In "The Puzzle Canal," the sages of the Lhankor Mhy sponsor an expedition into a curious labyrinthine waterway. The waterway reportedly contains such oddities as burning water and a painting that shows the future.

Compared to the other episodes, "Temple

at Feroda" seems a little out of place. The scenario includes a trip that begins and ends at Pavis, but is otherwise unrelated to this package, or its companion. Characters venture down the River of Cradles to an abandoned temple of the river's deity, Zola Fel. (This episode, along with "Krang's Table," was originally meant to be included in the *Pavis* package.)

The material in the episode book will yield many sessions of gaming. But the episodes are merely a starting point. The package is rich enough to provide a satisfying adventure *without* the episode book, if the GM uses the encounter table and has adventurers wander through the Rubble. Groups of characters can simply explore the old city, finding almost anyone or anything.

In one sense, the prepared scenarios can restrict the adventure, limiting its length and confining the action to a smaller range of events. A good GM will take advantage of the "openness" that the rest of the package provides, but even a less experienced GM will be able to run an entertaining adventure.

Big Rubble is one of the best scenario packages I have seen. It is well-produced in a physical sense, and it is well-written and well-planned. As a blend of self-contained scenarios and open-ended setting, it is a valuable addition to the RUNEQUEST library.

— Reviewed by Steve List

IT IS SPRING, 1375 B.C.

You stand before an ancient stone monument at Giza. Though dwarfed by the great pyramids, it possesses the answer to a mighty mystery. For hidden inside, in some secret, long forgotten, chamber rests the power to destroy the old gods and to allow one man to rule Egypt. Yet, as you seek to gain entrance, your thoughts are not of the danger that lurks within; but rather of how you became caught in this deadly intrigue, of how a simple journey turned into a nightmare in the barren Sinai and eventually brought you to this silent statue, a hunted criminal, with no choice but to brave what ever evil lies ahead and to discover . . .

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Why Sek Met, the High Priest of Ra, will stop at nothing to possess the missing item?
Why the Pharaoh's beautiful but estranged wife, Nefertiti, searches for both?

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Good, but not great

One of the problems with designing strategic-level games on fantasy subjects is the dearth of appropriate material. Literature must substitute for history, but most fantasy novels do not inherently provide a detailed strategic wargaming situation, and those that do are often too expensive in terms of licensing costs to permit game adaptations. So designers frequently fall back on the generic situation of two or more powerful groups vying to dominate the area covered by the game map. The variations on this theme are multitudinous, but they all boil down to being fantasy-oriented descendants of Tactics II.

CITY STATES OF ARKLYRELL is a recent entry by Task Force Games into this ever more crowded field, and the game doesn't have what it takes to stand out. Designer Mike Joslyn has presented some original elements, but overall, the game is not a major advance in the art of design.

The game consists of 54 counters, a 16-page rulebook, and a 17" by 21" color map in a ziplock bag, all for \$4.98. It is designed for 2-4 players. Task Force rates the complexity level as intermediate, and sets the playing time at about 2 hours.

Players act as leaders trying to become the dominant force on the world of Arklyrell. Each leader is represented on the map by a counter rated with his morale and combat factors, as well as his movement allowance. The 31 combat units — representing mostly human ground forces with some ships, rocs (huge birds), and ice worms — are each marked with a unique identity number. The units are similarly rated. The remaining counters in the game are "magical items" and control markers.

Victory is achieved by the leader who controls the citadels; the player with the most citadels after 25 game turns is the winner, unless another player seizes enough for an automatic victory earlier.

Twenty-five game turns may sound like a lot, but in practice the turns go very quickly. At the start of the game, each player will have very few counters to move and limited options as to how to move them, since all combat units begin as neutrals. A leader may attempt to recruit only one unit per turn, and he must be adjacent to that unit to do so; it takes time to build a force.

The turn sequence is simple. The phasing player moves his units, then recruits a unit, if possible. Lastly, the player resolves combat. Recruiting is accomplished if the player rolls a number greater than or equal to the morale of the unit in question. If the roll fails, that leader may not attempt to recruit that same unit again, unless it becomes owned by another leader in the meantime.

The game map represents an entire planet, with an ice cap at the north pole and a desert at the south pole. Units may exit

the map on the east and west edges, re-entering on the opposite edge. This gives the world a cylindrical shape. There are six continents (some of them large islands) on the planet, all in a single ocean. Travel between continents requires ships or rocs.

The continents hold citadels, units, and/or magic items. Much of the terrain is clear, but it includes some mountains and forests where no desert or ice is present. The map also shows port cities and the rocs' aeries, as well as the citadels.

Combat is initiated by the phasing player, at his discretion, with no zones of control to hamper movement. The basis for combat is the difference in combat values of the units involved.

The possible outcomes of combat are: no result, disruption of all attacking units, or the disruption or elimination of the defender. Leaders cannot be eliminated, even if they are stacked on a unit that is. Disrupted units must retreat, and they may become neutral. If they cannot retreat, they're eliminated from the game.

The die roll for combat results is sometimes modified further, depending on the type of unit defending and the terrain that it occupies. Moreover, combat is purely ground-based. Rocs are treated like any other unit, and ships may be attacked only in port, and can only attack other ships.

Aside from the "fantastic" roc and ice worm units, the only thing that gives this game a fantasy flavor is the obligatory presence of magic items. There are seven of these items, scattered face-down at the start of play. Two of them are actually "poisoned wells," and picking one of these costs the player his next turn. The other five magic items serve as aids in recruiting and combat, but they are hardly of great influence. There are no magic spells or wizards to cast them. This is in itself a relief, but it does leave the game with very little window-dressing as far as fantasy is concerned.

City States of Arklyrell is not a bad game, but it has nothing to make it better than the many others of its ilk that are already available. The combat system is pedestrian; its only original feature is the procedure for losing control of units due to morale effects. The game is basically a pastiche of game mechanics that have been used before, re-assembled in a package that is not noticeably more interesting or exciting than its predecessors. In addition, the physical limits of this game's "mini" format give it a cramped feeling, and the design does nothing to overcome it.

The game is at its best with four players. But there are already so many good multi-player games around that *City States* will not receive, or deserve, much time during those rare occasions when more than two players get together.

— Reviewed by Steve List

Spells between the covers



Details for delving into magical research

by Bruce Heard

The scene: A sleeping town under a cover of new-fallen snow. The silver glow of the moon casts a dim light down upon the darkness, but does nothing to disturb the silence. On the lattices of a frost-coated window, a bright island of golden light dances, shimmering and flickering as the candle flame inside the room is tossed about by the wind that forces its way through the cracks around the window. In the flickering light, an old man traces his finger across the archaic writing of a tattered grimoire, pausing every few moments to gaze out the window and lose himself in dreams of forgotten lore . . . knowledge . . . and power.

. . . Just another old sage, right? Well, maybe. But if your AD&D™ game includes features of the quest for knowledge and spell research, that character deep in concentration could be a magic-user

— perhaps a magic-user in your campaign. How many dusty old tomes does that character have, and what help are they in the arcane life? Do they really bring the knowledge and power everyone seeks?

To begin finding the answer to that question, we must first roll up our sleeves and open the *Ultimate Book of The Master* to page 115, whereupon begins the section on spell research. (*Editor's note: The information in this article is presented in terms that are specific to magic-user characters. However, the same principles and procedures can be applied to spell research by a cleric, as long as the proper changes are made, such as substituting wisdom for intelligence when determining the chance of successful research.*) In summary, here is what the book has to say:

It is possible for a spell caster to obtain, through study and research, spells already existing in the *Players Handbook*, or others

that may be devised by the character. In both cases, the chance of successfully researching and "manufacturing" the new spell depends on the intelligence and the experience level of the character, the level of the spell being researched or created, and the time and money invested in the attempt.

The amount of gold that must be spent varies with the level of spell being researched and the time the character is willing to spend. It is possible to increase the chance of success by spending more gold, according to these formulae:

Basic cost of research:

200 gp / spell level / week of work

Additional cost of materials:

100 to 400 gp / spell level / week of work

If the character does not possess or have access to a library, then 2,000 gp — 10 times the basic cost — will have to be spent, per spell level per week of research. The basic cost generally represents the scrolls and books you (the character) must buy during your research. But the DMG does not say what the value and the components of the library are and what specific benefit a library can bring.

Initial preparation of materials and basic research must go on for a certain time before there is any chance of being successful. This time is always at least a number of weeks equal to the level of the spell being researched, plus one. The chance of success can be checked on a weekly basis after the minimum research period is over; if the character does not succeed in mastering the new spell, the success chance can be re-checked every week thereafter as long as his research has continued, uninterrupted, in the meantime.

Basic chance of success: 10% (unmodified)

Plus researcher's intelligence,

Plus researcher's experience level,

Minus twice the level of the spell.

This formula gives the chance of successful research at the end of each week of work, once the minimum research time has been spent. The basic 10% chance of success can be increased up to a maximum of 50% by spending more gold, at the rate of 2,000 gp per spell level for each 10% increase in the base chance.

Example: A Sorcerer (9th-level magic-user) tries to research a 5th-level spell, and is determined to spend enough gold to give him (he hopes) the best possible chance of success. He has an intelligence score of 17 and owns a library. He must undergo six weeks of research before the DM will make the first check to see if he succeeds. During that time, he will spend a base cost of 1,000 gp per week (200 x spell level), plus anywhere from 500 to 2,000 gp additional each week for materials, and he must spend at least another 8,000 gp during the research period to raise the basic success chance from 10% to 50%. Thus, by spending at least 17,000 gp — perhaps as much as 26,000 gp, or even more — he can maximize his chance of having success on the first check at the end of six weeks. That chance is computed as follows:

50% (highest base chance possible) + 17 (intelligence)
+ 9 (experience level) - 10 (spell level x 2) = 66%

So much for the official rules. What the DMG does not say is how

to get an acceptable library, what benefit is realized from all the gold spent during research, and the difference between searching for a spell that already exists (as given in the Players Handbook) and one a magic-user is trying to create (that does not already exist in the rules).

Logically, it should be easier to find clues about spells already existing in the Players Handbook than about those a player is attempting to create from scratch. This is because the "standard" spells are already known by and being used by other spell casters; thus, it is obviously easier to find information about them than about spells that do not yet exist. To take account of this difference, it would be good to increase the basic cost of research to 600 gp (instead of 200 gp) per spell level, and use three times the spell level (instead of two times) as a subtraction to the chance of success when researching a "non-standard" spell.

Using these suggestions, the example given above would change in these ways: The sorcerer's base cost would be 3,000 gp per week (600 x spell level), and he would have to spend at least 29,000 gp in the six-week minimum research period (instead of "only" 17,000 gp) to retain the maximum chance for success. If he spends the necessary amount of gold, his success chance would be computed as:

50% + 17 + 9 - 15 (spell level x 3) = 61%

Creating a library

As the power of the spell being researched increases, the importance and expense of the library increases accordingly. For a library of minimum value, 2,000 gp must be invested. This will allow research on first-level spells; by spending a cumulative 2,000 gp per spell level above the first, added to the minimum needed for the next lower level, the library can be built up to allow research of higher-level spells. A library suitable for research of 2nd-level spells must have a value of 4,000 gp; for 3rd-level spells, 8,000 gp (4,000 + 2,000 x 2 levels above 1st); for 4th-level spells, 14,000 gp (8,000 + 2,000 x 3 levels above 1st); and so on up to a library of at least 74,000 gp value, which is suitable for researching spells of 9th level.

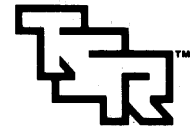
Having a library of sufficient size does not allow a character to undertake spell research without paying the basic cost. However, at the end of each week of study, the basic cost paid during that time can be added to the value of the library, since the basic-cost expenses correspond to the purchase of new books. If a character has a library of a value higher than the minimum value required for a certain spell, the base chance of success will increase at a rate of 1% for each increment of (2,000 gp x spell level) that the library value exceeds the minimum — but, as always, the base chance of success can never be raised higher than 50%. For example, a magic-user has a library worth 72,000 gp, which is 50,000 gp higher than needed to conduct research on a 5th-level spell. He will receive a bonus of 1% per (2,000 gp x 5) over the minimum, or a total bonus of 5% to his base chance of success. If he wanted to research a 1st-level spell, his valuable library would give him a bonus of 1% per (2,000 gp x 1), or 25%.

If a character is attempting to create a new spell, the minimum value of the library needed should be raised by one level; to research



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a 5th-level spell already existing in the Players Handbook, a library valued at 22,000 gp is required. If the 5th-level spell being researched does not already exist, the library must be worth at least 32,000 gp, which is the minimum for a standard 6th-level spell. Conversely, a 22,000 gp library would only allow the creation of a new 4th-level spell instead of an existing 5th-level one. There are other ways to increase the value of one's library. When a magic-user character goes through training to get to a higher level of experience, that character will be able to keep 1-10% of the training cost paid to his master and add it to the value of his own library. This represents the value of the books the student is allowed to keep after his training is over. This variable amount may be determined randomly, or it may be assigned by the DM according to the character's efforts and behavior, both while adventuring and during training. An award of 1% (or perhaps even no award at all) would be the result of poor performance, and 10% would be the amount given to a character of exemplary conduct and dedication to his profession.

Note: A character's spell books do not count in the value of his library.

Purchasing books

When a magic-user goes on a book-buying spree, the following tables can be used to determine the number of books purchased, their prices, and their functions.

Gold spent	No. of books	Value of each book, in its percentage of total spent
200	1	Book A, 100% of amount
400	2	Book A, 10%-40%; B, balance
800	3	Book A, 10%-40%; B, 10%-40%; C, balance
1,600	4	Book A, 10%-40%; B, 1%-20%; C, 1%-20%; D, balance
3,200	5	Book A, 10%-40%; B, 1%-20%; C, 1%-20%; D, 1%-12%; E, balance
6,400	6	Book A, 10%-40%; B, 1%-20%; C, 1%-12%; D, 1%-12%; E, 1%-12%; F, balance
6,401 +	7	Book A, 10%-40%; B, 1%-12%; C, 1%-12%; D, 1%-12%; E, 1%-12%; F, 1%-12%; G, balance

Gold spent is the total value of the investment in gold. Read the entries as "from 1 to 200, 201 to 400," etc. An investment can come from a direct purchase, or be a training cost or research expense.

Number of books is how many a magic-user can purchase for the given amount of gold. The DM may choose to adjust the number of books that can be purchased with a certain amount of gold; if so, use the corresponding entry to determine "Value of each book."

Value of each book is determined by assigning letter designations (A, B, C, etc.) to the books and then rolling dice to arrive at a value for each one. For example, if the purchaser invests 600 gp and finds 3 books, the first one (Book A) will cost 10% to 40% (1d4) of the 600 gp; Book B will also cost 10%-40% of the gold spent; and Book C will cost whatever is left of the gold spent, in this case anywhere from 20% to 80% of the original 600 gp.

It takes time to find books that are valuable in spell research. If a magic-user is simply shopping around, trying to build up his library but not being currently involved in actual spell research, it will take one week per 1,000 gp being invested to locate and purchase the desired books. (This assumes that the purchaser is in a big city with one or more large bookshops, or that the purchaser has made connections with an NPC who owns a large library and may be willing to sell certain books for a fair price.)

The magic-user will also improve the value and size of his library during the spell research process, at the set rate which is dictated by the basic cost of research. It is assumed in these cases that the researcher's effort to locate new books is part of the research process itself; spending the basic cost of research by going shopping for new books does not constitute an interruption in research. Example: If a magic-user who already owns a library is researching a "known" 4th-level spell, his basic cost of research is 800 gp per week. For this

expenditure, he will find three new books per week, and after determining their value and their nature, he may add them to his library.

Also, it is quite possible to find some of these books during adventures, in which case the above table can be disregarded. Some of these books can be a treasure by themselves.

The extensive table below gives titles and authors of books that may be found, all concerning "known" spells (those which are in the Players Handbook or which have been described in past issues of DRAGON® Magazine). The only "known" spells not mentioned in the contents of these books are *read magic* and *read illusionist magic* (from issue #66 of DRAGON Magazine), since a spell caster will always know one or the other of these as a result of his training.

There is a 3% chance per 100 gp of value of a book that it will contain an important clue to a spell. If this is the case, the researcher receives a bonus of 1-10% on his basic chance of success in researching that particular spell. The clue will concern one of the spells listed for the book in question, chosen at random.

In the lists that follow, many spells are accompanied by one or more superscript numbers (like this one¹). These numbers identify spells from past issues of DRAGON Magazine, as follows:

- 1: Official illusionist spells from issue #66.
- 2: Official magic-user spells from issue #67.
- 3: Official magic-user spells from issue #68.
- 4: Unofficial magic-user spells described in "Pages from the Mages," issue #62.
- 5: Unofficial magic-user spells described in "More Pages from the Mages," issue #69.
- 6: Existing magic-user spells described for illusionists in issue #66.
- 7: Existing illusionist spells described for magic-users in issue #67.

d% roll	Title and author of book, spells described within
01-02	"Idioms & Rare Cryptographs" by Elminster (message, write, illusionary script, tongues, audible glamer, magic mouth)
03	"Legendry of Phantoms and Ghosts" by Evard (phantom armor ¹ , phantom steed ¹ , phantom wind ¹ , Evard's black tentacle ² , wraithform ¹)
04	"Lore of Subtle Communication" by Tasha (ventriloquism, message, comprehend languages, legend lore, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter ²)
05-06	"Ancient Cryptomancy" by Phandal (sending ³ , wizard mark ² , secret page ² , sepia snake sigil ²)
07-08	Extreme Powers of Observation" by Kwalish (detect magic, detect illusion ⁷ , identify, detect invisibility, glassée, locate object)
09	"Eyes, Vision, and Arcane Sight" by Alphon (infravision, clairvoyance, blur, vision, blindness, wizard eye, eyebite ³ , ultravision ¹ 2)
10	"Theories on Perception" by Kuroth (detect evil, clairsentience, true sight, deafness)
11-12	"Manual Powers Beyond the Life" by Bigby (burning hands, Bigby's interposing hand, Bigby's forceful hand, Bigby's grasping hand, Bigby's crushing hand, Bigby's clenched fist)
13	"The Seven Skies of the Universe" by Casimur (gust of wind, whispering wind, rainbow pattern ¹ , precipitation ² , cloudburst ² , wind wall ²)
14-15	"The Forgotten Arts of Oratory Magnetism" by Leomund (fascinate ¹ , taunt ² , irritation ² , truenam ³ , Leomund's lamentable belabourment ³)
16	"Theory of the Invisible Forces" by Tenser (push, unseen servant, strength, Tenser's floating disc)
17- 18	"Displacements and Modelling the Milieu" by Thurl (shatter, enlarge, mending, stone shape, massmorph)
19	"Creation and Modification of Matter" by Caterpillar (move earth, dig, telekinesis, statue)
20-21	"Influence on Solid Corpus" by Mentor (fool's gold, transmute rock to mud, stone to flesh, plant growth, animal growth, shape change)
22	"Subconscious Repercussions of Pyromancy" by Quaal (fire trap, wall of fire, firewater ² , flaming sphere ²)

- 23-24 "Dissimulation and Obscuration" by Tzunk
(blink, invisibility invisibility 10' radius, improved invisibility darkness, continual darkness, vacancy¹, avoidance³, mass invisibility)
- 25-26 "Life of Nature, Its Secrets" by Caligarde
(feather fall, levitate, spider climb, web, fly, mount², Caligarde's claw³, bind²)
- 27 "Alterations of Tangibles and Intangibles" by Yagrax
(melt², transmute water to dust³, item², material², fabricate³, crystalbrittle³)
- 28 "Encyclopaedia of the Non-Substances" by Asmiak
(erase, non-detection, misdirection, improved phantasmal force)
- 29-30 "Components and Reactions of Phosphorus" by Daern
(affect normal fires, dancing lights, fire charm, fireball, delayed blast fireball, incendiary cloud)
- 31 "Legendry of Great Arms and Fabulous Heroes" by Kas
(armor², phantom armor¹, stonewall², protection from normal missiles, shield, forcecage³)
- 32 "Sulphur, Influence and Actions" by Arbane
(pyrotechnics, flame arrow, fire charm, fire shield)
- 33-34 "Tome on Influences and Suggestions" by Arunsun
(charm person, ray of enfeeblement, scare, suggestion, antipathy/sympathy, mass suggestion)
- 35 "The Multiple Applications of Perceptomancy" by Laeral
(alarm², detect illusion⁷, mislead, dream¹, dolor³, sequester³, Laeral's dancing dweomer⁵)
- 36 "Occult Magnetism" by Nolzur
(friends, hold person, charm monster, hold monster, charm plants, mass charm)
- 37-38 "Arcane Manipulations of the Entourage" by Otto
(sleep, scare, fumble, geas, Otto's irresistible dance, confusion)
- 39 "The Deep Fears of Humanity" by Hallo-ene
(shout², spook¹, scare, fear, chaos)
- 40-41 "Art of Communications and Sigils" by Flamsterd
(explosive runes, power word stun, power word kill, power word blind, symbol)
- 42 "Echo & Resonance of the Great Void" by Whisper
(find familiar, monster summoning I - V)
- 43 "The Foundations of Secret Authority" by Ill-Oominoty
(binding³, demand³, tormeng³, dismissal³)
- 44-45 "Epic Saga of the Great Conjurers" by Mordenkainen
(Mordenkainen's faithful hound, conjure animals, monster summoning VI, cacodemon)
- 46 "Repertoire of Illustrious Conjunctions" by Drawmij
(conjure elemental, Drawmij's instant summons, monster summoning VII, summon shadow, invisible stalker, guards and wards)
- 47 "Architecture" by Leomund & Mordenkainen
(Leomund's secure shelter², Leomund's tiny hut, forcecage³, Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion³)
- 48-49 "Doors and Passages of Parallel Worlds" by Lethchauntos
(hold portal, knock, jump, wizard lock)
- 50 "Theories on Converging Transitions" by Lhegrand
(dimension door, passwall, gate)
- 51 "The Unknown Movements of the Universe" by Arnd
(run², shadow walk¹, teleport without error³, succor³, vanish)
- 52 "Thesis on Conditional Ruptures" by Archveult
(teleport, phase door, shadow door, maze, Archveult's Skybolt⁵)
- 53 "Luminescence and Coloration" by Nchaser & Tulrun
(light, color spray, continual light, darkness 15' radius, prismatic spray, project image, projected image, chromatic orb¹, Nchaser's glowing globe⁴, Tulrun's tracer⁵)
- 54 "Spherogenesis of the Multiverses" by Otiluke
(Otiluke's resilient sphere², Otiluke's telekinetic sphere³, Otiluke's freezing sphere, globe of invulnerability, flaming sphere², prismatic sphere)
- 55 "The Powers of the Spiritual Will" by Phrandjas
(emotion, chaos, feeblemind, confusion)
- 56 "The Transcendental Impenetrabilities" by Leomund
(Leomund's tiny hut, minor globe of invulnerability, globe of invulnerability prismatic sphere)
- 57 "Cosmogony of Magnetic Fluids" by Mordenkainen
(chain lightning³, volley³, energy drain³, Mordenkainen's disjunction³)
- 58-59 "Arcane Resistance of Dwarves and Halflings" by Serten
(dispel magic⁶, remove curse, Serten's spell immunity, anti-magic shell, dispel illusion⁷, dispel exhaustion)
- 60 "Manual of Magnetic and Electric Waves" by Gee-Eeh
(shocking grasp, lightning bolt, repulsion, reverse gravity)
- 61 "The Dark Sides of the Memory" by Mordenkainen
(banishment³, Mordenkainen's lucubration³, ensnarement³, contingency³)
- 62-63 "Treatise on Cabalistic Protections" by Krest
(protection from evil, shield, protection from evil 10' radius, protection from normal missiles)
- 64 "The Trance of the Intellect" by Aspirin
(feign death, contact other plane, limited wish, wish)
- 65 "The Representations of the Sentient Plane" by Rialissom
(phantasmagoria¹, weird¹, mirage arcane¹, advanced illusion¹, delude¹)
- 66-67 "Intelligence and Intuitive Domination" by Zagy
(ESP, trap the soul, spiritwrack, magic jar)
- 68-69 "Arcane Puissance of the Memory" by Rary
(Rary's mnemonic enhancer, forget, mind blank, hypnotic pattern)
- 70 "The Origins of the Hour Glass Symbolology" by Nulathoe
(preserve², tempus fugit¹, Nulathoe's ninemen⁴, haste)
- 71-72 "Variations on the Visual Perception" by Mhzentul
(hypnotism, hallucinatory terrain, paralyzation, veil)
- 73 "Mental Impressions of the Retina" by Johydee
(phantasmal force, improved phantasmal force, permanent illusion, programmed illusion)
- 74 "Treatise of Sublimated Oneiromancy" by Tasirin
(sleep, dream¹, feign death, Tasirin's haunted sleep⁵)
- 75-76 "Theory of Occult Visual Shock" by Ye'Cind
(fear, minor creation, phantasmal killer, major creation)
- 77-78 "Libram of the Great Paravision Emanations" by Nystul
(Nystul's magic aura, shadow magic, demi-shadow magic, shades, Leomund's trap)
- 79 "The Minds of The Unknown" by Lum
(feeblemind, mind blank, dismind⁵, forget)
- 80-81 "Repertoire of Subconscious Apparitions" by Gaxx
(spectral force, shadow monsters, demi-shadow monsters, simulacrum)
- 82 "Thesis on the Planes of Anti-Matter" by Leomund
(rope trick, distance distortion, astral spell, disintegrate, Leomund's secret chest, duo-dimension, deppockets²)
- 83-84 "Clouds and Fog" by Dahlver-Nar
(stinking cloud, fog cloud, cloudkill, wall of fog, death fog¹, solid fog¹)
- 85-86 "Gazette of the Norse Climates" by Otiluke
(gust of wind, ice storm, control weather, Otiluke's freezing sphere, cone of cold, wall of ice)
- 87 "Science of Temporal Waves" by Leuk-0
(haste, slow, extension I - III, permanency)
- 88-89 "Tome of Studies on the Fourth Dimension" by Seik-O
(temporal stasis, time stop, imprisonment)
- 90-91 "Occult Observations on Fluids" by Koorz
(water breathing, airy water, lower water, part-water, sink³, grease², Spendelarde's chaser⁵)
- 92 "Evolution of the Arcane Will Power" by Tenser
(polymorph self polymorph other, polymorph any object, Tenser's transformation)
- 93-94 "Alterations of the Intrinsic Absolutes" by Math
(change self, alter reality, massmorph, shape change, alter self¹)
- 95-96 "The Bricks of the Spiritual Fortification" by Webster
(wind wall², wall of fire, wall of force, wall of iron, wall of stone, prismatic wall, glassteel)

- 97 "Ordinary Necromancy" by Vecna
(animate dead, death spell, reincarnation, clone)
- 98 "The Weapons of the Ether" by Melf & Mordenkainen
(whip², Melf's acid arrow², magic missile, enchant an item, enchanted weapon, Mordenkainen's sword)
- 99 "Treatise of Universal Astronomy" by Melf
(Melf's minute meteor², meteor swarm, fireball)
- 00 "Inexplicable Reflections" by Bucknard
(mirror image, magic mirror^{1 2}, gaze reflection)

Many of these authors' names will be familiar to the student of magic; however, a character who obtains one of these volumes would be incorrect in assuming that the book was written by the person of the same name who devised a certain spell or spells. In most cases, the authors are merely distant relatives of their more famous namesakes, and in some cases they may not be related at all. With imagination, a DM could easily devise a list that contained dozens more books of this type — and perhaps someday a character who creates an entirely new spell will himself become the author of a book on that type of magic.

If a character acquires two books of the same title, the second and subsequent books will have volume numbers (Vol. II, Vol. III, etc.), and the basic chance for success when researching any spell mentioned in more than one volume goes up by 3% per new volume. Each new volume has the same chance of containing an important clue (3% per 100 gp value) as the original volume did.

If an extremely valuable book is located, the chance of it having an important clue may be 100% or more. (This will be true of any book with a value of more than 3,333 gp.) In such a case, the character receives one clue automatically, and has a chance of finding a second clue in the same book, equal to the amount by which the "clue chance" exceeds 100%. Optionally, the DM may divide the "clue chance" in half and assign equal probabilities to finding the first and second clues; for a book with a 110% chance of containing clues, it could be ruled that there is a 55% chance of finding the first

clue and likewise a 55% chance of finding the second clue. In the long run, this method is much more charitable to the researcher.

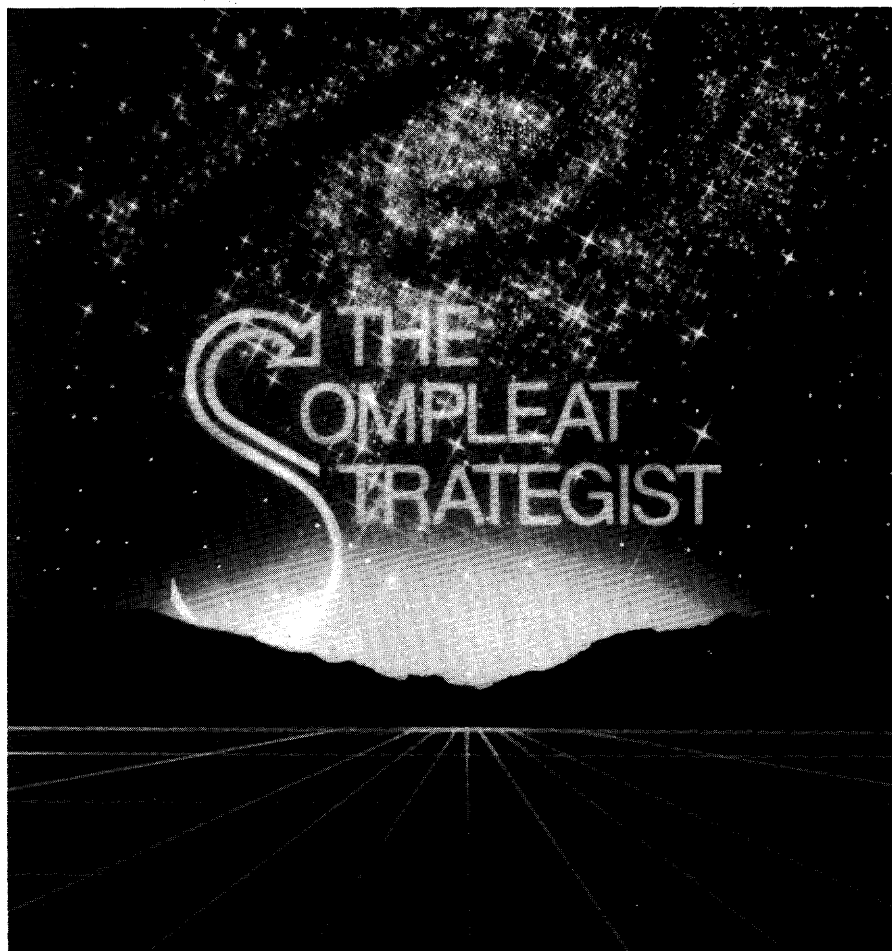
Some of these books contain spells usable only by illusionists. If a magic-user gets a book containing clues on illusionist spells (or vice versa), he will not find the clue(s) and will believe the book has no particular value to him. However, the magic-user or illusionist will recognize the book as one useful to a member of the other class, and may be able to sell the book at an agreed-upon price to a bookshop or a member of the appropriate class. When a spell caster buys a book, he is not able to discern its true title and contents at first glance; he will know only that the book has something to do with the creation or preparation of one or more magic spells. Only after purchasing it and concentrating on its contents will he be able to determine a book's true nature. When it is not part of the actual research process, studying a book to find out its nature will take 1d10 days per 1,000 gp of the book's value. Since this activity takes place outside of the actual research process, there is no penalty if a character desires or is forced to interrupt the studying.

If a character obtains a book during the actual research process (as part of the basic cost of research), he may subsequently discover that the book contains no specific information on the spell he is trying to research. However, the book will still be of some benefit; examining it will at least give the researcher some idea on how — or how *not* — to proceed.

Appraising a book's value

When a character makes a direct purchase, especially from an NPC, or when two player characters want to sell or exchange books, the following optional appraisal system can be used.

A seller always knows how much he expects to get for a book. This amount may be its actual value (as determined by the table given earlier), or it may be somewhat higher than that figure, if the seller is greedy or ornery or if the buyer has offended him in some way. The buyer has to appraise a book to get a good idea (or what he considers a good idea) of its value. It takes at least 10 rounds of



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examination before a buyer can come up with a decent appraisal; for every round less than 10 that he takes to examine the purchase, there is a 10% penalty to his chance of appraising it accurately.

A buyer's Appraisal Score, figured separately for each book being examined, is equal to $(1d4 \times 10) + \text{his intelligence} + \text{his experience level}$, expressed as a percentage. Only one appraisal attempt can be made for a single book, and only a member of a spell-using class can successfully appraise a book's value. (This would include rangers and paladins, if they are of sufficient level to cast spells.) "Experience level" refers to the buyer's level as a spell caster. Sages and professional booksellers can also appraise books, and are considered to do so at level 5, plus one level for each 5 years of age that character has over 50. (It can be seen from this that there is practically no way to "put one over" on an experienced elven bookseller.)

When the buyer's Appraisal Score is determined for the book in question, the DM rolls percentile dice, adding 10 to the result for every round less than 10 that the buyer spent examining his purchase. If the result of the roll (including modifications, if any) is equal to or less than the Appraisal Score, the buyer has exactly assessed the true value of the book — and the seller will know that the buyer knows what he's talking about. If the result is greater than the Appraisal Score, the buyer's estimation is in error, and the difference between the numbers indicates the degree of error as a percentage of the book's actual value. If the difference is odd, the appraisal is low; if the difference is even, the appraisal is high. If this difference is greater than 50, or if the result of the dice roll (plus modifications) is 100 or greater, the buyer's appraisal is a total failure, and he will agree to pay the price asked by the seller or else not purchase the book at all.

Example: A buyer has an Appraisal Score of 55, and the result of the dice roll is 80. The difference is 25, which means that the buyer appraises the value of the book at 25% less than its actual value — and that is where the dickering will start.

Of course, the use of magic can alter the outcome of a confrontation between seller and buyer. A *charm* spell or similar magic could

force the seller to propose an acceptable price or to give out the title or the clues he found in this book (if the seller is a spell caster).

Hypnotizing a seller or a buyer could permit the spell-user to cheat or practically steal from the other character, or at the least get accurate information on the book. Using a *true sight* spell or similar means will not reveal the exact nature of a book, but will allow an exact appraisal of its value. *ESP* can greatly help to figure out if a buyer or seller is trying to cheat. *Legend lore*, if used to try to identify the author or the title of a book, can be cast in 1-4 turns, but the answer will remain cryptic, and the spell will not give any information at all if the book is not worth more than 100 gp (at least you know the book is cheap if you get no answer!). Otherwise, a *legend lore* spell will not help in appraising the value of a book. Obviously, a *wish*, *limited wish*, or *alter reality* spell is powerful enough to identify and appraise a book . . . but the consequences could prove to be more costly than the benefit.

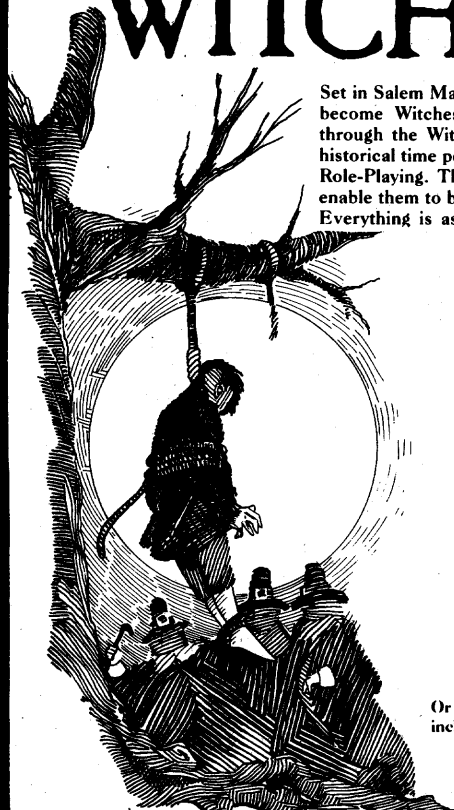
Because there are so many variables involved that cannot be set down in the form of rules, every book-selling situation is bound to be different. But here is an example of how things might go in one instance:

Nine-Fingers the thief recently stole an old book that he thinks could be worth a lot to the local sage. It is in fact worth 800 gp, but the thief has no way of knowing this and has decided on a price of 1,000 gp, figuring that will represent a tidy return on his "investment" if he is able to get the sage to pay it. The sage is 65 years old and has an intelligence of 17. The DM rolls a 3 on 1d4 and figures his Appraisal Score as follows:

$$30 + 17 + 8 = 55\%$$

The DM rolls a 78 on percentile dice, meaning that the sage makes an inaccurate appraisal with an error of 23% on the low side; he estimates the book to be worth 800 gp minus 23% of 800, or 616 gp. Now the arguing begins. Since one of the sage's personality traits is greed, and the thief is in a hurry to get rid of the "hot" book (a fact which the sage suspects to be true), the sage makes an initial offer of 500 gp and the thief ends up letting it go for 550 gp — not

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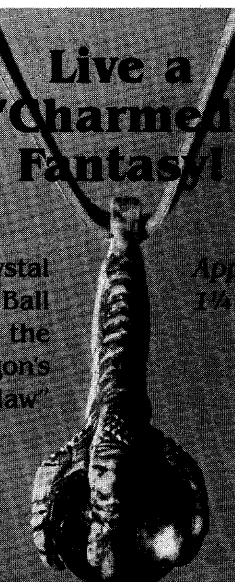
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without many whines and pleas on both sides. Several days later, after studying the book at more length, the sage comes to a realization of its actual value and decides he didn't make such a bad deal. And since the thief had no way to appraise the true value of the book in the first place, he goes away thinking that he just made some easy money.

Appearance of the library

Players who enjoy detail could find it valuable to determine the appearance of each book. The term "book" is perhaps inaccurate, since a "book" could actually be a pile of scrolls enclosed in a small chest or in a tube, or parchments held between two flat slabs. The chest, tube, or slabs could be made of various types of wood, mineral; or metal, according to the price of the "book." The book itself or the containers of the scrolls could have decorations (knot-work, lattices, runes, symbols of alchemy, stars, moons, gargoyles, demons or other grinning faces, etc.) or be simply smooth or lacquered with a single color. The binding of a grimoire could range from regular leather to silk, velvet, or animal skins. Metal fittings or other decorations are also common (iron, bronze, silver, nacre, ivory, or gold could be used). The metal could be part of the protection or the decoration of the book.

Special books

Some of the books described below have special properties and are thus considered as magic items. It is possible to buy them, but the buyer will not know the special nature of the book at the time of the sale. However, it is very uncommon for these books to be for sale. In most cases, these special books will only be discovered as part of a treasure hoard. If a random-determination method is desired, assign a 1% chance for any book found to be one of these special types. Of course, other types of special books can be fabricated by the DM; these should only be considered as examples.

d12 roll Book

- 1 Books of the White Mages
 - 2-3 Elfin book (written in elven language)*
 - 4-5 Contains a scroll of 1 spell (level 1-4)*
 - 6-7 Cursed tome
 - 8-9 Contains a map to a treasure or dungeon*
 - 10-11 Contains a spell (level 1-7) written in code*
 - 12 Books of the Dark Powers
- * - The book itself is not magical.

Books of the White Mages: Six of these books are known to exist. In addition to information on spells that they may contain, the Books of the White Mages are cursed to bring harm to characters of evil alignment who study them. A list of the books is given below, along with their xp/gp values. The first xp figure applies to a character who can be adversely affected by the book (evil characters for a good book, good characters for an evil book; see also Books of the Dark Powers). The basic gp value of each book varies according to random determination or the DM's judgment, which is why no basic

gp values are given here. The second set of xp/gp figures is used for characters who are not harmed by the book; the amount of gold pieces after the plus sign is added to the original value of the book after the beneficiary has studied it completely and is aware of its special power. A character who can be harmed by the book will be aware of its special nature as soon as the harmful effect begins or is noticed, but that character will not benefit from an increase in the book's gp value. Characters of neutral alignment (with respect to good and evil) will not be harmed by either type of special book described herein.

- 1 Book of Hopeless Deeds (500 xp/. . .) (700 xp/+500 gp)
- 2 Book of the Bright Ages (750 xp/. . .) (1000 xp/+600 gp)
- 3 Tome of Saintly Sanity (750 xp/. . .) (1000 xp/+600 gp)
- 4 Book of the Blind (400 xp/. . .) (600 xp/+400 gp)
- 5 Runes of Possession (900 xp/. . .) (1500 xp/+800 gp)
- 6 History of Evil Mages and Apprentices (1000 xp/. . .) (2000 xp/+1000 gp)

Book of Hopeless Deeds: After one week of study, an evil character suffers a -3 penalty on all his saving throws. This effect is permanent until a restoration or limited wish spell is used to counteract it.

Book of the Bright Ages: After one week of study, an evil character will begin to grow older at twice the normal rate. This effect lasts until a limited wish spell is used to counteract it.

Tome of Saintly Sanity: An evil character who studies this book has a 5% chance per day, cumulative, of contracting some form of insanity (see DMG, p. 83).

Book of the Blind: An evil character who studies this book will lose the use of his eyes at the end of one week of study. A cure blindness spell will get rid of the affliction for 1-4 days; a remove curse spell will bring back the character's sight permanently.

Runes of Possession: This type of book has a magical intelligence. An evil character who studies it for as much as one week must save vs. spell at -2 each day thereafter or be possessed by the book. The effect of possession is similar to a quest spell, forcing the owner to attempt to make amends for all the evil acts he has performed. Each time a major act of evil is undone (DM's discretion as to what "major" is), the owner is entitled to a saving throw vs. spell to see if he is freed from the possession. If the possession is neutralized by some magical means, the owner will be freed but will lose 10,000 xp or one level of experience, whichever is greater.

History of Evil Mages and Apprentices: After one week of studying this book, an evil owner must save vs. spell at -2 every week thereafter or be imprisoned in the book in a manner similar to a magic jar spell. A brief recounting of the owner's life and times will then appear on one or more of the book's blank pages. (Other previous owners are described on other pages; their life essences are also held within the book.) A single owner can be released from this captivity by a limited wish or alter reality spell. If the book is burned, damaged, or destroyed by non-magical means, the trapped characters are still imprisoned within the remains, and now cannot be released singly by anything short of a wish spell. If the book or its

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remains is burned, damaged, or destroyed by magical means, the captives will be released all at once, but each must roll less than his intelligence on d20 or be afflicted with some form of insanity.

Elfin book: These books are particularly valuable to elves and half-elves. When studied by a member of one of those races, the chance of finding an important clue to a spell is twice the normal amount.

Cursed tomes: These books can affect characters of any alignment. Generally, the owner of a cursed book can only be freed from the curse by getting rid of the book itself, and this can only be accomplished by a *remove curse* spell or something stronger (*limited wish*, etc.). Such a spell will either destroy the book outright, or negate its effect upon the owner (or the owner's library) and permit the book to be sold or traded like any other book, if the owner is successful in making a deal acceptable to a purchaser. The DM can use typical curses as described in the rules (such as those on p. 121 of the DMG), or can invent special curses, a few examples of which are offered here:

Poison pages: The owner must save vs. poison after each day of studying, or die. Some of these books do not require immediate saving throws, but their poison is addictive; if the owner stops studying the book, he must save vs. poison every week thereafter or lose one point of constitution upon each failed save. XP value 300.

Vampire book: The unlucky owner of this volume will lose one book at random per week, as the contents of his library are slowly drained by the vampire book. The books affected are left with blank pages, at the same time that these pages reappear in the vampire book. When another book is drained, the pages of the previously drained book disappear to make room for the new ones. However, the title and markings on the cover of the vampire book will not change, making it difficult and probably time-consuming for the owner to discover which book is doing the draining. After the owner of a vampire book notices that the contents of some of his books are disappearing, he may choose to conduct a search of his library to find the cause (assuming that he figures out what the cause is). He

must examine books individually to see if their contents match their covers, or to see if a book now contains writing drained from another book. This process takes one turn (10 minutes) per book examined, and the chance of locating the vampire book on any given turn is expressed as "one in x," where "x" is the number of books in the library that have not yet been searched. This can be a long and tedious endeavor for a character who owns a large library, and for the DM who must determine if and when the search is successful. (Depending on circumstances, a *detect magic* spell or other magical or psionic means may speed the search.) The vampire power will not function if the book is kept in a metal container by itself, or if it is stored at least 10 feet away from any other books. Its power is triggered 1-12 weeks after it is obtained. XP value 600.

Lore of demonkind: At the end of each week that this book is studied, there is a 10% chance, cumulative, that a demon will *gate* in and attempt to destroy the owner. The book will *gate* in a Type I demon if it is valued at 500 gp or less, a Type II demon if valued at 501 to 1,000 gp, a Type III demon if valued at 1,001 to 1,500 gp, and so on. XP value 300 for each 500 gp value of the book.

Spell written in code: If the owner of the book breaks the code and is able to use the spell he decodes, it can be added to his spell repertoire immediately. Breaking the code requires a minimum of 1d4 weeks of study, after which the owner must roll his experience level or less on d20. Failure to make this roll means that the code was not solved, and no further attempt will have a chance of succeeding until the owner attains the next highest experience level.

Books of the Dark Powers: These books will adversely affect good-aligned owners. They are basically the same as the Books of the White Mages, with appropriate name changes (History of Good Mages and Apprentices, Book of the Dark Ages, etc.).

Evil, good, or cursed books do not lose their original contents. Even if their adverse effects are triggered, they still contain information on spells and may be used in research just like other books, so long as the owner feels that the benefits they contain are good enough to offset their liabilities.

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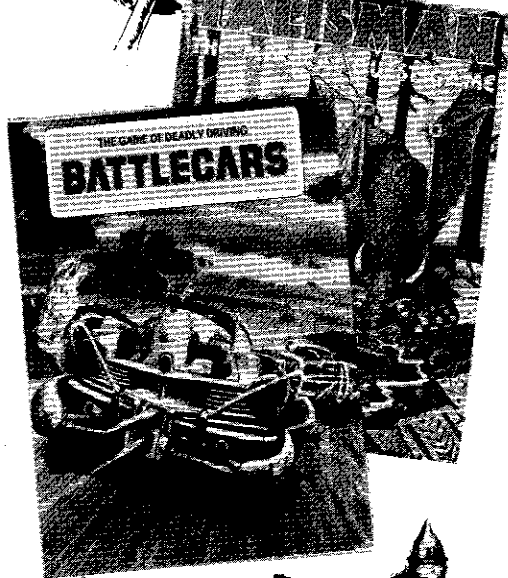
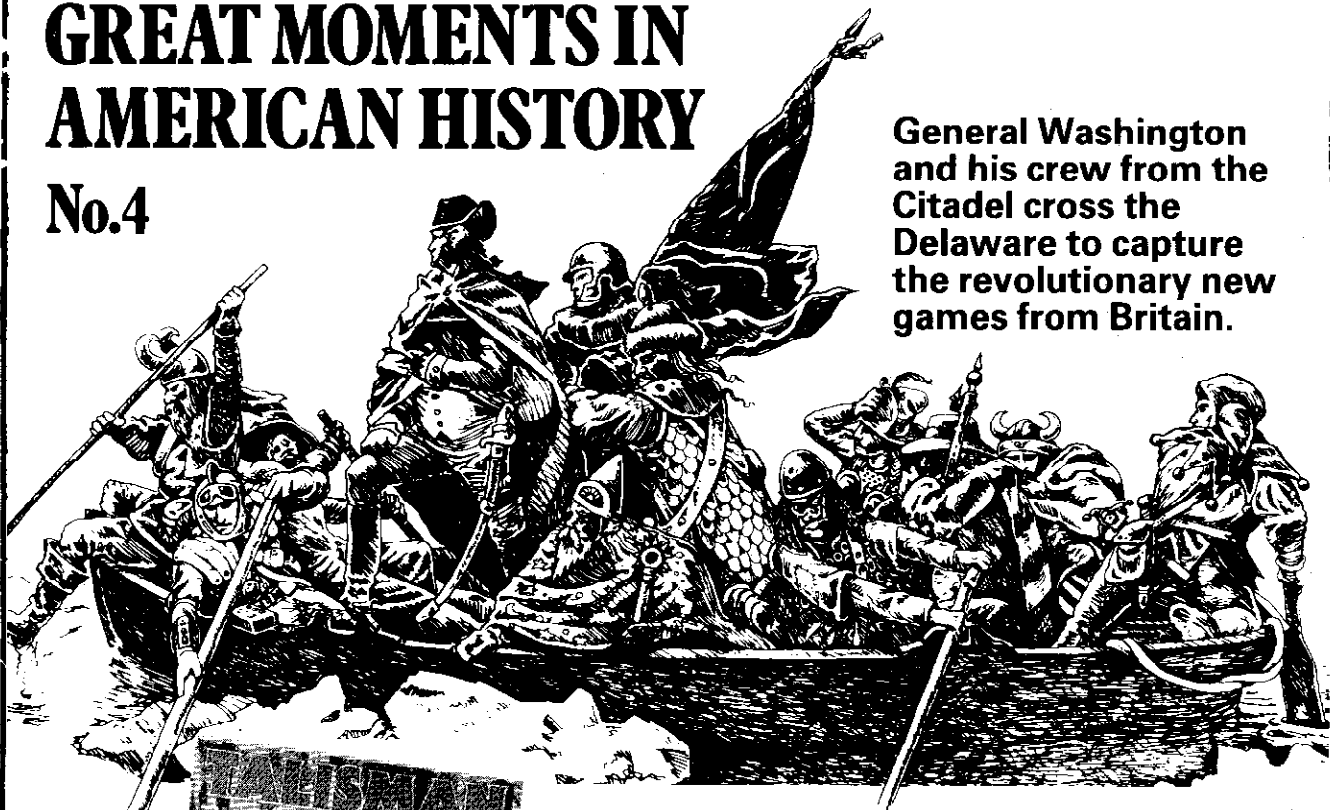
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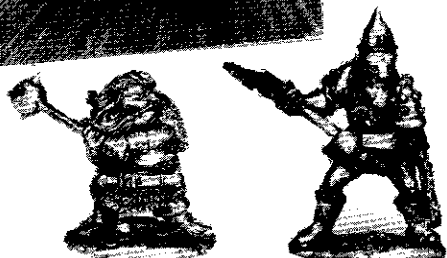
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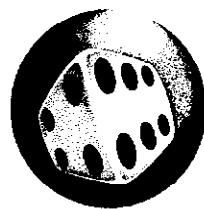
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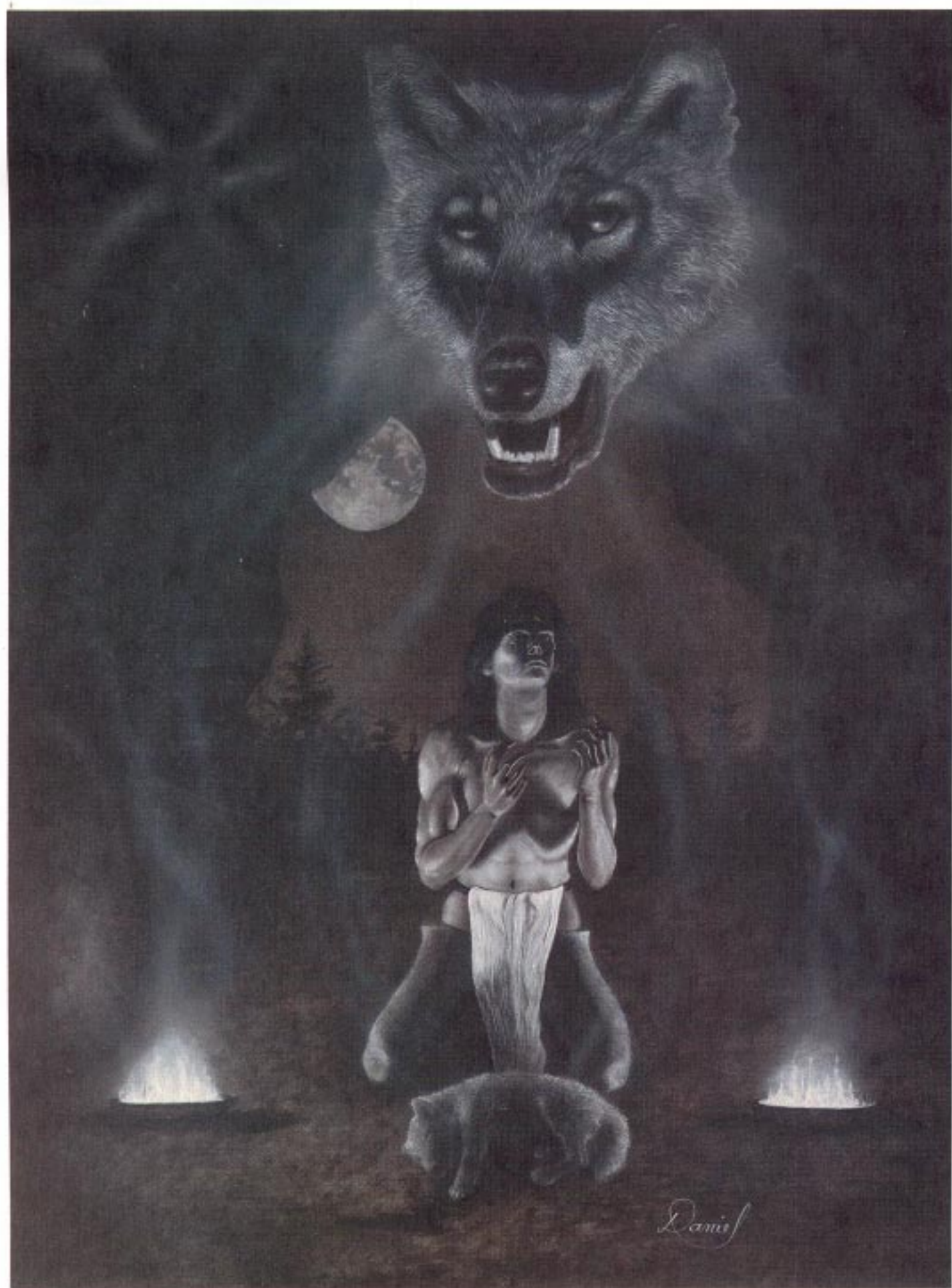
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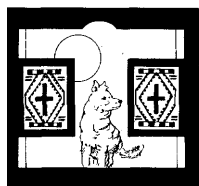


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LIVE: THAT IS THE FIRST THING. I live, and I quiver in fear or agony or exultation. I do not know which, as it is too soon for me to think about what I feel. Besides, there is so much more to be aware of.

I am looking down at a man standing in the dark. He looks up at me and says, "O Vonulupeh, great lord! You Who Howl in the Forest, send away your creatures and let the game return! I cannot hunt, O Lord! The wolves drive off the deer and leave none for us. We are living on squirrels and fish, Mighty One! Soon we will starve! Let us taste venison again, and we will share it with you, I swear."

He goes on in this way for some time. Between us, one the floor, two tiny flames burn in shallow bowls, one bowl on either side of the man. Between the bowls of light is a little heap of brown fur. It is a wolf cub, dead. Its throat leaks a dark puddle on the stone, and the smell is rich and dangerous and exciting.

I have never seen this man before, nor any other man. I have never heard his language before, nor his speech, nor any other sound. Yet he prays and sacrifices to me, and I understand these things. I have never seen fire or wolves or blood or anything else, either, but I know them.

Just now, this man has promised me venison — a rich, rank taste — in huge amounts if I will chase away the wolves. So I jump to the floor, over the corpse and the fires and the man, and go about my business. Before I leave the cave, I turn back and look. The man is still standing with uplifted hands. His gaze is fixed on a picture on the stony wall — a running black wolf.

Could that be me? But I cannot be a picture on a wall. Just a few minutes ago I was with my mother and my litter mates; I was never flattened onto cold stone. Mother? Littermates? But I am new. These are my first moments. I shake my head and pad away in the dark.

I lope through the woods, wind blowing behind me. I run faster and the wind rises. I leap for the mere joy of it. In the air, the wind and I howl together. I am the howling of the wind. I am Vonulupeh, Windwolf, Master of the Game and the Pack, He Who Howls in the Forest. I run on the night air.

I find the wolf pack. Their leader follows me without hesitation, without recognition. I create for them a trail which leads far away from my supplicant.

Afterwards, I rise on the night wind and sniff the air, the moonlight, the starlight. I smell the mingling lives of trees, herbs, men, and beasts. I see the mountains lifting and hear the stones creaking. I hear Time whisper to itself about the past and future. And far away I hear the herd, the deer wandering in the dark, sleeping in tiny naps. I jump in and out of their narrow dreams and chivvy them toward the man's camp. Venison . . .

I return to my shrine and my icon on the cavern wall. The man kneels before it, sleeping erect like a deer. The dead cub still lies before his knees. I sniff at it. It is cold meat now, and will taste gamy, but I gulp

Windwolf

by Earl S. Wajenberg

Illustrations by Daniel Buckley

it down, anyway. It is mine, after all; the man gave it to me. And it is mine for another reason, which I do not yet recall.

The man wakes. He does not see me, but he looks down and sees that the wolf cub is gone. "I accept your offering," I tell him. He shudders and prostrates himself.

SUCH WAS MY FIRST NIGHT, MY FIRST sacrifice, and my first worshiper. Their images are sharp and clear to me, though the ages since are often misty.

The next day, Koll, my first worshiper, told his tribe of my sign to him. He led the hunters, though he was getting old, and brought down the first deer himself. He brought it home, skinned and dressed it, then left all the meat for me on a high rock. He did not suffer for his honesty. There were many other deer for Koll and his people; I saw to that.

At sundown the spirits of the deer came to me as I lay upon the high rock, and they reproached me. "Treacherous wolf-spirit," said the buck I had eaten, "why did you bring down men on us? Was my meat your price? You did not need it. You are beyond hunger."

"If I brought the men, I also chased away the wolves," I answered. "Do you care who hunts you? Death is death."

A doe replied, "Men take more deer than wolves do. Wolves give merciful death to the old and sick, while men take the best in the herd. Count all the fleshless spirits around you, and see!"

I sat on my rock and thought while the deer-spirits drifted like dandelion seeds around me. At length, I said, "I see justice in your complaint. I will do what I can to make amends."

The deer followed me to the hunters' camp. While Koll slept, happy in his triumph, I led them into his dream. He saw me and said. "Hail, Vonulupeh, He Who Comes Leading the Game to Men."

"Hail, Koll," I answered. "You have kept your promise to me, so no debt stands between us. However, here are others whom you owe." And I made him gaze upon the deer. "They are aggrieved," I said, "because you took so many of them from their herd and because they were not ready for death. Make sacrifice to them, as you did to me, and do not destroy their people. Obey me, or lose all the luck you gained today." Koll bowed to me and to the deer, so we withdrew and left him to dreams of his own devising.

Next morning, Koll took the hearts from the slaughtered deer and burnt them. He told his sons — and any others who would listen — that he did this to appease the anger of the deer-spirits. "We must honor them," he said, "or they will not let us catch them, and Vonulupeh will curse us. You must give each kill its heart and tell it that you are sorry but you need its meat. This is what Vonulupeh told me in my dream."

Then the souls of the deer departed, contented. And from Koll's act, I learned that the words that dreaming men hear are not always the words spoken to them.

At first, only Koll made the game offering; so, I kept good only his luck and the luck of those who heeded him. Soon his sons and brothers made the offering, then finally all the tribe. So began the custom among men of consoling their prey.

Even now I mourn that this practice failed when men took mastery of the herds and bred cattle. It would benefit your spirits to remember the lives your dinners cost and make them some apology. Or, do you need a wolf-spirit to teach courtesy and reverence?

BECAUSE I CAME TO KOLL IN DREAMS, brought the game at his prayer, and gave luck in hunting to all who made the game offering, the tribe began to name Koll my priest. This offended Vekkal, the tribal wizard.

One night, when all the tribe was gathering around the fire to hear tales, the first hunter invited Koll to sit beside him and began, "Join me, priest Koll. I must tell a story tonight, but I am tired. I will need Vonulupeh's luck to be any good." He laughed. "After all, it is your god who wore me out with all this hunting."

As Koll took his seat, Vekkal said. "Priest is a new word, Koll, from the southern tribes. Can you tell me what it means?"

Koll thought for a few moments, then said, "A priest is one who knows how to serve the gods. He prays and sacrifices in a way that pleases the spirits, so others ask him to pray for them. But I do not ask for the name of priest. Vonulupeh favored (me by his own choice.)"

"Yes, it is the spirit who chooses, not you. The spirit makes you priest or lets you go; it fulfils your prayer or ignores you, as it pleases; it sends you signs for its own ends. True?"

"True," said Koll. His voice was calm, but he and all the others waited for Vekkal's next words.

"All this reveals that you are not a wizard," Vekkal said. "If you were, you would command the spirits, not beg them. My familiar spirits come faithfully to my trances, for I know where their hearts are hidden. They bring me news and compel other spirits for me."

"Yet they could not compel the deer-spirits," Koll said. "Only Vonulupeh did that. And he gives us luck for returning their hearts."

"What if Vonulupeh had not taken a liking to you?" asked the wizard. "We would still be scrounging for minnows and chipmunks. Until my familiars stole the hearts of the deer-spirits, or learned their names, or brought me scraps of their shadows. All will work eventually. You are just lucky that Vonulupeh happens to love you."

"That is indeed a great piece of luck," said Koll. "And I would rather give my love to Vonulupeh than have the obedience of your familiars. As you say, I am not a wizard."

"No," Vekkal muttered, "you are a fool."

But Koll did not hear that, because the first hunter laughed loud just then and said, "Whatever you are, we are glad to have you. But I am rested now, and I remember a story my mother's father told me. . . ."

I did not listen to his mother's father's tale. Instead, I

lay down among the tribe's tame wolves, at the edge of the firelight, and thought on Koll's words.

THE NEXT NIGHT WAS THE DARK OF THE moon. And, reckoned from my waking at Koll's prayer, I was two and a half months old. Since that time, I had spent the nights exploring my territory. Tonight, as I sped through the dark air, two spirits rose from a stand of hemlock to meet me.

One had the form of a hairy, child-sized man. Over his face, he wore a wooden mask, carved in a frantic pattern of triangles. The other was a skeleton crow, bare but for the tattered feathers on its wings. Though I was still formless as the wind, they saw and flew towards me.

I fled.

I know now a hundred ways I could have eluded them. And my power is now so great that I could have let them catch me and then crush them. But I was young then; all I could do was flee.

I dove into the grasses and hid among the whispering drafts, but the crow and the goblin came swooping on me like falcons on a field mouse. I leapt into the forest and roared through the trees, weaving a trail of swaying confusion. But they unfurled a net between two trees and nearly caught me. I jumped over the net and flew, howling across the mountain tops; but, the two evil ones flew at my tail, the net between them. At last, I climbed straight up, summoning all the speed I could; but those two climbed faster, and I became weak from the thinning of the air. They wrapped my power in their net, which was fine enough to hold the wind, and dropped back to earth.

I still struggled. I assumed my wolf shape, then clawed and snapped at the magical weave. I could get no purchase on the thing.

"Die," the bird-skull croaked. "Abandon this airy body and die — this is your best hope."

I tried. I let go of the wolf shape and of the air, then tried to leave, to fade away, to shun the world. I failed. The two monsters drew me toward the camp, and I guessed who they were. "You are Vekkal's familiars," I said.

"Two of them," the crow replied. "He has many. He will have you."

"Why do you do his evils for him?" I asked.

"For the same reason you will," said the crow. "We have no choice. As he devoured the essence of our power, so he will devour yours. If I had pity to spare, I would pity you."

We flew on through the dark sky. The goblin's silence became a greater horror to me than the rotted crow. "Why does your friend not speak?" I asked.

"His mask has no mouth," the skeleton replied.

"Then why not take off the mask?"

The crow chuckled. "Turn around, Uthalamietok," it told the other. After the goblin had pivoted in the air, I saw the back of the mask: He was hollow behind, like an eaten-out melon.

I remained silent, then wondered what terrible form awaited me in Vekkal's service.

We flew over the camp. Though guards stood near the watch fires, they did not see the invaders in the air. The familiars landed before the flap of Vekkal's tent and pulled me in. Vekkal lay in a shallow trench, with heavy stones upon his belly. A fire of green wood filled the tent with smoke.

Then the familiars dragged me into Vekkal's trance. There, I fought, bit, and clawed with new frenzy; but still the magic net defeated me. Soon, I lay before him in his own darkness, the net tightly wound about me. Vekkal stood above me, now dressed in robes of colored feathers, and smiled.

"Here is the great god Vonulupeh," he said, "who gives game and luck, who drives away the wolves. Welcome to my service, Windwolf." He reached into the dark and grasped. A knife appeared in his hands, the flint blade shining like a cloud in the moonlight. He licked his lips. "It has been a long time since I tasted a new power." He knelt beside me and slit my belly through the net.

I was wind. My belly was air, and I howled through the hole in the net. I threw my full force at the two familiars, who stood on the borders of the trance. The crow burst into a shower of bones and feathers. I tore the mask off the goblin, and he vanished instantly. Fast and cunning they were, but not strong.

I blew out of the dream and into the smoky air. I churned the air and scattered the fire, but the tent held me as securely as the net had. I drove for the flap, but a new presence blocked the way — something cold, heavy, still, and strong.

"I bound that spirit in a rock," said Vekkal. His body still lay in the trench, but he stood beside it in his robe of plumes. "It gave me much trouble in the capturing. But do not fear the same for yourself; you have done nothing that I did not expect. Rarakun! Uthalamietok!" The crow and the goblin re-formed before him and advanced on me.

Again, I blew through them; and again, they dispersed. Vekkal stood behind them, arms wide, mouth open to inhale. He would suck me in like the savor off roast meat! I became wolf in the air and struck him in the chest. He stabbed with his knife as he fell, but I became wind again at the first prick.

I re-formed by his body and snapped at his throat. My teeth jarred on stone. One of the stones that lay on his belly had moved to shield his throat. The stones moved again and again to shield his face, groin, arms, and legs. They moved as fast as thought — and much faster than wind.

Vekkal laughed. "No careful wizard leaves his body unprotected."

I snarled and leapt at his other throat — the throat of his spirit-self. He brought up his knife arm. I savaged his wrist, but at the same time he pierced my throat. Busy at my own work, I did not notice until the blood flowed. Then I felt a strange tug in my mind and knew that Vekkal felt the same. Both of us stopped struggling.

"Well, wolf," he said, "we each have drawn the other's blood. Do you know what that means? I do!" Then

he drove the knife deep into my neck — such an attack would have killed a fleshly creature — and became wolf. We snapped and struggled for each other's throats.

In answer to his master's will, the goblin sprang into the fight and tried to hold me down. The moving stones leapt from Vekkal's body like toads, then pressed down on me. I tried to become wind, but the knife in my throat prevented it. More goblin shapes appeared and seized my legs and head.

Vekkal stood over me and bared his fangs. "Now Koll must say farewell to priesthood."

Then I remembered Koll, who said he loved me. Koll was sleeping not a hundred paces away. I howled into his dreams, "Koll, Koll, help me! Vekkal would eat my heart!"

I doubted that he heard — or that he would come soon enough. Vekkal did not hear, but neither did he tear my belly with his fangs. He stared at me, unmoving, then returned to human shape.

As he glanced at my neck, I laughed and spoke to him for the first time. "You must cut out my heart with your spirit-knife. But if you take it from my neck, I will blow away. Your knife has two edges, wizard!"

Vekkal scowled at me. "Then I will not take it out." He knelt down beside me and pulled the knife from the side of my neck to the base of my collarbone, cutting half of my throat. He began sawing away at the bone. I closed my eyes and set my mind on holding in the blood.

After some time, Vekkal stopped and stood. "This needs more strength," he said aloud to himself.

Leaving his familiars to hold me down, he staggered back to his body and vanished into it. Then he rose from his trench, knelt again beside me, and sawed with fresh vigor. I felt my bones begin to yield.

Then the tent flap snapped open. My priest had heard the prayer of his god. Roaring, he snatched Vekkal's hand from my chest. The spirit-knife came with it.

I was wind and free. I blew out through the open flap and resumed wolf shape. I was whole and unwounded. A great clamor came from the tent; Koll was still in there, with Vekkal and all his familiars. I flew back in.

It had only been seconds since I had left, but already Vekkal had Koll in my place, had him held down by his goblins. When I entered, the spirit-knife fell. I heard Vekkal's heart beat twice before I tore his throat out. It beat seven times more, then stopped. But Koll's heart had also stopped. He was not a spirit to survive the piercing of his neck.

Koll, I still regret your death, though you would be dead four hundred times over by now. If only I had stayed and trusted my renewed freedom, you might have lived out your span!

But all remained still within the tent, for nothing breathed or moved. The familiars had vanished. I was free and alone. I sat up and bayed my grief.

"My lord," said Koll. I looked down and saw him struggling within his flesh. "My lord, I would bow before you, but I cannot rise."

"Koll," I told him, "you are dead. Leave your body and go where you will. But before you go, ask anything you want of me.

You saved me, and I should have saved you."

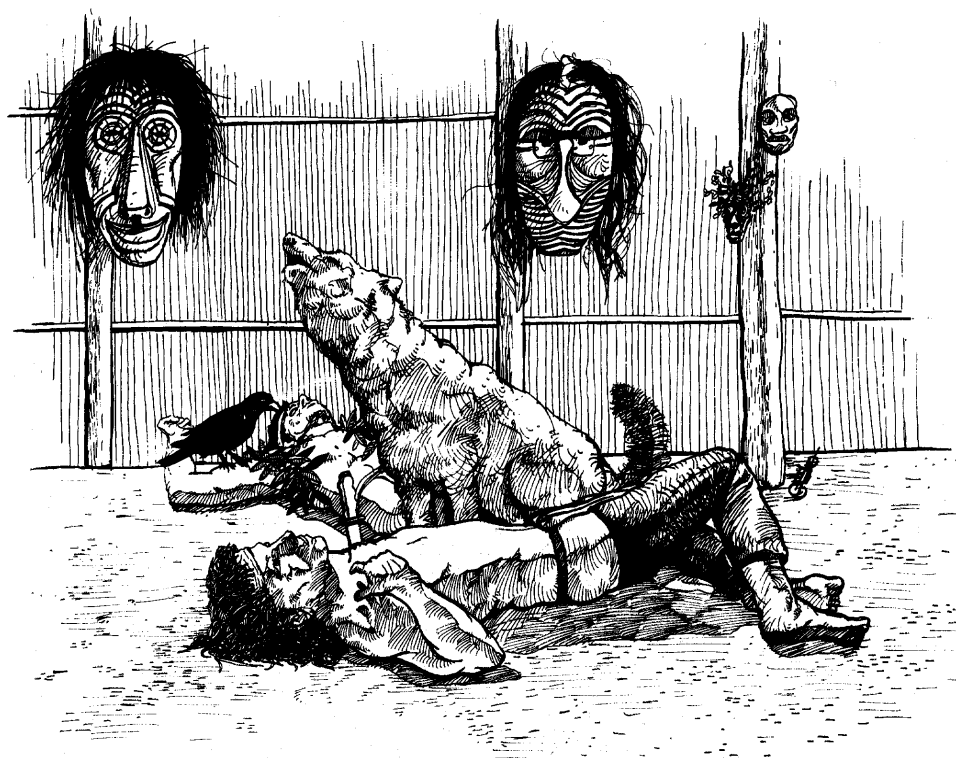
"He cannot rise," croaked a voice. I turned and saw the crow, Rarakun, perched on Vekkal's chest. But now he was no horror of bones and ragged feathers; he was complete and as handsome as a crow may be.

"Have you come back to reclaim your heart?" I asked.

"We all did that when Vekkal's heart stopped," Rarakun answered.

"Now the others are chasing Vekkal through the night. When we catch him, we will devise a revenge. I came back for his eyes. But your worshiper cannot rise until you take the knife out of his neck."

I tried to pull it out,



but the handle was too smooth. It slipped between my teeth. "Koll, do I hurt you?" I asked.

"No, lord, I feel nothing."

The crow plucked out one eye and swallowed it.

"Take man shape," it advised.

"I cannot," I said. "My only shapes are wolf and wind."

"No longer," said the crow. "Think. Vekkal took wolf shape after drawing your blood, and you drew his in the same moment. Only will it, and the thing is done."

So I stood on my hind legs and wished for fingers. Presently, I had them. I drew the knife from Koll's neck, and he stood up before me, fleshless. He stared into my face, wondering. "I hope I do not look like Vekkal," I said to him.

"No, lord," he said, prostrating himself quickly.

"But I have never seen you in human form before, and you are very beautiful."

"Thank you. Rise, Koll. I am greatly in your debt. What would you ask of me?"

He rose and looked about uneasily. "Lord, I must go and . . . and meet someone. But I know not whom, and the night is full of demons."

"I know that well enough," I said. "Come., I will take you where the deer go when they are slain, and I will guard you on the way."

We left Vekkal's tent to the crow and set out across the night air. I took wolf shape and led Koll to the great rock where he gave me my first buck. From there, I nosed out a trail I had often noticed but never followed. It ran across a plain of darkness that seemed remote even as we trod it. There, we met a creature made of sparkling-lights, the Morning Star in the midst of the Pleiades.

"I was coming for you, Koll," it said. "But I see Vonulupeh has brought you half the distance."

Koll smiled and began to shine, too. My human shape could not have been more beautiful than his. "I will come with you," he told the light.

"And you, Vonulupeh?" it asked. "Do you wish to

come now?"

I stared into the light, puzzled. "But are you not the Guide of the Dead?"

"Yes. Do you not know what you are?"

"I am Vonulupeh," I answered.

"Before you were Vonulupeh, Vonulupeh was a dream. And you were a wolf cub. And you" — the Guide turned toward Koll — "had a gift like Vekkal's: You were able to shape the way in which spirits touch the world. Vonulupeh was nothing but a tale — born of howling wind and night terror — until you prayed to him at the end of the famine. You prepared a place in the world for a one who would hear your prayer. And there was a newly freed soul: the wolf cub you had sacrificed. It took the place that you prepared, and here he is — Vonulupeh."

I thought back on my first night. "Then I have a mother and littermates among the tame wolves of Koll's camp."

"Yes," the Guide said, "so far as a spirit has any kin. In another way, you are kin to Koll Godmaker. But now decide. Will you come with Koll and me?"

I looked at the dark stillness around us. Koll and the Guide were also still, as quiet as the stars at the edge of the air. "You are asking me to die," I said.

"To finish dying," the Guide answered. "But I do not ask you. Come with us or return, as you will."

"Koll," I said, "I will come if you will it. You are my maker, and I name you master. But this very night we both fought hard for my life."

Koll laughed. "I have worshiped the work of my own hands, but I do not regret it. You have only started to live, my Vonulupeh. Return to the world and be worthy of your godhood."

I became human and knelt before him. "I will bring my blessing on your family to the tenth generation."

"Go," said the Guide. "Return at your own will."

I became wind and blew back into the world. Alas, Koll! You were my maker, my first worshiper, my first friend, and my first human sacrifice. You could not stay in the world . . . and I could not bear to leave.

Write on!

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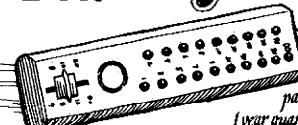
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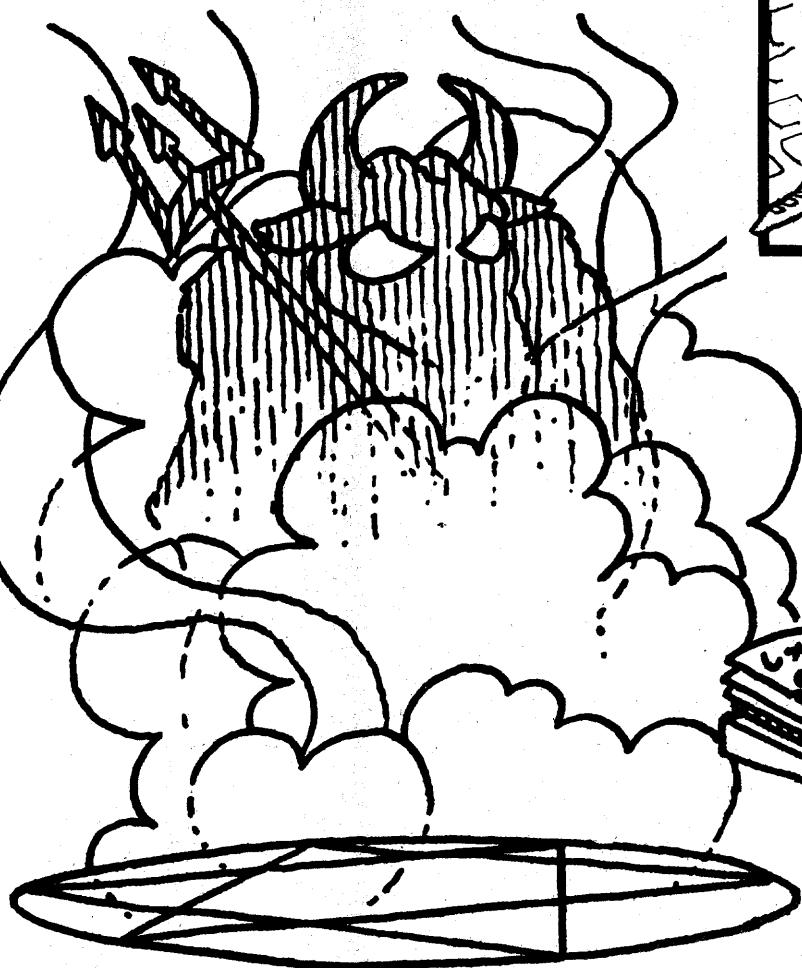
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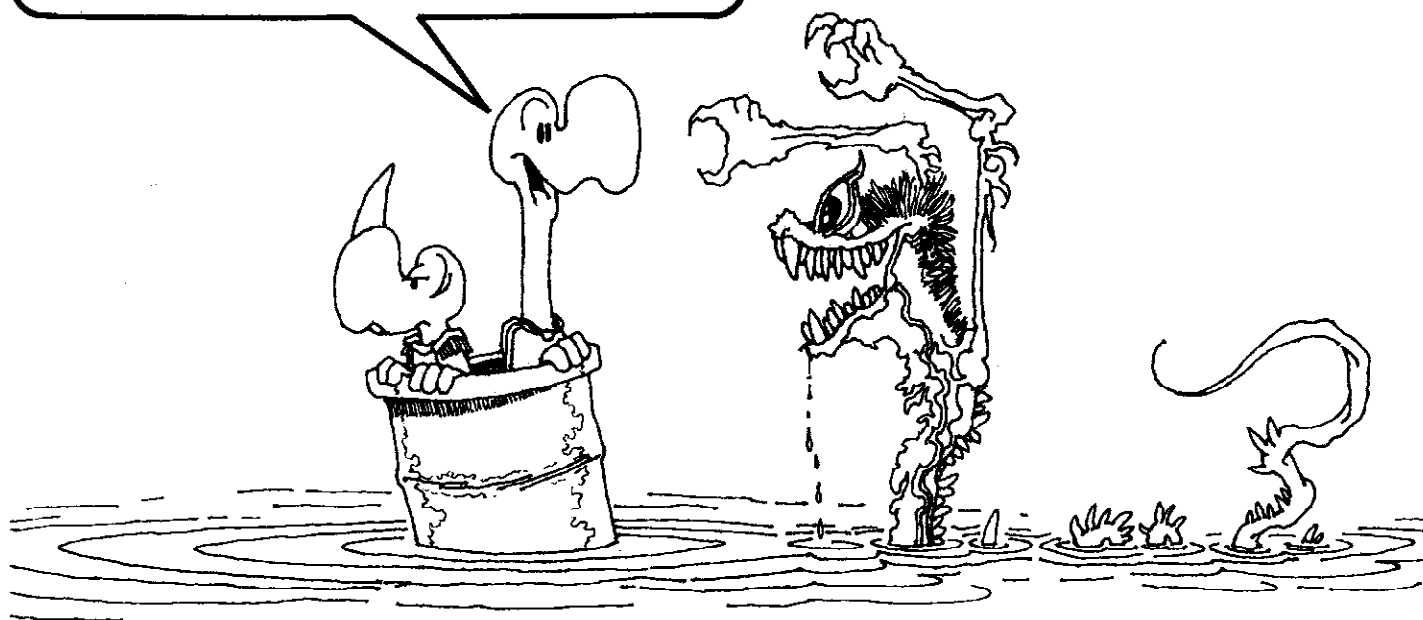
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Heimstadter

Tal Alan

Introducing Talmadge Quinlan and Alan Heimstadt, preparing for a gaining convention.

Let me at the monsters! Let me at the monsters!

by Kurt Erichsen

#1

What, exactly, is in these boxes, Tal?

What's in them? Why, I am Dungeon Master, Lord of the entire universe you're about to bravely sally forth in upon.

But as I am powerful, so am I merciful. Since this will be your first con, I'll explain.

I've played *Monsters and Misanthropes* for ten years, and designed a world of *Sweat and Sorcery* quests down to the minutest detail.

Ah! So all these notebooks contain your world.

All except the map.

--The map?

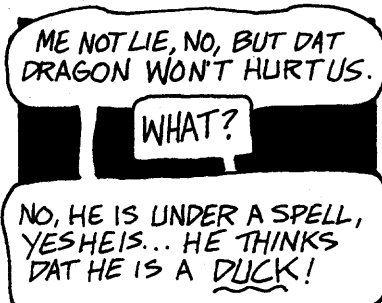
Well, don't just stand there-- help me get it into the car!

KURT ERICHSEN

SNARFQUEST

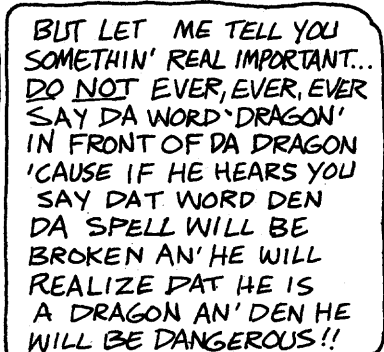
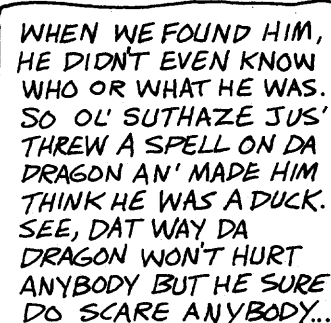
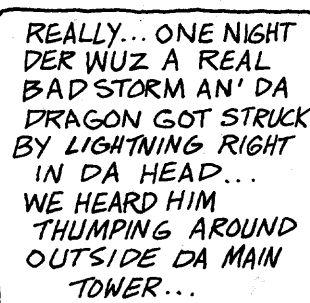
#7 BY ELMORE





WHAT?

NO, HE IS UNDER A SPELL, YES HE IS... HE THINKS DAT HE IS A DUCK!



OK... IF THIS DRAGON THINKS THAT HE IS A DUCK, THEN YOU GO IN FIRST, OL' BUDDY.

YEAH... YOU GO ON IN AN' SEE IF DAT 'DRAGON' QUACKS.

SURE, BUT DON'T SAY DAT WORD, 'DRAGON' OR WE ALL WILL GET FRIED.

SO IN THEY GO...

HELLO, WILLIE... YOU LOOK FINE TONIGHT.. REAL FINE.

WILLIE?

GOOD GRIEF.

QUACK... HI GEETHEL.

WE GOTTA GET HIM A BIGGER BOWL.

WHAT ITH GOIN' ON... QUACK... GEETHEL, I HEARD A HORRIBLE YELL A MOMENT AGO... QUACK...

OH DAT... UMMM IT WAS DA NEW DOORBELL.

WE NEED TO PICK UP A FEW ITEMS FOR SUTHAZE... OK?

THIS IS RIDICULOUS!

LOOK AT ALL DAT TREASURE.

GO RIGHT AHEAD, GEETHEL. QUACK

WE NEED TO PICK UP A WAND... AND SOME GOLD AND A FEW BIG JEWELS.

QUACK

OK... HE KEEPS ALL DA WANDS OVER HERE.

DER DEY ARE... ALL KINDS OF WANDS. SOME OF DIS STUFF SUTHAZE PICKED UP WHILE HE WAS TIME-JUMPING... WE THINK SOME OF IT COULD BE MAGIC.

\$ CHEEEE\$

WHAT DO WE DO WIF ALL DESE WANDS... WHICH ONE IS ETHEAH'S?

I DON'T KNOW, JUS' GET ALL OF 'EM!

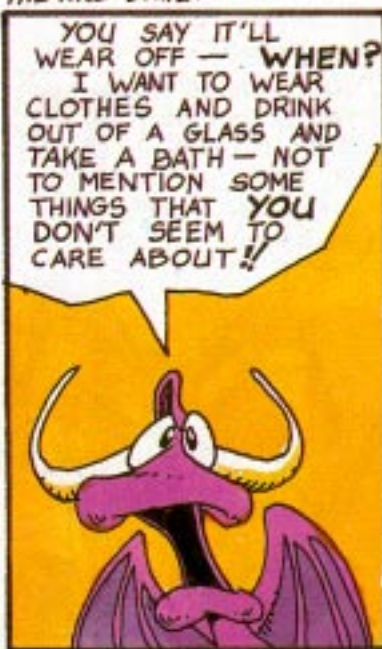
WHAT ABOUT ALL OF DIS WEIRD LOOKIN' STUFF?

LEAVE IT. WE KNOW THAT JUNK DOESN'T BELONG TO HER...

PLEASE HURRY.

FOLLOW ME, YOU MORONS, THEY'VE TAKEN A SECRET PASSAGE TO THE TREASURY. WE'LL CATCH 'EM THERE.

NEXT ISSUE: AS OUR GANG ESCAPES THEY GET SIDETRACKED BY... (YES- YOU GUESSED IT...) A BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN!



BOTH SORCERY & PSIONICS ARE USEFULL WHEN LOOKING FOR OBJECTS- AND DO ABOUT AN EQUALLY GOOD JOB OF IT.

OH YEAH? WELL I DON'T KNOCK OUT MY FRIENDS WHEN I'VE GOT A HEADACHE!

AND I DON'T HAVE TO GO ROOTING ABOUT IN THE ENTRAILS OF A PIG TO REMEMBER WHERE I PUT MY CAR KEYS!

SOMETIMES ALL OTHER METHODS FAIL AND THEN YOU HAVE TO TAKE DRASTIC MEASURES.

SMALL PURPLE DRAGON?

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INFORMATION

GRAND CENTRAL

AH HA!- AND YOU ARE!

ARE YOU CRAZY?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

LOOKING FOR YOU! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT I WENT THRU-

GRUMP

HEY DIXIE - IS THIS GUY BOTHERING YOU?

WANT US TO TAKE CARE OF HIM?

HO HO GENTS- I'M BUT A FRIEND OF THE LADY.

RIGHT DIXIE?

SPINK!

DIXIE?

C'MON DIX- QUIT CLOWNIN' AROUND!

GROWP?

NEXT MONTH - HOW TO GAME WITH BROKEN BONES...

GROWP?

..IF I'M LUCKY.

8 WORMY





The forum

(From page 8)

"ignoring" women. I have played AD&D for two years and read the magazine for nearly as long, and I do not feel that AD&D is a "male-oriented" game, nor is DRAGON a "male-oriented" magazine. For example, in the Players Handbook, most of the entries that can refer to

either male or female characters are stated as "his or her." I also think that a slight strength penalty for female characters is not sexist; it is actually rather generous, if you consider that the AD&D game is based on a medieval society, in which women were rarely allowed out of the house! Compare this to a game like the one described in the book *Fantasy Wargaming*, in which female player characters suffer penalties such as -2 to charisma and -3 to social class!

I must also commend DRAGON Magazine for its fairness. The women we frequently see on the covers of the magazine have been anything but weak and helpless, and are certainly clad in more than chain-mail bikinis. I can even remember that one old issue of DRAGON contained an article which strongly discouraged the use of rape and pregnancy in campaigns.

Laurel Golding
Grosse Ile, Mich.

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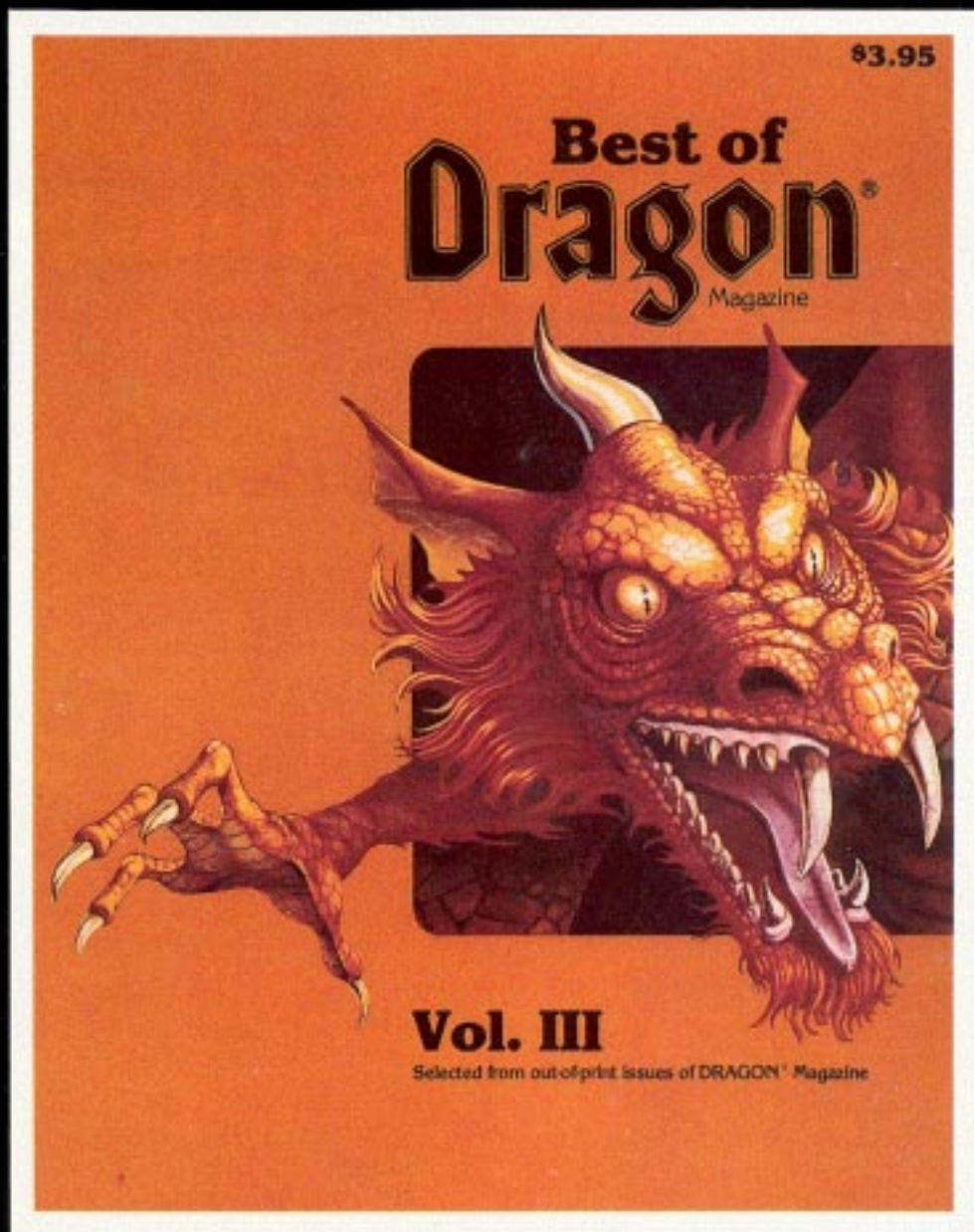
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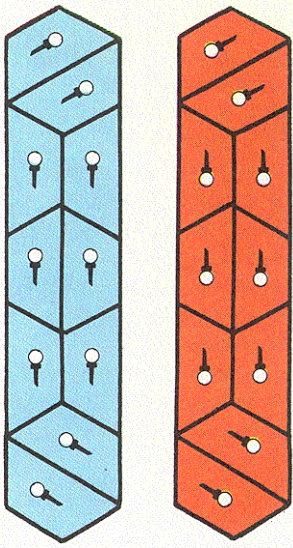
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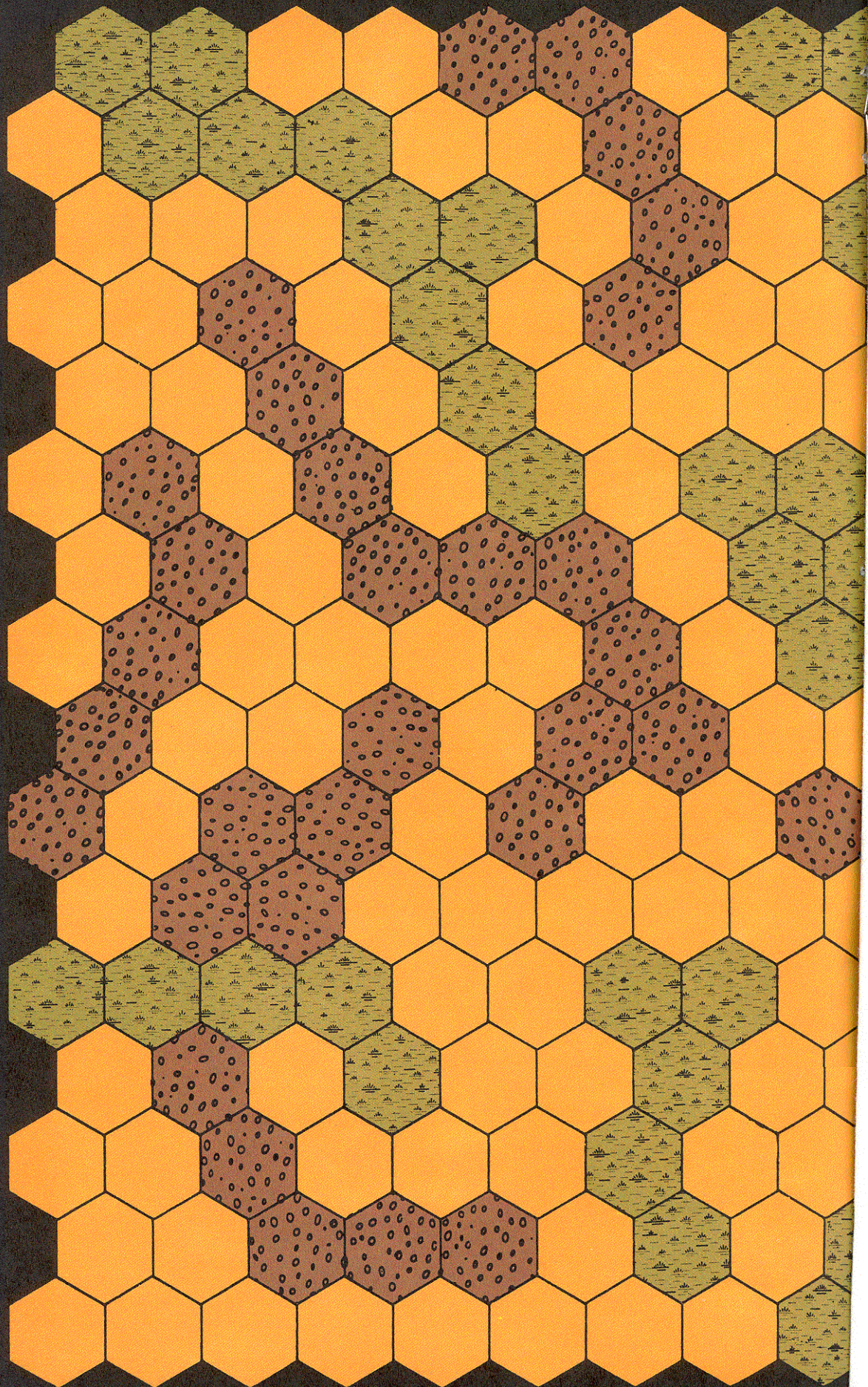
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L 2	L 2		L 2
L 2	L 2		L 2

	F 4		T 3
S 6	F 4		T 3
S 6	F 4		T 3
S 6	F 4		T 3
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