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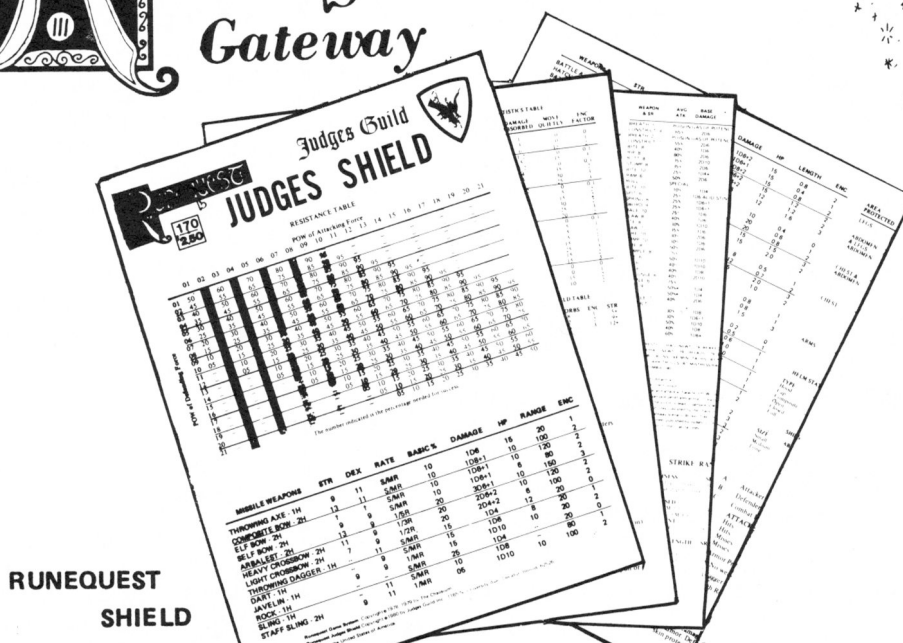
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ARTISTS

FRONT COVER: Steve Oliff.
INTERIORS: Patrick Jenkins, Paul Jaquays, Liz Danforth, Buster Salanoa, Reed Stover, Adriana, Rick Becker, Alexis Gilliland, Valerie Olson.

AWARDS

On page 36 of this issue is the list of ORIGINS Awards nominees. The final balloting will take place at ORIGINS '80 with the attendees voting for their favorite in each category. The completed ballots will be collected Friday and Saturday, tabulated Saturday night, and winners announced Sunday. Results will appear in the next issue of *Different Worlds*.

While many of you will not be able to vote in the ORIGINS Awards, you can still cast your votes for your favorites in the Strategists Club Awards. See page 37 for instructions and list of nominees.

Voting in these awards is one way of participating and helping out in our hobby. It's simple, cheap, and fun. Due to the closeness of past results every vote still counts, don't waste yours. Help your favorites get the recognition they deserve by voting.

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ehara



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Nr. 1 Sold Out

Nr. 2 Apr/May 1979
Beginner's Brew; Review of *Legacy*; Specialty Mages Part 2; Character Name Tables; My Life & Role-Playing Continued!; *Starships & Spacemen* Expansion Kit; Arduin, Bloody Arduin; The Cacodemon Cult; Dramatic Structure of RPGs; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr. 3 Jun/Jul 1980
Review of *Bushido*; My Life & Role-Playing 3; Research and Rules; Specialty Mages Part 3; Role-Playing: How to Do It; Druid's Valley; The Three Feathered Rivals Cult; New Clerical Cure System; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr. 4 Aug/Sep 1979
Games to Gold; Beginner's Brew; Kirk on Karit 2; Enchanted Weapons Table; A Perspective on Role-Play; Waha's Quest; Letter from Gigi.

Nr. 5 Oct/Nov 1979
Arduin for the Masses; Games to Gold Update; Developing a Character's Appearance; Some Greek Gods: The Cult of Apollo; My Life and Role-Playing Cont.; Encounter Systems; To Be or Not To Be a Pure Strain Human That Is the Question!; Clippings; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr. 6 Dec/Jan 1980
Gangster: An Overview; Super Rules for *Superhero: 2044*; Finding Level in *RuneQuest*; How to Make Monsters Interesting; Vardy Combat System Part 1; The World of *Crane*; Insanity Table; The Cult of Gestetner; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr. 7 Apr/May 1980
Ten Days in the Arena of Khazan; *Cults of Prax* Review; Gloranthan Birthday Tables; Vardy Combat System Part 2; Foundchild Cult; *In the Labyrinth* Review; Power Groups and Player Characters in RPGs; Metal Marvels; System Snobbery; Oriental Weapons for *RQ*; A Letter from Gigi.

LOOKING FOR MORE GAMERS IN YOUR LIFE?

Looking for other gamers? *Different Worlds* will run notices for our readers that are looking for more players for their games. Simply send us your name, address (with zip!) and/or phone number (with area code!). If you only send a phone number you must at least give your city, state, and zip. Give the RPG systems that you are interested in (if you are also interested in playing other types of games, add "general games" or "board wargames"). Let us know the number of issues in which you want the notice to appear—maximum of six to keep the list updated. If you wish to remain listed after the six issues, simply send another notice. If you do not specify the number of appearances, it will run only once. This service is open to anyone and is free until further notice.



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BETTER GAME MASTERING

Teaching Role-Playing

By Robert Harder

Ever wonder why role-playing games (RPGs) are not played by more people? One reason is that certain Game Masters (GMs) may be excellent for experienced players but should not be running first level adventures. Most people become GMs because they desire to utilize all the neat complex structures of the game system. Invoking all this on beginners is the quickest way of losing new players. Others will soon hear that the game is boring, complex, time consuming and that everyone got killed off. This gives role-playing a bad reputation.

So, what makes a good GM for beginners and what does not? First and foremost, an adventure is a social gathering and should be organized and planned as such. Invite from two to four people and inform them of when the adventure starts and when it will end. The total time should not exceed three hours and should have a formal 15 minute break at the hour and a half mark. Do not continue the game during the break. Pay attention to the personalities invited. Avoid those who must bring their little ones, those who are always late, or those who bring uninvited friends along. Consider the feelings of those who are smokers, non-smokers, drinkers, and non-drinkers. Either run an adventure consisting of young people or one of adults, do not mix the two. But do try to mix the sexes. Too many adventures consist of all males. Females enhance an adventure and should be given a character that will be very involved in the action.

The biggest mistake is to invite an experienced person. Although the experienced person will tell you they will "lay back" and play a retiring cleric, a campaign is a campaign and they will overshadow the group every time. They also

have a tendency to boast and show their prowess to the neophytes. Overall, they inhibit both the party and the GM. In this setting, the GM is the experienced person, helper, teacher, and lastly, Game Master.

When designing and running this adventure you, the GM, should K.I.S.S. the adventure often—Keep It Simple Stupid! Assume your party knows nothing of role-playing rules. Introduce and describe only the rules you plan to use



during the adventure and design the adventure around those rules. For example, if there are no undead creatures in the adventure, do not inform the cleric of their ability to dispel the undead. Rules extraneous to the adventure will waste time and detract from the enjoyment of the game. This enjoyment also hinges around the type of adventure. Make it out of the ordinary, like a dungeon or an abandoned space station. Village adventures with offending creatures at taverns and evil merchants should be avoided as it too closely resembles real life.

As Mr. Krank noted in his article "Mastering Your First Adventure" in *Different Worlds 4*, the adventure gets started sooner if the GM has a set of characters prepared. Put each character on a separate sheet of paper and list in an organized fashion, the statistics for that character. Explicitly label the "hits to kill," the "savings modifiers," and the "to hit modifiers." Avoid notation! The person playing the character will not what "+2TH/+1M/+3SvsP" means. Include the abilities of the character in terms of seeing, listening, finding things and so forth. List each weapon carried and the damage dice that are used with it. Outfit the character with just those articles they will need for this adventure. For those characters with spells, write the spell on a 3"x5" card and note how the spell might be used. Under no circumstances should you hand them a 100 page book of spells and say "pick three." Some of you are now saying that all that information would take ten pages to write up. No, you missed the point. Only include the information needed for that three hour adventure. Introduce the other information later in another adventure. This sheet is all that person knows about the game, so make it useful. If during the game you, the GM, are wondering why the !t+\$/&* dwarf doesn't use their infravision, it may be that the !t+\$/&* GM didn't tell the dwarf they had infravision. Too often beginners have no idea how to organize all their character information. This character sheet gives them a format in which to organize future characters. You may also want to make up a tally sheet for hit points, experience points, treasure, and other aspects of the character that change often. After all, how many times have you heard, "I have 423 hit points left."

After reviewing the character sheets you may wish to clarify the different dice used. I once watched four beginners call out hit numbers between 11 and 20 on a D20 until the GM got wise

and designated the black as high and green as low.

The group is now ready for your three hour adventure, but where does one find such an adventure? If Uncle Sam had not dealt 23 hit points of damage to my first level company last month, I would have recommended mine. In lieu of that, design your own. Create it around a main objective and have sub-objectives that lead up to completing the main objective. Have each sub-objective or encounter last about 15 to 60 minutes and arrange it so that each sub-objective must be met.

For example, suppose the main objective is to obtain a statue from somewhere for a church. The statue is located in a locked room in an old temple. Recently some thieves stole the magical key to that room. The party reaches the old temple and explores the first room. The sub-objective here would be to find the secret door that leads to the second room. The second room contains the passageway leading to the room with the statue. However, the thieves are in the second room and the party must fight the thieves for the magical key. Just as the last thief is overcome, she tosses the key into another room. This room is full of traps and of course, the key lands way in the back. The sub-objective here is to get around the traps and get the key. Once this is accomplished the group head to the statue

room. Inside, they find a very high level neutral monster. The objective is to bargain with the creature for the statue and return to the church. There are four encounters here and all of them must be experienced to complete the objective of fetching the statue. Beginner's times will be about 20 minutes for the first room, 50 minutes for the fight, 30 minutes for the traps and 20 minutes for the bargaining. With a 15 minute break and 45 minutes for first level confusion, that totals about three hours.

Now with only four encounters how can we make this exciting? Characters develop in four basic areas:

- 1) basic abilities—strength, intelligence, etc.
- 2) amount of experience
- 3) types of items and magical items they possess
- 4) amount of gold and wealth

Experience seems to be the most important item sought since it develops the character and too often experience is given only for killing. The GM then wonders why supposedly lawful-good characters play chaotic-evil roles! Experience points should be given for useful and intelligent actions as well as fighting and casting spells. Since all good role-playing articles must have a table, I devised one of suggested actions that yield experience. The table also gives experience points for certain actions connect-

EXPERIENCE TABLE

Action	Points
Finding a secret door	5
Finding a trap	10
Disarming a trap	40
Hearing something	5
Casting a spell	30
Bargaining (to the group)	50
Finding an object	5

For Specific Actions to the Sample Adventure:

Finding correct secret door	10
Finding special tool in room (in lieu of above)	15
Using special tool to disarm trap (in lieu of above)	50
Using special herb in room 3	25
Using chandelier for fight	35
Pulling bookcase in room 2 over in fight	35
Not killing all the thieves (to the group)	50
Using one of the thieves to get the key (to the group)	50
Fetching the key (to the group)	100
Killing the creature in room 4 (to the group)	-300
Bargaining with the creature in room 4 (to the group)	100
Returning statue to church (to the group)	600

ed with each encounter for the sample adventure just mentioned. For example, in room one, there is a special tool to disarm a trap in room three. One of the thieves in room two has a special herb that is enticing to the monster in the statue room. Experience is given in the Experience Table for the party's actions with these articles.

In one magazine, I read the clues should be as vague as possible. My experience differs. Properly formulated clues that are useful and necessary to completing objectives keep interest at a high level. The players are always trying to figure out the puzzle. Most good fiction has a plot or mystery to solve from clues and hints. Have your adventure possess the same qualities.

Also fill your adventure with small items to investigate and small obstacles to overcome. These can be inscriptions along walls with clues, plants and vines along the floor, or a caved in portion with debris that must be removed in order to continue. Keep these things interesting and potentially useful but limit them to things that can be done in five minutes or less. And of course, give a few points of experience for intelligent behavior with the items or obstacles.

All these ideas can keep interest in the game, but if there are a few overzealous players hogging the action and getting all the experience, then try this. Make a form with the following head-

ings: Melee Round, Action, Item in Hand. Inform the group that when you, the GM, says "Action!" they have 15 seconds to write down their reactions to whatever you tell them is occurring. If at the end of the time limit, nothing is written down, then it is assumed that the person stood there in shock. Allow the players to discuss what is happening, but at the end of the time, all reactions must be on paper. Review quickly what each person wrote to get a feel for the confusion and then proceed to resolve the actions player by player. Besides forcing individual thought and action and toning down the role of the caller, this technique brings a certain degree of honesty to the force. Haven't we all modified our actions during a round based on what happened to our fellow adventurers?

At times, this technique creates quite a comical show and is actually more realistic. People are often running into each other or a monster comes down the hall and everyone runs into a room, except the poor cleric. Once one of my parties were gathering around a door and could hear someone on the other side. Clues had indicated some dim-witted creatures (gnorcs) were roaming in the area. At that point I said, "The door flies open and a room full of gnorcs are staring at you, you have 30 seconds. Action!" Everyone grabbed their pencils and started writing. Immediately the wi-

ly cleric yelled out, "Everyone, hands to the wall or you die!" The result of the round was:

one cleric preparing a light spell
one magic user with drawn sword
seven gnorcs and two fighters with their hands up against the wall

Actions such as these are best when played with miniature figures on a gridded surface. Each player can then move their piece according to their written action and show the GM what they did.

Overall, keep a beginning adventure simple with lots of action leading to the accomplishment of the objective. The will help the problem of escalation discussed by Mr. Krank. After one of these adventures, the party usually has some gold, some magical items and a healthy amount of experience. But most important, they have a good feeling about role-playing.

Remember, you learned role-playing in spite of your GM and the materials available. The attitude, "I learned the hard way, so can everyone else," went out with the buggy whip. Teach your players and they will continue to enjoy your world and come back for new ones.



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SLEEP VS. MIXED PARTIES

By John T. Sapienza, Jr.

The Sleep spell is the most popular of offensive spell for low level magic users in *Dungeons & Dragons*, for it is the only area spell available before the mage reaches fifth level and can learn spells like Fireball and Lightning Bolt. Yet the spell description is very vague, saying only that it either affects so many L1s, or so many L2s, or so many L3s, or a single L4. It doesn't tell you the shape or volume of the spell, or its range, nor does it tell you what to do when it is used on parties of more than one level. You have no problem when using it on a party of Orcs, which are always of the same level; but what do you do when confronted with a band of human bandits, of whom the rules expressly provide for leaders of higher level than the rest? And what is the effect when they throw Sleep on your own party? I suggest that the best solution is to redefine the spell.

This system is simple, easy to remember, handles mixed parties with ease, and lends itself to development of higher spell order versions, if the GM wants to allow characters to research them. For example, Sleep II would affect 4D4 L1s, plus 3D4 L2s, plus 2D4 L3s, plus 1D4 L4s, plus one L5, at one spell order higher than Sleep I. Or you might allow a Sleep Monster of the same specifications as Sleep, but at three spell orders higher, to allow players to use Sleep on really large creatures (who tend, of course, to have excellent saving throws), on lycanthropes, and enchanted monsters (but not on undead, or demons, and probably not on other heavy monsters such as dragons; use a degree of restraint on what you allow into your world, since you will have to live with it evermore). The high order versions of Sleep are not as serious as they may seem, since they are limited on the number and level of victims, and a save means there is no effect while for most other spells there is at least half damage on a save. And it simply lacks the sheer

violent power of a Fireball, Lightning Bolt, or their counterparts in high order spells. But, in any case, the mechanics of the basic Sleep spell are what this article is about, and I think you will find them an improvement.

SLEEP SPELL

Sleep affects 3D4 L1s, plus 2D4 L2s, plus 1D4 L3s, plus one L4. Every potential victim gets a save vs. magic, which not only helps make up for the larger number affected but also eliminates the oddity of a no-saving-throw spell at such a low spell order. Range and mechanics are identical to a Fireball — 24" range of cast, opens into a 40' diameter sphere that deforms to fill an area when there are solid obstructions. In case of doubt as to who is affected, the creatures closest to the center of the sphere (the hit point) are affected first, then outward until the number rolled for effect are reached. If there is no creature in the area affected of one or more of the possible levels subject to the spell, those potential victims are lost; you can't carry over possible points to other levels to catch more victims (such a system is possible but gets unduly complicated). A victim who fails his saving throw falls into deep magical slumber, from which it is possible to be awakened by strong attempts (such as a solid kick), which give the victim a new saving throw; otherwise, it wears off in an hour.

The spell affects any natural creature of up to human size of the appropriate level (hit dice), or half the number of larger creatures. Natural creatures include humans, elves, orcs, kobolds, etc., and all natural animals such as wolves, eagles, horses, etc. It does not include undead, enchanted monsters, lycanthropes, spirits, demons, dragons, and other creatures in the "monsters" category.

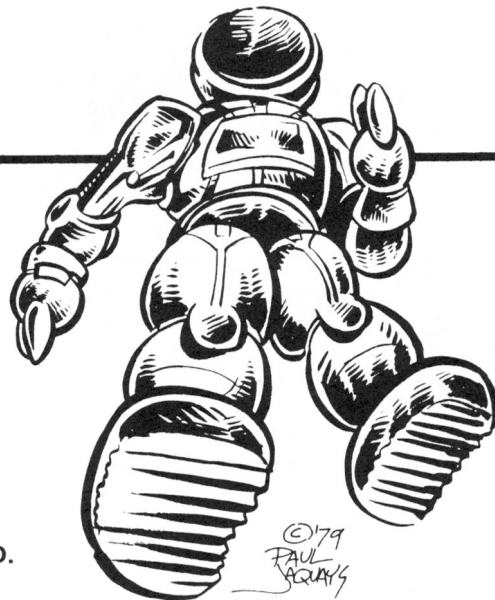
There have been arguments concerning Sleep being excessively powerful a spell for first spell order. I am inclined to agree with this, as Sleep against low levels under the no-saving-throw system of the original rule can wipe out a small party of Orcs on a good 2D8 roll. This is one reason I give the spell a saving throw. Another problem with Sleep is that if it works, you completely overcome the victim at a blow, instead of merely weakening the total number of hit points left to the victim as in most other offensive spells. Since it is easy to slit the throats of sleeping bodies, this makes Sleep a low order relative of the Cloudkill spell, which is a fifth order spell. So it may make better sense to move Sleep up to third order, the same as Fireball, giving the magic user the choice of being able to blast a large number of victims or to attempt to get the unburned goods of a smaller number. This of course leaves the low level mage without a major spell, but for this purpose I suggest making Fear available at first spell order. This spell would operate much the same as the Sleep spell in numbers affected at a given level. But instead of dropping those who fail to save in their tracks, it would make them turn and run away, taking their equipment with them — you broke their morale, but you didn't scare them silly. This will serve the same tactical purpose that Sleep is commonly used for today, thinning out the ranks of the two platoons of Orcs that were charging you, while allowing the poor victims to live to fight another day.

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ALIEN AND STARSHIPS & SPACEMEN

By Leonard H. Kanterman, M.D.



"WELCOME TO YOUR NIGHTMARE" ■ THE MOVIE ■

When you go to see *Alien*, 20th Century Fox's science fiction/horror film, be prepared for a week of sleepless nights. By combining the classic themes and techniques of suspense from past works with the stunning visual effects first pioneered in *Star Wars*, this film is a milestone for the genre. No longer will horror be hampered by visuals limited to magnified insects and obviously cardboard miniatures. Faithfulness in the portrayal of a coherent, consistent technology imparts a believability to the terror of the situation.

The plot of *Alien* is a familiar one to devotees of *Star Trek* and other aficionados of SF. The crew on a massive, interstellar refinery/transport ship is prematurely awakened from suspended animation by an alien signal transmission. They land on the planet's surface to investigate the source of the transmission, and discover a ruined space vehicle, type unknown, and the skeleton of a creature from a strange, space-faring race. The cause for the creature's demise becomes obvious when one of the crew members is attacked by a parasite that had lain dormant for untold millenia. The crew member is rushed back to the ship for treatment; too late does the remainder of the crew realize that they have allowed their own vessel to become infested. The remainder of the movie details the efforts of the crew on the one hand and the parasite on the other to stalk each other, the suspense becoming magnified to the point where one no longer wonders who will be the next victim, but if any of the crew will survive and defeat the monster, as its power grows more awesome with each metamorphosis it undergoes while the crew is being diminished one by one.

What sets *Alien* apart from the run-of-the-mill "bug-eyed monster" film is, as mentioned above, its dedication to a believable technology. The first half hour of the film is devoted to the development of the mise-en-scene of the crew's ship. There is a convincing aura to the ship, combining the familiar (such as the grimy engineering area, which could have been at home in the New York subway system) with the fantastic, most notably the dazzling computer center, called "Mother." There is the same convincing feeling about the crew as about the hardware. The crew members are not extraordinary heroes, but merely people doing a job. They complain in a believable manner about being aroused early, griping in time-honored fashion about the chow, discussing their financial arrangements in an ironically trivial segment considering the challenge

to their very survival they are about to undertake. In short, they behave as anyone might be expected to in a universe where interstellar transport has replaced interstate trucking. None of the actors are "name" stars, and this helps underscore the intensity of their plight. It facilitates the projection of the audience into the situation on screen, and smooths the "willing suspension of disbelief" required for the success of a film such as this.

They reader may gather from the above that the film successfully reproduces the atmosphere engendered in a good role-playing game. So without further ado. . .

THE SCENARIO

Author's Note: In detailing the scenario below, I will be following the procedures of play outlined in Starships & Spacemen; it is the system I am most familiar with, having been the designer. Certainly, with minor modifications by the Game Master, the scenario could be implemented for other space-travel RPGs.

I was inspired to develop a scenario by the striking resemblance of the crew composition in the film to that portrayed in *S&S*. The crew is made up of a team of specialists, each performing his own realm of expertise but the concerted cooperation of all being required for success. The crew in *Alien* consisted of a commander, his subordinate, an unemotional science officer, the navigator, the communications specialist, and the determined, resourceful mechanic who can fix anything. This configuration is right off the bridge of the *Enterprise*. What was especially impressive was the smooth integration of races, sexes, and nationalities, each person a valued member of the team. *Alien* is free of the stereotype of the eye-batting, helpless female; indeed, the toughest and most admirable crew member is a woman, while the science officer is just the least bit effeminate.

Before the onset of play, and in secret from all the other players, the Star Master should give the following information to the science officer: "In the course of your travels, you will encounter an alien life form heretofore unknown. It is your mission to bring back a specimen of this life form unharmed for further study. This is your primary goal, and the remainder of the crew can be considered expendable to accomplish this

goal." Naturally, the science officer will find it to his benefit if the rest of the crew does not ascertain this information, lest they turn on him. At the Star Master's option, he may give similar information to the captain, or any other member of the crew, deleting the information about expendability. (It is always the captain's prime responsibility to insure the safety of his crew.) The scenario will work best if the science officer is of a different race than the rest of the crew.

The Star Master otherwise begins the scenario normally, giving a mission and a destination to the players. On the Star Map, he should secretly locate the alien's planet. The Star Master should try to keep random encounters at a minimum until the ship comes within a predetermined distance of the system, at which point the players will be informed that the alien signal transmission has been intercepted. The ship will be able to "home in" on the signal to its source. Should a player wish to attempt to decode the transmission with the aid of the computer, he must roll less than his intelligence *minus 15* on a D20. (In S&S, all attributes are on a 1 to 20 scale, so a character's intelligence must be at least 16 for him to have any chance at decoding.) Even then, the computer will only be able to deduce that the message is a warning, and not a S.O.S. or distress signal.

When the ship arrives in the system, that particular planet will be the only one.

PLANET DATA

<i>Gravity</i>	<i>Medium/high</i>
<i>Temperature</i>	<i>Extremely cold</i>
<i>Atmosphere</i>	<i>Methane-ammonia/poisonous</i>
<i>Radiation</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Life-forms</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>(Dormant spores not picked up as life-forms)</i>	
<i>Organic material</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>Industrial material</i>	<i>Present</i>

The landing party may descend either by teleporter or by shuttle ship. Use of an auto-analyzer will enable the party to guide itself to the source of the transmission. This will be an alien spaceship, type unknown and not identifiable by computer. Aboard the ship there will be, at the Star Master's option, the remains of one or more aliens. Each alien body will be infested with one dormant spore, which will be revived and germinate by any investigation or probe, invading the nearest crew member.

Once invaded, the parasite will follow a certain life-cycle. The parasite will grow and develop over a period of several hours, and when development is complete, the host will be destroyed (ruptured) and the parasite will escape to continue its development. The parasite will invade a new host only once a day. With each cycle, the parasite will grow stronger, beginning with five damage points and doubling with each cycle up to a maximum of 160. In addition, the requisite time for development in the host will be shortened with each cycle by a half to a minimum of five minutes. There is no method of cure once invaded, and an attempt to dispose of the creature by disposing of its host will only result in the premature rupture of the host and release of the parasite. The parasite can be dealt with only when it is outside of a host. The parasite is invariably fatal to its host.

The parasite is not particularly intelligent, being a creature of instinct; it cannot be communicated with intelligently. It exists only to continue its life cycle, invading and developing

while killing its host. When the parasite runs out of hosts, it will enter its dormant stage again, leaving one spore behind in each prior host. Should the entire crew be killed, the ship will be "dead in space," but will continue to harbor the spores (to be used by the diabolical Star Master on another unwitting group).

The parasite's only source of food is in its host. Any sentient being can be a host but, at the Star Master's option, the creature may have a preference for one race over another, invading other races only once the preferred hosts are expended. A skillful Star Master can parlay the terror of this, falsely reassuring one race that they are apparently safe, until the parasite has no where else to turn.

The parasite does not reproduce sexually, and will not increase in number. However, if more than one crew member is initially infected by exposure, there may be several parasites running loose on the ship at once, a situation most crews will find very difficult to deal with.

The creature prefers the dark, and will hide in dark, deserted passages awaiting its next host. It will be repulsed by light, as well as by extremes of temperature, both hot and cold, although this will not damage the creature in any way. Sound waves will also repel the creature. The creature can be damaged by conventional weaponry; however, damage from weapons will cause the creature to leak its caustic, acid blood, which will dissolve any known material including the structural components of the ship. The amount of acid released is proportional to the size of the creature at the time and the damage inflicted; if it burns through the outer hull of the ship, the ship is torn apart in the vacuum of space. Electrostatic weaponry will repulse, but not harm, the creature.

How to kill the damn thing? Well, there are several methods. Ejection into the vacuum of space, either by shuttle, airlock, or transporter, will kill the creature. Projection into the psionic plane will just result in mental invasion for the next life cycle, with re-emergence into the physical plane. Damage from either conventional or atomic weaponry will destroy the creature (if its hit points are exceeded); however, acid leakage must be considered. Finally, the creature can be neutralized by caustic alkali agents, since its blood is acid. All this information is potentially discernible to the players from the computer, if they ask the right questions. (In S&S, one of the Star Master's roles is that of the computer. However, the computer can answer only yes-no questions, and interprets the questions literally.)

The objective of this scenario, quite obviously, is survival. Despite the instructions to the science officer, it is impossible to bring the creature back alive unless the entire crew is killed. This initial conflict of interest, along with the inevitable realization that the destruction of the parasite is the only feasible alternative and that concerted action is necessary for any chance of success, will lend a credible suspense to the encounter.

Star Master's Note: This scenario is a killer. The Star Master may find that once the parasite gets established on a ship, it is beyond his control to help the crew members rid themselves of it. The Star Master must be cognizant of the fact that many of the player's favorite characters will not survive, and be willing to deal with the consequences. You can only hope that one of your players will at length be able to say... "Got you, you bastard!"



TALENT TABLES



By John T. Sapienza, Jr.

This is a system for supplying distinguishing features for fantasy characters, to be used in conjunction with my personal appearance system in *Different Worlds 5*. The rationale to this system is that characters often develop abilities or disabilities in the course of their lives in the period before they entered the campaign. These can add interest by offering features that can help the player develop personality quirks to individualize the character. You will notice that the odds of getting something bad are equal to those of getting something good under this system. This is so to make you take your chances, if you are going to use a system that offers the possibility of benefits, of getting detriments as well, under the TANSTAAFL principle (There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch). It isn't as bad as it may seem at first, however. Both possibilities are limited in effect to no more than a 10% variation from average, so even the worst rolls are bearable, and are usually balanced by something good; the system generally produces characters with two talent areas, one good and one bad. And in any case, don't be disheartened if you roll up only detrimental results, since a character with problems is often more interesting to play than one

born with a silver spoon in his or her mouth. The table is followed by explanatory notes and supplementary tables for use with reaction roll modifications and with certain detection abilities.

To use this table, you will need a D6 (a six-sided die) and three D10s to produce the various number ranges required. D100 is produced by rolling two D10s and reading one as "tens" and reading the other as "ones." D1000 is produced by rolling three D10s and reading one as "hundreds," one as "tens," and one as "ones." Anyone who has a set of polyhedral dice and a set of percentage dice can use the D10 from the first and two D10s that make up the second to get the three D10s needed for this. Or buy a set of red, white, and blue D10s from Lou Zocchi, 01956 Pass Rd, Gulfport, MS 39501, if you want something more colorful (different colored dice do make it easier to remember which die stands for which digit).

First roll D100 to determine the number of talent areas for the character. Then roll D1000 to identify each talent area, and one D6 for the nature and degree of each talent rolled.

NUMBER OF TALENT AREAS TABLE

D100	Number
01-30	One
31-55	Two
56-75	Three
76-90	Four
91-98	Five
99-00	Six

NATURE AND DEGREE TABLE

Items	1D6			
	1	2-3	4-5	6
01-21	-10%	-5%	+5%	+10%
22	-10m	-5m	+5m	+10m
23	-10pts	-5pts	+5pts	+10pts
24	+10%	+5%	-5%	-10%
25-26	-2/6	-1/6	+1/6	+2/6
27-155	-2	-1	+1	+2

TALENT AREA TABLE

<i>D1000</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Talent Area</i>	<i>D1000</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Talent Area</i>
001-008	01	Experience Bonus	395-402	59	Day Vision
009-016	02	Resurrection Probability	403-410	60	Night Vision
017-024	03	Surviving Spell Probability	411-414	61	All Vision
025-032	04	Open Locks	415-422	62	Notice Sounds
033-040	05	Remove Traps	423-430	63	Notice Odors
041-048	06	Hide in Shadows	431-438	64	Notice Taste
049-056	07	Move Silently	439-446	65	Sense of Touch
057-064	08	Pick Pockets	447-454	66	Detect Secret Doors
065-072	09	Read Languages	455-462	67	Detect Sloping Passages
073-080	10	Read Magic	463-470	68	Detect Moveable Walls/Rooms
081-088	11	Identify Potion	471-478	69	Detect New Construction
089-096	12	Detect Poison	479-486	70	Detect Mechanical Traps
097-104	13	Detect Acid	487-494	71	Detect Magical Traps
105-112	14	Neutralize Poison	495-498	72	Detect All Traps
113-120	15	Neutralize Acid	499-502	73	Premonitions
121-128	16	Neutralize Paralyzation	503-504	74	All Scout Skills (53-58, 73)
129-136	17	Legend Lore	505-506	75	All Sense Skills (59-65, 73)
137-144	18	Desertwise	507-508	76	All Detect Skills (66-73)
145-152	19	Mountainwise	509-515	77	Use of Axes
153-160	20	Waterwise	516-522	78	Use of Daggers
161-168	21	Woodswise	523-529	79	Use of Hammers
169-176	22	Infravision	530-536	80	Use of Shortswords
177-184	23	Psionic Ability	537-543	81	Use of Spears
185-192	24	Spell Research	544-550	82	Use of Maces
193-200	25	Speed On Foot	551-557	83	Use of Military Picks
201-208	26	Speed While Riding	558-564	84	Use of Longswords
209-210	27	Strength	565-571	85	Use of Flails
211-212	28	Intelligence (IQ)	572-578	86	Use of Morningstars
213-214	29	Common Sense (Judgment)	579-585	87	Use of Battleaxes (Two-Handed)
215-216	30	Wisdom (Piety)	586-592	88	Use of Two-Handed Swords
217-218	31	Constitution (Sturdiness)	593-599	89	Use of Heavy Hammers (Two-Handed)
219-220	32	Endurance (Stamina)	600-606	90	Use of Mauls (Two-Handed Maces)
221-222	33	Dexterity (Hands)	607-613	91	Use of Pole Arms
223-224	34	Agility (Feet)	614-620	92	Use of Quarterstuffs
225-226	35	Charisma (Leadership)	621-627	93	Use of Bows
227-228	36	Comeliness (Beauty)	628-634	94	Use of Crossbows
229-230	37	Size (Height)	635-641	95	Use of Slings
231-238	38	Hit Points	642-645	96	Use of All One-Handed Weapons
239-246	39	Fire Resistance	646-649	97	Use of All Two-Handed Weapons
247-254	40	Cold Resistance	650-653	98	Use of All Articulated Weapons
255-262	41	Lightning Resistance	654-657	99	Use of All Thrown Weapons
263-270	42	Encumbrance	658-661	100	Use of All Missile Weapons
271-278	43	Health Recovery	662-663	101	Use of All Weapons
279-286	44	Followers (Number)	664-670	102	Wrestling Skill
287-294	45	Morale of Followers	671-677	103	Defense vs. Normal Hand Weapons
295-302	46	Language Ability	678-684	104	Defense vs. Normal Thrown Weapons
303-310	47	First Impression (Reaction Roll)	685-691	105	Defense vs. Normal Missile Weapons
311-318	48	Credibility (Reaction Roll)	692-698	106	Defense vs. Enchanted Hand Weapons
319-326	49	Musical Ability (Reaction Roll)	699-705	107	Defense vs. Enchanted Thrown Weapons
327-334	50	Reaction Roll: Intelligent Monsters	706-712	108	Defense vs. Enchanted Missile Weapons
335-342	51	Reaction Roll: Other Monsters	713-719	109	Defense vs. Monster Bites
343-346	52	Reaction Roll: All Monsters	720-726	110	Defense vs. Monster Claws/Stings
347-354	53	Follow Trail	727-733	111	Defense vs. Undead Attacks
355-362	54	Find Way Back	734-737	112	Defense vs. All Normal Weapons
363-370	55	Find Water	738-741	113	Defense vs. All Enchanted Weapons
371-378	56	Find Plants	742-743	114	Defense vs. All Attacks Above
379-386	57	Find Animals	744-750	115	Saving Throw vs. Disease
387-394	58	Weather Sense	751-757	116	Saving Throw vs. Dragon Breath

D1000 Item Talent Area

758-764	117	Saving Throw vs. Paralyzation
765-771	118	Saving Throw vs. Poison
772-778	119	Saving Throw vs. Spells/Staves
779-785	120	Saving Throw vs. Stoning
786-792	121	Saving Throw vs. Wands
793-794	122	Saving Throw vs. All
795-801	123	Detection Magic
802-808	124	Protection Magic
809-815	125	Wall Magic
816-822	126	Fire Magic
823-829	127	Cold Magic
830-836	128	Lightning Magic
837-843	129	Light/Dark Magic
844-850	130	Air/Gas Magic
851-857	131	Water/Liquid/Ooze Magic
878-864	132	Earth Magic
865-871	133	Communication Magic
872-878	134	Observation Magic
879-885	135	Movement Magic
886-892	136	Animation/Inanimation Magic

D1000 Item Talent Area

893-899	137	Animal Magic
900-906	138	Charm/Hold/Etc. Magic
907-913	139	Sleep/Poison Magic
914-920	140	Illusion/Confusion Magic
921-927	141	Polymorphic Magic
928-934	142	Life/Death Magic
935-941	143	Bless/Curse Magic
942-949	144	Cure/Cause Magic
950-956	145	Physical Ability Magic
957-963	146	Monster Summoning Magic
964-970	147	Locate Object/Etc. Magic
971-977	148	Time/Power Magic
978-981	149	All Magic User Spells
982-985	150	All Illusionist Spells
986-989	151	All Clerical Spells
990-993	152	All Druidical Spells
994-997	153	All Magical Artifacts
998-999	154	All Magic
000	155	Luck

NOTES AND SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

The first group of items (1-26) are somewhat arbitrarily put together because they are the only ones on the table that are not in a simple range of -2 to +2. Item 1 should be self-explanatory. Items 2 and 3 are tied to the percentages on the character's Constitution rating. Items 4-10 are *Thief ability* figures; any other character gets a base level ability of 5% (plus 1% per level above first), to which these items provide deviations according to the D6 roll. Items 11-16 are *Alchemist ability* figures; any other character gets a base ability of 5% (plus 1% per level) on identifying potions, detecting poison or detecting acid without tasting them (by smell, color, sound, etc.), and no base ability to neutralize anything. (For identifying something by taste, see item 64.) *Legend Lore* (item 17) is a Bard ability; any other character gets a base ability of 5% (plus 1% per level).

For items 18-21 I can offer Game Masters little guidance because I am not sure exactly how I am going to play them myself. The concept that a character grew up or had training in certain terrain appeals to me as a general idea. I am going to wing it as to what percentage I am going to require a character to roll to succeed in camping comfortably (woodwise), bearing the heat (desertwise), building a workable raft (waterwise), finding a pass (mountainwise), and so forth. But when I do, I will adjust it by what the character rolled up under these items. These are general skill areas, and should be played with imagination and flexibility, but also with balance and restraint.

Infravision (item 22) is an extension of existing ability, on the plus side. A human (which lacks natural infravision) would get an added ability, with a range of 5 or 10 meters, as rolled. A dwarf would get an extended range of 5 or 10 meters beyond the normal 20 meter range. On the minus side, a character that has natural infravision would have a reduced range of vision. A character that lacks natural infravision would lose some night vision capacity (see item 60).

Psionic ability (item 23) is increased or decreased by the indicated number of points. *Spell research* requires both time and gold; both are adjusted as indicated (item 24; if you roll this for a non-spell user, roll again). *Speed* on foot and while

riding (items 25 and 26) is adjusted in fractions of the movement figures given for characters and mounts, most of which are evenly divisible by six.

The *personal characteristics* (items 27-37) include a number that are in use in various campaigns, although they are not standard with any particular role-playing system. If you roll up one that you don't use, roll again. (Optional rule: If you roll up a non-standard characteristic roll a D6 for which of the standard characteristics will be affected—Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Constitution, Dexterity, or Charisma.) The figures given for these are points added to or subtracted from the character's rating for that personal characteristic.

Hit points (item 38) are adjusted by adding or subtracting the figure shown for each hit die as the character goes up levels. The *resistances to fire, cold, and lightning* (items 39-41)



are general measurements of the character's resistance to natural forces (such as inclement weather, etc.), but they also affect the character's saving throws vs. magically cast fire, cold, or lightning spells. *Encumbrance* (item 42) is in 100s of gold pieces times the figure given, or in kg, or in "things," whichever fits best.

Health recovery (item 43) is normally one hit point per day. A character that is +1 recovers two points per day, while one that is +2 recovers three points per day. A character that is -1 takes two days to recover one point, while one that is -2 takes three days to recover one point. Adjust magical cures by points, too.

Followers (item 44) are according to the character's Charisma; adjust the figure for the maximum number of followers by the number rolled on the table. The *morale* of a character's followers, horses, etc. (item 45) is also according to the character's Charisma; adjust the morale figure by the number rolled on the table. (Treat the numbers given in both tables as increments on a D20; in a crisis, a follower must roll 11+ to keep morale.) *Language ability* (item 46) affects the number of languages a character can speak other than Common by the number on the table. (But a character that has an Intelligence of 10 and rolls -2 languages is not reduced to no languages at all; the minimum is one language.)

The *reaction roll* group (items 47-52) are adjustments to the reactions of those whom the character meets in the game as non-player characters (monsters). The adjustments are to D20 rolls on the Reaction Roll Table. *First impression* (item 47) is just that, a short-term effect. It uses the general attitude part of the table. If the encounter doesn't turn into a melee, it is possible for the non-player character to revise the opinion of the character (roll again on the table, but without the adjustment figure). *Credibility* (item 48) uses both the credibility and the reaction to your offer parts of the table. It concerns how honest-seeming and persuasive the character is—do they believe you? (Whether you are actually telling the truth or not is irrelevant; what matters here is your delivery.) *Musical ability* (item 49) uses the attack odds part of the table. It is principally directed at bards, but anyone can try to sing a friendly song as you saunter past the six umber hulks hoping they will resume their nap (or at least lose interest in you). Characters other than bards have a base ability level of 5% for this (plus 1% per level), adjusted by the figure from the table. The remaining items (50-52) are general reaction rolls.

The *scout skills* group (items 53-58, and 73) pertain to finding your way through unfamiliar territory, and living off the country if necessary. *Follow trail* (item 53) is the ability to follow a track or trail through wilderness without becoming lost. (This can also be used for tracking people or animals.) *Find way back* (item 54) concerns the character's ability to re-track his/her own trail, to remember the way home. *Find water, plants, and animals* abilities are learned skills in woodcraft or desertcraft, by which the character detects the signs by which they are to be found (item 55-57). *Weather sense* (item 58) allows a character to detect changes in the weather, and to predict the coming weather. The latter requires a roll of "01" on a D20 for greatest accuracy of prediction, with diminished accuracy on higher rolls; the prediction will be completely off (and randomly so) if the character fails to roll within the *lower half* of the range shown according to race in the Scout Skills Table, which gives the base ranges for each skill.

The *sense skills* group (items 59-65, and 73) pertain to sensory perception and what you make of it. The character will notice something only if the die roll is within the indicated range in the Sense Skills Table. *Vision* rolls show whether something was noticed at the limit of the visual range (e.g., 20

meters down a torchlit corridor). They can also be used for matters that are closer by, but difficult to see (items 59-61). *Sound* rolls (item 62) show whether the character heard something. *Odor* rolls (item 63) show whether the character noticed the smell of the poison gas, or whatever. *Taste* rolls (item 64) show whether the potion had a taste that called itself to the character's attention. *Touch* rolls (item 65) show whether the character detected something unusual while running his/her fingers over it.

In order to identify matters detected with the senses (recognize what was seen, what language was heard, the odor that was noticed, etc.), the roll must come within *one half* the indicated range on the Sense Skills Table. Otherwise, all the character has is the knowledge that there is something there, but not what.

The *detect skills* group (items 66-73) are the standard non-human race senses (plus premonitions). The detect skills are attributed to nonhuman races in varying degrees in *Men & Magic*, some with die roll limits, some not. It seems to me that all races probably have some ability in each category, and while some races will be especially able in particular detects none of them will have a 100% probability of success. (In other words, I don't believe that dwarves invariably detect sloping passages, etc., although they certainly have a better chance of detecting them than other races.) My opinions about the relative ability of each of the four standard *Dungeons & Dragons* player races in each category are shown in the Detect Skills Table.

While characters must roll for detects when specifically searching for something, they also have a chance of catching a glimpse of something hidden without consciously looking for it. The range within which a given race will so detect something is given in the Detect Skills Table in parentheses next to the range for deliberate searches. Note that there is no parenthetical figure for dwarves on detecting sloping passages. I consider this an automatic or instinctual sense for dwarves that does not require conscious effort, so I roll for detection once each movement turn that a dwarf is going up or down a sloping passage. I only roll for a character noticing something without specifically searching for it if the character is within 3 meters of the object or condition to be detected.

Magic traps are detected by spell users who are specifically searching for them on a roll of "01-03," without a detect magic spell. (The term "spell users" includes all classes that can use spells, including clerics.) Of course, they cannot tell what kind of magic is involved, only that the trap is magical. Non-spell-users can detect the presence of a magic trap on a roll of "01," but they do not know that it is a magic trap—only that it is a trap. (This is based on the assumption that the trap contains some physical parts that can be detected, even though they are disguised. Wholly nonphysical magic traps would require a detect magic spell.) No character can detect a magic trap without specifically searching for traps. (Item 71.)

Premonitions are a GM's option, giving the character some idea as to what is going to happen. If you use it, be somewhat vague as to details, and as to the time it is going to happen. (This is a low probability item, even at +2.) (Item 73.)

The *use of weapons* group (items 77-101) are adjustments to the character's D20 roll to hit with the type of weapon indicated. The weapons are arranged in groups by type: weapons that can be thrown (items 77-81), other one-handed weapons (items 82-84), articulated weapons (85-86), two-handed weapons (items 87-93), and missile weapons (items 94-96). *Wrestling skill* (item 102) follows weapons use because it operates the same way: the figures are adjustments to the roll to punch or grapple.

The *defense from attacks* group (items 103-114) are adjust-

ments to the character's armor class vs. the type of attack specified. Note that, as in the use of weapons group, "thrown weapons" are not included in "missile weapons" (which are arrows, bolts, and sling stones).

The *saving throws* group (items 115-122) is the other half of the defense section of the table, although it is related to the magic section that follows it. The adjustments are to the number rolled on a D20 for the character's saving throw vs. the type of attack specified. (For disease, I use the "stone" column in the saving throw table; for paralyzation, I use the "wands" column.)

The *magic* section (items 123-154) adjustments apply to both the character and his/her opponent. The numbers from the table are applied to the number that the character's opponent must roll as a saving throw when the character casts that type of spell at the opponent. The numbers are also applied to the character's saving throw D20 rolls vs. the type of magic specified. Note that these adjustments apply to everyone, because they affect the character's own saving throws vs. the specified type of magic, so there is no reason to reroll if you roll up one of these for a non-spelluser. The adjustments are made for all magic of the type specified, whether from spoken spells or magic artifacts. (Certain types of magic do not take saving throws, and thus the rule above does not apply to them. They are discussed below under specific items.)

Detection Magic (item 123) is any magic that reveals the presence or existence of a person, object, or condition. Apply the number from the table to the saving throw, probability of success (as 5% increments), range, or duration of the spell, in that order of preference, as appropriate.

Protection Magic (item 124) is any magic that protects the user, including personal and area spells, and partial and complete protection (but it does not include walls of protection). Apply the number from the table against the plus (i.e., a +1 ring of protection would be +2 for a character who has a +1 on protection magic), the range, or the duration of the spell, in that order of preference.

Wall Magic (item 125) is all magic that imposes a wall of protection, including the prismatic walls. The saving throw rule applies vs. anything that must make a saving throw when trying to penetrate the wall. For other purposes, apply the number from the table to the duration of the wall.

Fire, Cold, and Lightning Magic (items 126-128) includes any magic that uses or protects against them. *Light/Dark Magic* (item 129) is any magic that creates or dispels light or dark, but does not include fire magic or lightning magic when used for other purposes. Apply the number from the table to the range or duration of the spell.

Air/Gas Magic is any magic that creates or manipulates gases, including weather magic. *Water/Liquids/Ooze Magic* is any magic that creates or manipulates liquids. *Earth Magic* is any magic that creates or manipulates solids, including transformation into or out of mud or stone, move earth, and earthquake. (Items 130-132.) Apply the number from the table to the range or duration of the spell.

Communication Magic includes all forms of communication, including telepathy and contact higher plane. *Observation Magic* includes all methods of observing, including ESP and crystal ball magic. (Items 133-134.) Apply the number from the table to the range or duration of the spell.

Movement Magic is all forms of movement via magic, including flying, telekinesis, levitation, walking on water or air, and teleportation. Note that it includes moving other people or objects as well as the character casting the spell. *Animation/Inanimation Magic* is all manipulation of objects that are normally immobile, such as animating objects or the dead, and

causing objects that are normally mobile to become still. (Items 135-136.) Apply the number from the table to the range or duration of the spell.

Animal Magic is all forms of locating, communicating with, and dealing with animals, birds, insects, reptiles, and fish (it includes "speak with" spells but no other form of control magic). (Item 137.) If no saving throw applies to the situation, apply the number from the table to the range or duration of the spell, or the number of animals affected. *Charm/Hold/Etc. Magic* is all forms of control magic, including charm monster and charm animals. (Item 138.) Saving throw applies.

Sleep/Poison Magic (item 139) is all forms of magically induced sleep or poison, and in particular includes all spells calling for a saving throw vs. poison. If you do not give a saving throw for sleep, apply the number in the table to affect the number of creatures affected (in 5% increments).

Illusion/Confusion Magic (item 140) is all forms of magically induced illusion or confusion. Saving throw applies.

Polymorphic Magic (item 141) is all forms of magic that change the size or shape of persons or objects. If saving throws do not apply to a situation, apply the number in the table to the range or duration of the spell.

Life/Death Magic (item 142) is all forms of magic that cause death or raise from the dead. If saving throws do not apply to a situation, apply the number from the table to the probability of success (as 5% increments), or to the range or duration of the spell, or to the number affected (as 5% increments).

Bless/Curse Magic (item 143) is all forms of magic that raise or lower morale and impose or remove curses. Morale is affected directly by the number from the table (i.e., a cleric who is +1 on bless/curse magic would cast a +2 bless spell on the party). Apply the number from the table as a probability of success on curses (as 5% increments) if a saving throw does not apply to the situation.

Cure/Cause Magic (item 144) is all forms of magic that cure or cause wounds or disease, or other forms of bodily or mental disfunction. Apply the number from the table directly to the points cured by a cure light or cure serious wounds spell. Apply the number to the saving throw on cause spells.

Physical Ability Magic (item 145) is all magic that affects bodily ability, such as haste, slow, strength, and weakness. Saving throws apply to slow and weakness spells. Apply the



number from the table to the duration or number affected for haste (in 5% increments). Apply the number from the table directly to the die roll on strength in determining the number of points of strength given to the person the spell was cast upon.

Monster Summoning Magic (item 146) is all forms of summoning servants, including monsters, elementals, and aerial servants. Apply the number from the table to the morale of the summonee directly, or apply it to the duration of the spell (in 5% increments).

Locate Object/Etc. Magic (item 147) is all forms of magic

used to locate persons or objects. Apply the number from the table to the range or duration of the spell.

Time/Power Magic is all magic that manipulates time and other fundamental powers, including power word spells. (Item 148.) Apply the number from the table to the range or duration of the spell, if saving throws do not apply to the situation.

Luck (item 155) is the universal modifier. It affects every die roll for the character, including rolls to hit, effective armor defense, saving throws, rolls for division of treasure, etc.

SCOUT SKILLS TABLE

	<i>Follow Trail</i>	<i>Find Way Back</i>	<i>Find Water</i>	<i>Find Plants</i>	<i>Find Animals</i>	<i>Weather Sense</i>
Human	1-6 (2)	1-6 (2)	1-4 (1)	1-6 (2)	1-6 (2)	1-6 (2)
Elf	1-12 (4)	1-12 (4)	1-8 (3)	1-8 (3)	1-10 (3)	1-10 (3)
Dwarf	1-6 (2)	1-12 (4)	1-6 (2)	1-4 (1)	1-6 (2)	1-4 (1)
Hobbit	1-8 (3)	1-8 (3)	1-12 (4)	1-8 (3)	1-4 (1)	1-8 (3)

SENSE SKILLS TABLE

	<i>Day Vision</i>	<i>Night Vision</i>	<i>Notice Sounds</i>	<i>Notice Odors</i>	<i>Notice Taste</i>	<i>Sense of Touch</i>
Human	1-8 (3)	1-6 (2)*	1-4 (1)	1-4 (1)	1-4 (1)	1-6 (2)
Elf	1-12 (4)	1-12 (4)	1-8 (3)	1-10 (3)	1-8 (3)	1-10 (3)
Dwarf	1-4 (1)	1-12 (4)	1-8 (3)	1-6 (2)	1-6 (2)	1-12 (4)
Hobbit	1-8 (3)	1-12 (4)	1-6 (2)	1-10 (3)	1-12 (4)	1-10 (3)

DETECT SKILLS TABLES

	<i>Secret Doors</i>	<i>Mech. Traps</i>	<i>Magic Traps**</i>	<i>Up/Down Slopes</i>	<i>Movable Wall/Rm</i>	<i>New Construction</i>
Human	1-6 (2)	1-4 (1)	1	1-6 (2)	1	1-6 (2)
Elf	1-12 (4)	1-4 (1)	1	1-6 (2)	1	1-6 (2)
Dwarf	1-6 (2)	1-12 (4)	1	1-12***	1-12 (4)	1-12 (4)
Hobbit	1-6 (2)	1-6 (2)	1	1-8 (3)	1-2 (1)	1-8 (3)

PREMONITIONS: Humans 1; Elves, Dwarves, and Hobbits 1-2 (base figures). The timing to roll on premonitions is at the GM's discretion, depending on the circumstances, since you don't try for a hunch, it just appears on its own.

* The range shown for night vision for humans is 1-6 for outdoors with some light sources (such as the moon), 1-4 indoors with only torchlight as the light source. The other races use a combination of good eyesight and infravision, so I make no distinction on their night vision capacity.

** Only a deliberate search will detect a magic trap. Non-spellusers need a 1, while spellusers need a 1-3.

*** I treat this as being instinctual for dwarves, so there is no distinction between deliberate searching and casual detection here.

The numbers above are the ranges on a D20 within which a character must roll when making a deliberate effort to determine something, with the exception of premonitions. (The numbers in parenthesis show the range (from 1 to n) within which a character will detect some hint of the presence of the matter without consciously searching for it). To predict weather, or to identify matters detected with the senses, the character's detection roll must have come within one-half the regular range; otherwise the character detected something, but doesn't know what it means.

The figures in the skills tables are D20 base ranges for low level characters. Add one point to the range within which the character must roll to succeed on each skill on the tables for every three levels attained by the character: L1-3 is base range, L4-6 is +1, L7-9 is +2, etc. For example, an elf's skill roll for noticing sounds would be 1-8 at L1-3, 1-9 at L4-6, etc. The parenthetical numbers for detecting something without searching for it deliberately are one-third of the base range, and should be increased when the character rises to a sufficiently high level, increasing his or her skill range.

REACTION ROLL TABLES

D20	General Attitude	Credibility	Reaction to Offer	Attack Odds	Offer Advice	Offer Aid
01	Furious	Sure You're Lying	Distains Offer	Always	Never	Never
02-03	Angry	Thinks You're Lying	Rejects Offer	01-15	Never	Never
04-05	Hostile	Thinks You May Be Lying	Ignores Offer	01-10	Never	Never
06-08	Irritated/Touchy/Suspicious	Doubtful and Distrustful	Pretends to Consider Offer	01-05	01	Never
09-12	Uninterested/Wary/Changeable	Uncertain and Doubtful	Uneasy About Offer	01-03	01-03	Never
13-15	Enigmatic/Distant	Partially Persuaded	Considers Offer	01	01-05	01
16-17	Tolerant/Amused	Reasonably Convinced	Accepts Offer	Never	01-10	01-03
18-19	Friendly	Believes You	Accepts Offer Willingly	Never	01-15	01-05
20	Benevolent	Completely Convinced	Accepts Offer Enthusiastically	Never	Always	01-10

The numbers in the attack odds table indicate different degrees of hostility-turning-into-action. If you don't roll an attack at the first encounter, roll again as appropriate (whenever opportunity presents itself, or every turn) if the column shows a possibility of an attack. Note that an "attack" need not be a frontal assault; it simply means that the monster is going to do something harmful, including simply picking your pocket (preferably of that amulet vs. the monster in the next room that you don't know about yet).

The middle category in the general attitude table (09-12) is very changeable. This means that the monster will change attitude according to what the party does, and sometimes simply because of a change in mood. (Roll again as the situation changes, with appropriate plus or minus factored in; also roll again when enough time has passed for the monster to have reassessed the initial impression.)

The "advice" and "aid" columns should be self-explanatory. Use a D20 for results on all three columns when a number range is given for result on the initial reaction roll.

FINAL NOTES

This article originally appeared in issue 25 of *Alarums & Excursions*, in somewhat different form, and is copyright ©1980 in its current form by the author. The original idea of providing characters with particular abilities to help distinguish individuals was Mark A. Swanson's, whose tables of Swanson Powers appeared in the first issue of *A&E*. This idea was expanded by Joel S. Davis to the principle that a character might have more than one area that deviates from the average, and that the deviation might be below as well as above average, in *A&E* 10. I adopted Joel's approach, and expanded his table to provide a much greater number of talent areas, and for a range of pluses and minuses in each. The Reaction Roll Tables were an expansion of a table by Daniel L. Pierson, whose critical hit and fumble tables were the inspiration of what has appeared in at least two published game systems. My thanks to each and all for inspiring this article.

I use a single table for all character classes because I don't think that specialized tables are necessary under a system that provides for more than one roll for most characters (70%). There is a good chance you will roll up something pertinent to any given character's occupation on this table, since most items are deliberately drafted broadly to be universally applicable. (A very few items on this table apply to only a limited number of situations or game systems; if what you rolled is obviously inapplicable, roll again.) This design proved unexpectedly helpful, since although the table was written specifically for use in *D&D*, it can be applied to most fantasy RPGs on the market today, including *RuneQuest*.

A final thought. This system was originally designed for use in creating new characters, although it obviously can be applied to existing characters with the GM's permission. It can also be used by the GM when creating magical treasures. Roll on the table for abilities provided by minor magic items such as

rings, bracers, necklaces, earrings, and other jewelry, or items of clothing such as cloaks, belts, boots, hats, etc., to a character who wears them. For this, you will normally want the results to be pluses instead of minuses, with perhaps a 10% chance of a cursed magic item with a minus (roll 1D10, with a curse present on a roll of "1"). And you may want a greater range of numbers, in which case I suggest using a 1D6 roll: 1-3 for +1, 4-5 for +2, and 6 for +3, with the same range for minuses on cursed items. Or use the table exactly as it is, with equal odds of plus or minus, to produce a more restrained substitute for the effect of using magic items that normally produce extreme results, such as a deck of cards or a magical book. Use your imagination.



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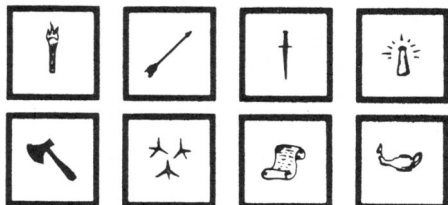


Bearhug Game Accessories

By John T. Sapienza, Jr.

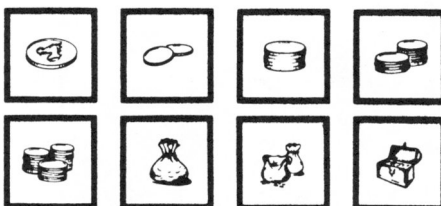
Every role-playing character carries a variety of equipment around while adventuring — food, torches, ropes, oil flasks — that get used up over a period of time. How do you keep track of how fast things are consumed? In addition, things get picked up during an expedition, both ordinary supplies and magic items. How do you record who is carrying what, so that when George Greataxe, your lead fighter, falls down a bottomless pit you can settle without argument what was lost with him? Of course, you can always keep notes on your character sheet, but this requires precise record-keeping and a certain amount of bother.

Bearhug Enterprises has come up with an interesting solution to this problem that may well appeal to you. They have issued four sets of die-cut counters printed with pictures representing the most commonly carried pieces of equipment or loot. Die-cut counters are quite familiar to wargamers, but for those who have never seen them, they consist of sheets of cardboard about 1/16" thick on which pictures of equipment have been printed in rows. Groups of these rows have been overprinted with color, so that a given sheet may have red, orange, yellow, and brown sections, for example, to distinguish different types or groups of much the same items. Then the sheets are pre-cut so that each item can be pushed out by the buyer into 1/2" squares. Each square represents one item or group of items, and is handed to the player whose character is carrying something represented by that counter.

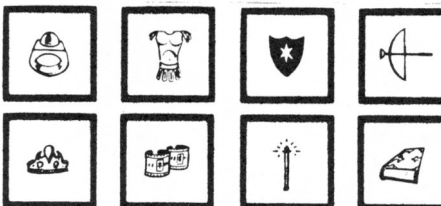


The first pack (TA-01) is called *The Acoutery*. It consists of 400 counters, an instruction booklet, and four 4"x4" zip-top plastic bags for holding the counters, and

costs \$6. The set contains counters for items that may get eaten, or broken, or burned, or thrown in use: Daggers, Caltrops, Shuriken, Arrows, Quarrels, Axes, Hammers, Spears, Javelins, Candles, Torches, Lamps, Lanterns, Flasks of Oil, Pen and Ink, Parchment, Scrolls, Vials for Potions, Wine Bottles, Wine/Waterskins, Vials of Holy Water, Wooden and Silver Crosses, Mirrors, Spikes, Rope, Pipes and Tabacco, and Rations. It also includes a page giving the pictures as they appear on the counters and what they stand for, and the weight (in kg) for each item. Several blank counters are included for inventing your own items.



The second pack (TT-02) is called *The Treasury*. It is an assortment of 400 counters representing various amounts of coinage for use as treasure and as a fast and convenient method of monetary exchange during adventures. The denominations are one coin, two, five, ten, 20, 50, 100, 500, and 1000 coins, each represented by a distinct picture. They are accompanied by an instruction sheet and four 4"x4" plastic bags for holding the counters. The set costs \$6. The sheets are multicolored, so different colors can be used to represent copper, silver, gold, and other metals.



The third pack (TC-03) is called *The Treasure Chest*, and contains 200 counters, an in-

struction booklet, and four 4"x4" plastic bags for storage. These can be used to indicate all the character's normal equipment, or can be limited to magical items picked up during an adventure. There are counters for Hammers, Maces, Morning Stars, Flails, Axes, Battle Axes, Swords, Greatswords, Spears, Bows, Crossbows, Quivers, Daggers, four types of Armor, Bracers, Greaves, Gauntlets, Boots, Helmets, Shields, Jewels, Rings, Necklaces, Crowns, Girdles, Bracelets, Purces, Bags, Chests, Robes, Capes, Scrolls, Books, Potions, Horns, Wands, Staves, Crystal Balls, Scarabs, and some blank counters for adding your own items. This pack, being smaller than the first two, costs only \$3.50.

The fourth pack (CT-04) is called *The Complete Trove*. It is an assortment of 500 counters from the first three packs, an instruction booklet, and four 4"x4" zip-top plastic bags. It is for those who want some of each but not a complete pack of each type, and costs \$7.50. When you consider that you are getting the equivalent of half of each of the three complete assortments, the price is reasonable.

Bearhug has done a good job of producing these gaming accessories. Each sheet is well printed and well-cut, and coloring is bright and useful for making distinctions of many types (orange might indicate +2 weapons, for example). The bottom line question is whether they are useful in gaming. I think they are, particularly in groups that spend excessive time arguing who is carrying what. And they also allow a means of passing equipment around the party even in calm, civilized groups of players, and at the relatively cheap cost they are well worth giving a try. Available postpaid from Bearhug Enterprises, Inc., PO Box 12, Mission, KS 66201.



DEFINING THE CAMPAIGN

GAMEMASTER STYLES

By Lewis Pulsipher

If I began this article by saying I prefer to referee or play in a FRP campaign which is wargame and skill oriented, low risk and low reward, "mortal," "natural," stresses differentiation of character types, maintains a believable degree of uncertainty, and uses rigid-form rules, you'd probably wonder what the hell I was talking about. It is difficult to say much about differences of style in FRP campaigns, between one referee or one game and another, because no one has bothered to find words to express or de-

fine style in a variety of ways. Consequently discussion of the broadest aspects of FRP play is rare. In this article I propose a set of categories and terms to help describe FRP playing style. The reader will have to take it from there, deciding what kind of campaign he participates in, what kind he'd like to be in, and why.

BASIC STYLE

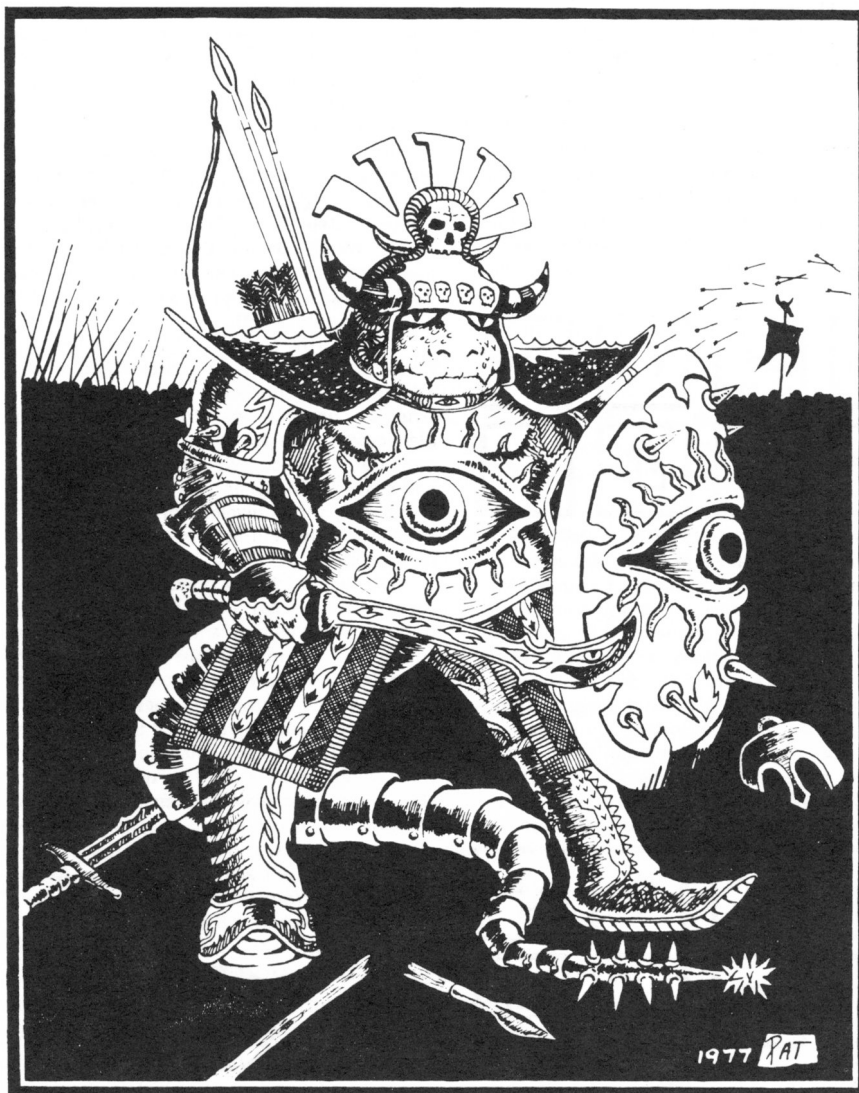
First one must talk about the basic style

of the campaign, since this strongly influences the other aspects. As with most categories, this one is a spectrum between two extremes which are seldom attained. If one numbered a scale from 1 to 100, campaigns would be found at each number. Not all categories reflect a bell curve probability, however, nor can anyone say in each case where the majority of FRP campaigns now fit into the spectrum.

Basic styles range from the "simulation" through "wargame" to "silly game" and "novel." The "simulation" campaign, epitomised by the *Chivalry & Sorcery* rules, requires faithfulness to history and the real conditions of our world, as much as is compatible with the assumption that magic works. A few referees demand even more "realism" than in *C&S*. These might be characterized as referees who need a pocket calculator to figure out combat, spell effects, and a lot more. Complicated combat systems requiring a long time to resolve battles often dominate a "simulation" campaign.

The "wargame" style, which seems to be the way *Dungeons & Dragons* is intended to be played, stresses smooth, fast play, a "sense of wonder," and competition — not necessarily with other players, certainly not with the referee, but competition with the monsters and puzzles. The player makes the right moves or he doesn't stay alive — he determines his own fate. Where "realism" would get in the way of these goals, it is ignored. Normally a "wargame" campaign referee came to FRP through hex boardgames, or through another referee who is a wargamer.

The "silly game" style is the way *D&D* is often played, especially by those who have never played hex wargames. Much of what happens is unbelievable or merely laughable, and quite often the entire campaign is a huge pun or joke. Other silly game players take it all quite seriously, strangely enough. This style is an amusing diversion, but



many players soon become bored with it. Players tend to be passive or robotic — either they wait for something to happen or they dutifully push buttons and pull levers whenever they find them, whatever the uncertainty of the consequences.

Finally we have the “novel” style favored by many players involved in science fiction fandom. The referee is, in effect, writing a verbal novel with players as semi-independent characters in the novel. Most of these first-draft stories are pretty bad, but the players enjoy themselves. Of course, the referee tends to manipulate events to make them conform to his notions of how the story should progress; players are often quite passive, waiting to be entertained.

As we examine other aspects of campaigns you will see how basic style often limits the referee's choices, how certain extremes tend to be common to one style or another.

BELIEVABILITY

Believability is related to almost everything else that goes on in an FRP game. One asks, “if I read this in a heroic fantasy novel, would it fit, could I believe it?” Of course, one must willingly suspend one's disbelief in magic to read any fantasy novel with pleasure — but would this event from the game destroy that willing suspension of disbelief? Some games are more believable than others — *Tunnels & Trolls* is least believable — but more depends on the referee than on the game. In many respects the degree of believability directly correlates with positions on the game style spectrum. The “simulation” is most believable, the “silly game” (and most “novels”) least believable.

RISK AND REWARD

What is the relationship of risk and reward in the campaign? Risk refers to the death rate among decent characters controlled by good players. Some campaigns exact 25% or 50% dead per adventure, others just an occasional death. The availability of resurrection bears on this, as some of those high casualty campaigns see most dead resuscitated somehow. Reward refers to the number of adventures required for a character to gain a certain amount of experience or skills. The “Monty Haul” or giveaway campaign is the extreme of low risk and high reward. You've all heard of the character who rises to 16th level in a couple of months. On the other hand the suicide or “ritual sacrifice” cam-

paign, in which everyone is either dead or in debt and still inexperienced, is the extreme of high risk and low reward. Most *D&D* campaigns with inexperienced referees are either giveaway or high risk high reward. The FRP ideal, I think, is low risk and low reward. The campaign lasts longer, players feel that they've earned what they receive, and it is more believable. I've always wondered how any real person in his right mind would adventure in a high risk high reward situation; soldiers of fortune (and what else are adventurers?) have always been willing to take calculated risks, but not consistently high risks month after month.

COMBAT VS. PUZZLE

Most campaigns include monsters to fight and puzzles to solve, but far more of the former. Occasionally a campaign is largely puzzle-oriented — in fact, the campaign may be a gigantic puzzle which ends when the players “solve” it. The average FRP player prefers battle — it's more heroic — and the average referee hasn't the turn of mind required to make up many good (fair) puzzles. Too often puzzles are arbitrary and virtually insoluble.

DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY

In order to enjoy the wargame style players must have, or be able to gain, enough information about the “world” to be able to predict or determine probabilities of results of actions. In other words, if the players are so ignorant of the nature of the world (and of the kinds of monsters they might meet) that they don't know what could happen next, how can they rationally choose between two or more alternatives? Why not roll dice to decide what to do next? On the other hand, the “novel” or “silly game” may be more exciting when players know little about the world. In general, the longer the game rules the more the player knows about the world, unless the referee prohibits rules-reading. More depends on the referee than on the game.

EXTENT OF THE SUPERNATURAL

This subject has a strong bearing on the degree of uncertainty. Every FRP game starts with the assumption that magic works, but how, how often, and how much are important questions. Several kinds of characters can cast known spells, and spell research may create a few more. Gods exist, with god-like

powers. How often do new spells, and especially godlike magic, affect the game? A science fiction writer once said that any sufficiently advanced technology would be indistinguishable from magic to earthlings. In FRP, any sufficiently powerful magic will be inexplicable to those magic-users who understand “human” magic and magic items. How often does inexplicable or super magic affect the game? How often is magic indistinguishable from or more powerful than a “wish”? In a highly “supernatural” campaign bespelled areas, “artifact” quality magic items, and visitations from gods will be everyday affairs. In a “natural” campaign such events will be rare. *C&S* is least susceptible to highly supernatural treatment, *T&T* most susceptible. “Silly game” FRP tends most often to the supernatural, “simulation” least often.

IMMORTALITY, HIGH LEVELS, AND SCIENCE

These categories are all related to the supernatural. If the gods appear often in the campaign, if the characters become so powerful that they equal or surpass the gods themselves, the campaign stresses the immortal rather than the mortal. Gods and godlike creatures do not necessarily go together, for some referees like their gods to play with the ever-weak characters. Moreover, a campaign can be “supernatural” and yet “mortal,” but not often.

One must also ask how strong characters will be compared to potential top strength and compared to non-player characters — in other words, will they be high or low level? In *D&D*, for example, some referees like to start characters at third or fourth level, and characters rapidly reach double figures. These characters are usually as tough as any NPCs they encounter. In other campaigns it takes a couple years (real time) for characters to reach third or fourth level, and characters tend to “retire” when they reach double figures. There are usually NPCs around who are stronger. In the high level campaign, players easily become nobles and kings; in the low level it takes years of hard work to approach such goals.

When one considers the supernatural in a campaign, consider science as well. After all, the effect of either on the campaign is the same, despite different trappings. Most FRP referees don't allow vibra-swords, phasers and lasers, robots, plastic armor, etc., but most will sooner or later allow players to “gate”

to a highly technological setting, just as a change of pace.

SKILL

The degree of skill required (or permitted) in a campaign depends heavily on basic style, and will be high in the absence of the highly supernatural or immortal combined with a low degree of uncertainty and low referee interference (see below). The players must control their own fate (as much as this is ever possible) in a "wargame" style. A player must be allowed to choose between plausible alternatives — whether to fight or run, to cast one spell or another, to hunt here or there — for there is no skill involved when the referee or campaign

leaves him with only one plausible choice or many choices with unpredictable consequences. A campaign in which skill counts for little normally emphasizes the arbitrary and unpredictable — frequent saves vs. death, levers to pull, godly intervention, supermagic, etc. People who don't normally play games may enjoy this, but the average game player plays to win, even in FRP where he isn't (normally) playing against another person.

HOMOGENEITY OF CHARACTERS

This category concerns how much one character differs from another in natural abilities, potential to learn skills, background, and so on. At one end of the

spectrum are those variations of *D&D* and other games in which all characters are created equal. Players may then alter their initial ability numbers, trading increase in one for a decrease in another. In the beginning every character is able to learn every skill — spell-casting, thievery, fighting, tracking, or whatever. The players, not the dice, are responsible for differences between characters, choosing their lines of development as the campaign progresses. *RuneQuest* is the commercial FRP game closest to the homogeneous extreme. At the other, heterogeneous, extreme we have *C&S*, in which myriad die rolls over which a player has virtually no control to determine abilities, race, eccentricities, skills, ancestry, horoscope, alignment, ad nau-



siam. There are at least a dozen different character types as well. *D&D* falls somewhere in the middle, *T&T* closer to the homogeneous. Alignment is especially prominent in *D&D* as a means of character differentiation, but the choice is the player's.

FATE

How far does the player decide what his character will do as opposed to determination by the dice or the referee? What is the role (or rule) of fate in character generation? A strong role of fate is often associated with a heterogeneous campaign. *C&S* is again the example — the player is almost entirely a prisoner of fate (the dice) when he establishes a character. At the other end of the scale, *RQ* not only allows great freedom to choose specialties and predilections (no alignment), a player can choose to be any of many races, far more than in other FRP games.

Taking this one step further we can ask about the role of fate in the campaign as a whole. Relating this to the spectrum of basic campaign styles, fate — in this case both dice rolls and the potentially arbitrary dictates of the referee — plays a greater part in the "silly game" and "novel" campaigns, with a big role sometimes in the "simulation." The "wargame" usually gives the players the greatest freedom of choice.

One can also ask how far a player is required to play his character as his ability numbers and background dictate. If the character is stupid must the player pretend to be stupid? Some referees will roll dice against intelligence, or wisdom, to decide whether a character is able to understand or use (or even say) something even if the player has figured out how to. (Some work it the other way as well, so a character can figure out something the player hasn't.) In some campaigns the character must be true to those characteristics the player has freely selected (such as alignment in *D&D*) but not to those determined by dice rolls.

THE LORDS OF THE WORLD

There is one more question to ask about the "world." Is it dominated by humanity? This is really two separate questions: do humans heavily outnumber other character races (as in *D&D*), and do the character races dominate the world or do dragons, giants, or non-player races hold sway? *C&S*, for example, is not only a world of humans, the humans dominate all other creatures al-

most as much as we dominate modern earth. I have never heard of a campaign not dominated by the character races, but I'm sure such must exist. In fact, one could say that any world where gods often intervene in mortal affairs is dominated by the gods, not the mortals.

RIGID VS FREE FORM

The remaining categories consider the referee's attitude toward mechanical aspects of the game, rather than the nature of the world. For example, how rigorously does he rely on printed or otherwise pre-formulated rules? When someone tries to lasso a horse or break a lamp, does he roll dice against a table (whether in the rules or one he's devised) or does he make up percentage chances on the spot. Is he consistent? Some games, notably *T&T*, force a non-rigorous approach on the average referee, who isn't willing to write pages of his own rules and tables; more commonly those desiring greater rigor switch to a more comprehensive game. A closely related question is, how far does the referee substitute his own rules for the printed rules? Most "wargame" players prefer a rigid form game — a rule for every situation — while novel players expect a free-form — rules are boring.

REFeree INTERFERENCE

Another question to ask is how much does the referee interfere with the game, how consistent is he? In other words, how often, and to what extent, does he change the situation he's devised after he sees what may happen? Does he give the players many godly hints, or does he let them work things out on their own? Does he change dice rolls? Some referees will alter anything in order to attain a preconceived outcome. I think this is despicable, but some players don't mind; others even demand it, so that the "novel" will have good climaxes.

UMPIRE VS GOD

Is the referee there to serve the players as a neutral umpire, or is he intent on manipulating characters and world in order to amuse himself? The latter likes to be called "god" and maintain a high interference rate. "Novel" referees are often of this persuasion.

REAL TIME VS GAME TIME

Some referees allow players ten or fifteen minutes to plan an important move, though only a couple game min-

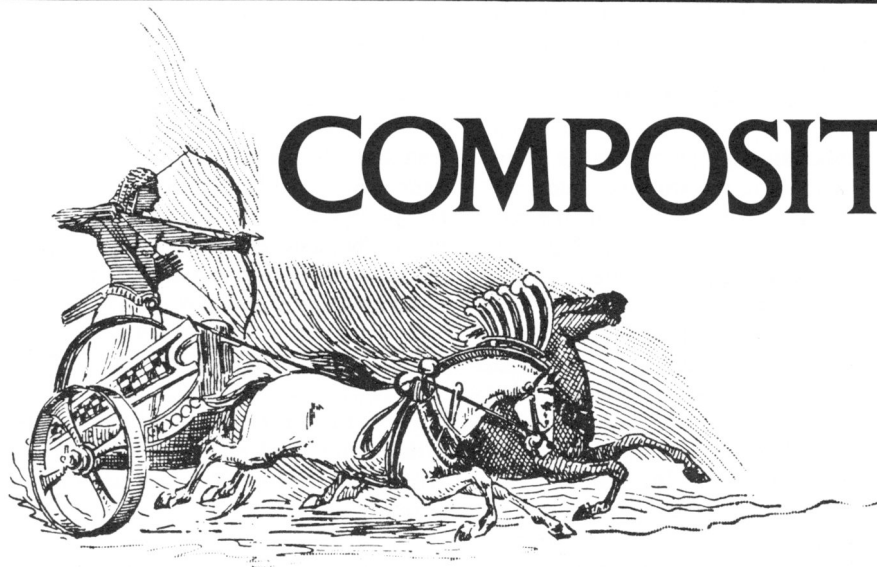
utes pass. Others require players to react as fast as their characters would have to in the battle or encounter. The rationale for the former is that players shouldn't be expected to react as quickly as trained, experienced adventurers — they're just ordinary people playing a weird game. And the game players' tradition allows sufficient time for planning and thought. The real-time (fast) referee lean toward "simulation" style, or perhaps they just like Chaos. (One of my pet peeves is the referee who gives you plenty of time to think until a really dangerous situation comes up — then he switches to fast time.)

CONCLUSION

Now you can read the beginning of this article and understand what I said. Where do you fit? Here is a list of categories:

Basic style: simulation — wargaming — silly game — novel
Believability
Risk and reward
Combat vs puzzle
Degree of uncertainty
Extent of the supernatural
Immortality, high levels, and science
Skill
Homogeneity of characters
Fate
Lords of the world
Rigid vs free form
Referee interference
Umpire vs god
Game time vs real time





COMPOSITE BOWS

By Simon Magister

As most of the medieval-era role-playing games, and a few of those that aren't, include the composite bow as one of the available missile weapons it is incumbent upon the Game Master to be at least minimally familiar with these arms. Unfortunately this bow is much less well-known to westerners than the traditional simple bow and the derived Anglo-Welsh longbow. This article is meant to give the interested GM or player some information on the various aspects of this important weapon.

GENERAL HISTORY — Composite bows are considered to be a comparatively recent development (compared to the simple bow, which has been around since at least 12,000 B.C.). Its origin is lost, but was probably the result of a crossing of the sinew-backed wooden bow and the recurved horn bow, both of which have been around since 5000 B.C. It was possibly used by the Assyrians and Scythians and almost certainly by the later Parthians, although unfortunately no examples survive from these periods. The composite bow never really caught on in the west, for several

reasons: the Roman and Germanic tradition stressed hand-to-hand conflict, often preceded by the hurling of throwing weapons but with the bow relegated to the place of a minor support weapon; the moister European climate was harder on composite bows than that of the Near East and North Africa; and wood suitable for bow-construction was generally much more abundant in Europe. Composite construction was used in western crossbows following the Crusades until the introduction of the steel bow in the late 14th century.

and certain types of goat. Bovine horn is not usable because of a tendency to split when stressed. Sinew was taken from the leg tendons of deer or other animals.

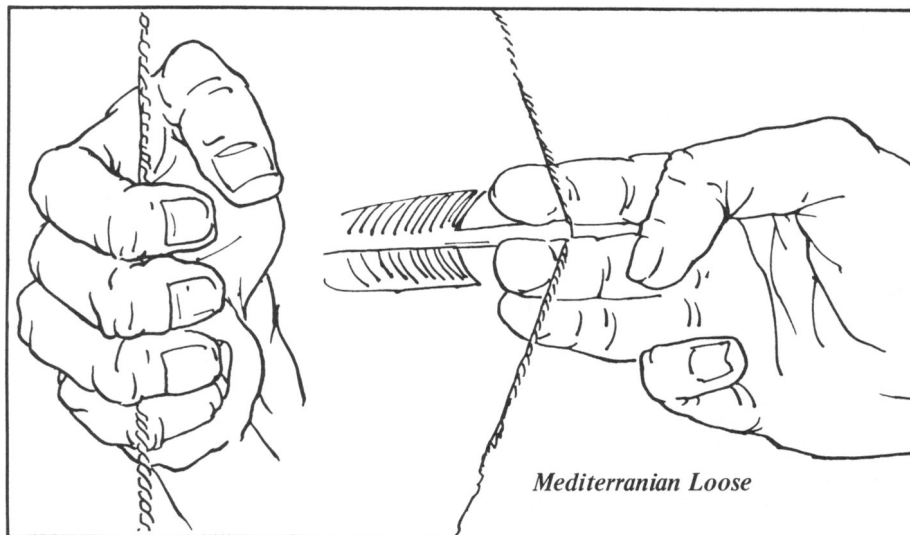
Construction of the bow started in the autumn, with the assembly of the components of the wooden core, the cooler and more humid weather ensuring slow and thorough adhesion. Next the strips of horn were glued to the belly of the core (that part of the bow which faces the archer when the bow is aimed) and firmly bound to dry, the bow being

Particularly well-known is the shot of Sultan Selim of Ottoman Turkey in 1798 . . . witnessed by the British ambassador . . . it was set down as being at least 953 yards . . .

COMPOSITION AND MANUFACTURE — Composite bows were made of four basic substances; a wooden core, horn for strength, sinew for resilience, and glue to bind the whole together. The types of horn used were those of the carabao, the ibex, the water buffalo,

bent upon its back (the opposite of the position when strung) into a "C" and left for three months while the glue dried completely. When warm weather came the sinew would be dried, beaten out, impregnated with glue, and applied to the bow's back in up to three layers, each layer being allowed to dry before the next was applied. When the glue had set the hardened sinew would be shaped with a file and the process of adjusting the arms of the bow into their final alignment by heat and pressure was begun. Finally, the back was veneered with tree bark and varnished, the whole process having taken about a year, partially in waiting for the glue to dry between steps and partially waiting for the appropriate weather to achieve optimal results in each step. The finished bow would be about 45 inches long when strung. Bowstrings were made of raw silk fibers or hair twisted together and bonded with glue or of strips of animal hide (camel was said to be best) by a process of soaking, twisting, and stretching for several days.

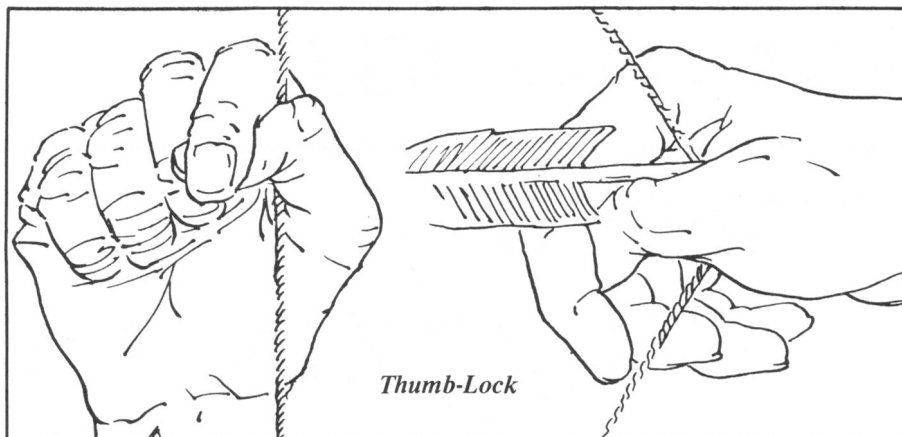
ARROWS — Eastern arrows were usually about 30 inches long and weighed 0.9 to 1.3 ounces. The arrowhead of a war arrow would weigh 0.15 to 0.2 ounces and would be a tapered spike with a square cross-section (very



similar to the English "bodkin" head). The point would be slightly blunted, as a point too fine could bend or snap upon striking armor and prevent the arrow from penetrating. The arrow would be fletched with three or four eagle or vulture tail feathers.

LOCKING AND DRAWING—The lock (more commonly "loose") is the method by which the arrow is held and the bowstring drawn. In European countries the "Mediterranean loose" was (and is) practiced almost exclusively; it is the familiar lock in which the first three fingers draw the string with the arrow's nock placed between the first and middle fingers. The Orientals however preferred the thumb-lock, in which the thumb is curled around the bowstring and held under the first or first and second fingers, the rest of the hand being balled into a fist with the knuckles up, and the arrow's nock resting on top of the thumb and against the first finger. To guard the thumb from injury a leather protector or a thumb-ring of bone or ivory was used.

With either lock, the important point is that the string must not drag unduly against the fingers or thumb when released, as this will slow the arrow down and reduce its accuracy. The Orientals considered that for military purposes the best draw was one in which the arrow was pulled back slowly and continuously until only a fist's length remained between its head and the bow, and then after a slight pause the arrow would be rapidly "snatched" back the remaining distance and a sharp loose executed; this gave a faster and crisper (though less accurate) shot than drawing to the full, holding and aiming, and then loosing.



usually only be guessed at, a practice requiring long experience. As you may remember from freshman physics, an arrow leaving the bow (or a bullet leaving a firearm) immediately begins to fall at an increasing rate (9.8 meters/second/second). A fast projectile will reach the target in a shorter span of time and thus will have fallen a shorter distance than a slow one would fired at the same point, but each projectile will fall at the same rate in respect to absolute time if wind resistance (and Einsteinian relativity) is ignored. To overcome this, the bow hand is elevated to achieve a trajectory that will prevent the arrow from striking the ground before it hits the target (in other words, the archer aims above the point he actually wishes to hit, and the arrow will (hopefully) have fallen to the proper point once it reaches the target). The Asiatics estimated the proper elevation by aligning the

APPENDIX: THE HORSEBOW

Some RPG rules include two types of composite bows, a regular one and a shorter less powerful one often designated as for use while on horseback. This is a misconception growing out of the European reasoning that, since the longbow could not be used on horseback and shorter substitutes had to be adopted, the same must hold true for the composite bow. Trench writes in his *History of Marksmanship*, "I doubt that the most powerful reflex bows were in fact used by mounted men: I doubt if a man on horseback could draw a 100-lb. bow, and I am sure that he could never string it." However the author of the manuscript on which *Saracen Archery* is based, who is thought to have been a high officer of the Mamelukes, mentions different sorts of composite bows for warfare, hunting, target shooting, flight shooting, and trick shots but makes no mention of a separate bow for use while mounted, though he devotes a whole chapter to the procedure and equipment involved in shooting from horseback; and in his chapter on methods of stringing the bow lists two separate ways for performing this task while mounted. While it is quite legitimate to have such lighter composite bows available, as they would be used for small game hunting and such, military forces would generally not be armed with these weapons, unless perhaps they are composed of hobbits, etc., who can't draw a full-sized bow.

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- Trench, Charles Chenevix. *A History of Marksmanship*. Norwich: Jarrold & Sons Ltd., c. 1972. The author is an English officer and gentlemen of the old school, giving him a pro-European bias in general and England in particular that leads him to some, ah, unfortunate conclusions. Still, an above-average source on the general history of all sorts of missile weapons.

A high officer of the Mamelukes mentions different sorts of composite bows for warfare, hunting, target shooting, flight shooting, and trick shots . . .

RANGES AND RANGING—It cannot be contested that some quite remarkable long shots have been made with the composite bow. Particularly well-known is the shot of Sultan Selim of Ottoman Turkey in 1798; this shot was witnessed by the British ambassador and was set down as being 1400 Turkish pikes in length, the exact English measure being in question but conceded to be at least 953 yards and probably 972 yards. There are many other authenticated examples of shots of 600 or more yards. However, the important thing to remember here is that all these shots were made with specially made competition bows and with the short, light (24 inches and 0.4 oz.) flight arrow, both of which were used only for flight shooting, a popular form of competition in which the objective was to shoot the arrow the farthest, without any mention of accuracy or power being made. With the war bow and armor-piercing arrows things become quite a bit different. In *Arab Archery* it is estimated that the shortest practical range is 15 yards and the longest is 75 yards, while beyond 175 yards accuracy is impossible. Trained archers en masse using arcing fire could put down an unaimed but still dangerous harassing fire at ranges up to 400 yards. At 75 yards it was considered that a good, well-practiced archer should be able to group arrows within a circle three feet in diameter.

Of course, in combat the actual range can

various fingers of the bow hand with the top of the target. For example, to hit a man at a range of 200 cubits (approx. 115 yards) the archer might line up his middle finger with the man's head, while at a range of 300 cubits (about 175 yards) he would line up his little finger with the man's head. This of course would vary with the bow, and for that matter the hand, used, and had to be determined by the archer himself by experiment. It should be noted that only the Orientals, firing from the right side of the bow, could use this method. The Europeans fired from the left, which blocked the line of sight to the target, forcing them to range from under the bow hand. Similarly, it is the thumb-lock which allows firing from the right side; attempting this with the Mediterranean loose will result in greatly reduced accuracy because of the way the string travels after leaving the fingers. At this point one might ask what advantage, if any, did the English longbow possess over the composite bow? The answer is that while both bows had similar pulls (and both types of bowmen drew all the way to the lobe of the ear), the longbow fired a longer and heavier arrow, usually 2½ to 3 ounces in weight. Given the same initial push, the lighter Oriental arrow will travel faster and farther, but the heavy longbow arrow will be less affected by wind and far less likely to splinter when striking armor, making for better penetration.

METAL MARVELS

HERITAGE'S

DUNGEON DWELLERS

By John T. Sapienza, Jr.

Dungeon Dwellers is Heritage's latest line of figures, which come in blister packs in distinctive dark green colors. The initial releases are adventurers, to be followed by monster packs. Heritage will also be issuing *Dungeon Builder* standing walls and floors, molded plastic *Scenoramics* towers and castles, and *Scenosquare* modular terrain sections for outdoor expeditions, all scaled for use with 25mm figures. It's an ambitious program.

The eight packs reviewed in this issue were all sculpted by Max Carr. Each pack presents four figures of a specified character class, and costs \$3.95. Write to Heritage USA, 9840 Monroe Dr., Building 116, Dallas, TX 75220, for a catalog. The titles used for each figure below were supplied by *Different Worlds*, and do not appear on the figure packs.



The Wizard, pack 1200, is unusual, for instead of showing four wizards it shows the same wizard in four different poses. The wizard is a male human with a mustache and a long goatee, wearing a pointed hat with stars on it, a long open robe with flaring sleeves and embroidered hems, under which he wears a belted tunic and necklace, and boots. In *wizard with staff*, the wizard holds a dragon-headed staff in his left hand as he looks in that direction. Around his head on the right side flies an owl familiar. The figure is 35mm tall, 30 mm to the top of the wizard's head.

In *wizard casting spell*, the wizard looks right and gestures with a raised left hand and outstretched right arm. Around his left side peers a waist-high demon familiar. The figure is 32mm tall, 29mm to the top of the wizard's head.

In *wizard with book*, the wizard looks intently into the large book cradled in his right arm. From his upraised left hand emerges a cloud of smoke forming a screaming face. A banshee, or just something about to bite? The figure is 42mm tall, 30mm to the top of the wizard's head.

The fourth pose is the most spectacular, *wizard casting enchantment*. The wizard stands looking up with outspread arms. From his hands comes smoke which is forming into a being over his head, holding a sword and from whose gaping skeletal jaws comes a silent challenge. Lovely. The figure is 50mm tall, 30mm to the top of the wizard's head.



Wizards, pack 1201, has four male human magic users. The *wizard with staff* is a traditional pose, with robes and a beard that almost reaches the ground. He holds a wizard's staff in his right hand while looking left and pointing with his left hand. The figure is 32 mm tall, 28mm to the top of the wizard's head (not counting his hat whenever a top of head figure is given).

The *wizard with scroll* has a waist-length beard, and wears robes with a hood over his head, and a patterned girdle from which a scabbarded dagger and a pouch hang at his waist. With his left hand he holds an open scroll on which writing can be seen, while he speaks and points to the right with his other hand. A nice action pose. The figure is 28mm tall.

The *wizard with book* also wears robes and hood, but his beard reaches his knees. He holds a large book under his left arm while giving the open handed sign of peace with his right. He carries a large load of equipment—a backpack and bedroll, a waterskin, a pouch, a scrollcase, and two wands attached to his back or belt. Very attractive. The figure is 30 mm tall.

The *wizard casting spell* is very spectacular. He wears robes and a cape but no hood, his beard falling to his knees. He holds out his left hand as if to balance his outstretched right hand, from which a blast of flame extends. The figure is 28mm high and 39mm wide.



Knights, pack 1202, has four male human fighters. The *fighter in plate* walks forward with triangular shield raised and sword held against the leg with his right hand. He wears a plain helmet, tunic, and a belt with scabbarded dagger and scabbard for his sword. The figure is 30mm tall.

The *charging knight* wears plate armor covered with tunic and cape, scabbard, and two pouches. He carries a triangular shield, and his sword is raised over his head up to his helmet plume (thus making both sturdier). His helmet's visor is raised, revealing a fierce expression. The figure is 39mm tall, 28mm to the top of the fighter's head.

The *fighter with battleaxe* wears chainmail and long tunic to which are belted a scabbarded sword and dagger. He wears a helmet, carries a long shield in his left hand and raises his axe overhead with the right hand. The figure is 38mm tall, 30mm to the top of the fighter's head.

The *man-at-arms* wears a helmet and either leather armor or covered chainmail. He carries a round shield in his left hand, and is in the process of delivering a backhanded slash with his sword with his right hand. He has a short beard, and carries a profusion of pouches along with his backpack and dagger. The figure is 30mm tall.



1204 Clerics

Clerics, pack 1204, comes next because pack 1203 wasn't out when this column was written (neither were 1208-09). Before I describe its contents, I'd like to comment on clerical figures in general. I see a lot of cleric figures in robes without shields, and can't help but wonder exactly what the sculptor believes they are going to be used for. In *Dungeons & Dragons*, at least, the cleric typically is equipped with plate armor, shield, and mace, yet we get little attention paid to this need. It is very strange.

The *cleric with ankh* is a beardless male human with shoulder-length hair. He wears open robes through which can be seen a tunic with belt from which hang two pouches, and boots. Around his neck he wears a small ankh (hooded cross), while slung on his back is a backpack; another pouch hangs over his robes at his right. He stands with both hands raised, looking right and holding raised in his right hand a large ankh. This could very easily be used as a magic user casting a spell. The figure is 29mm tall.

The *cleric with book* is a fat beardless male human in robes and hood. He holds a gnarled staff in his right hand and a large book under his left arm. From his belt hang several pouches, a cross, and a mace, while on his back are bedroll and backpack. This could be used as a magic user figure if you file the mace down to a wand instead. The figure is 32mm tall, 29mm to the top of the head.

The *cleric with mace and cross* is a male human with a short beard, a bulbous nose and a pot belly (the fat cleric seems to be something of a cliché). He wears a helmet but no armor other than his robes, and no shield. He wears a cross around his neck and three pouches around his waist at the back. He holds his mace in his right hand at his waist as he looks to the left and raises a crucifix in his left hand in the traditional undead-banishing gesture. The figure is 30mm tall.

The *cleric with flail* is the only man-at-arms in the group. This is a male human wearing chainmail covered by tunic and cape, with high boots. A large pouch is slung over his back. He wears a helmet, carries a round shield with a raised Formee cross in his left hand, while in his right hand he carries a morningstar-type flail, which because it is molded as resting against his shield is very sturdy. Since morningstars have a tendency to break, this figure should be attractive for anyone looking for a fighter with morningstar, although a morningstar is a forbidden weapon for *D&D*-style clerics, who are forbidden pointed weapons, but would be permitted a ball-and-chain flail. The figure is 30mm tall.



1205 Thieves & Assassins

Thieves & Assassins, pack 1205, contains four male human figures. The *assassin* wears a tunic and high boots, a cape with raised hood, and conceals his identity by hiding his face by raising the cape partway over it with his raised left arm, as he looks that way. He wears a pouch at his

waist and holds a dagger in his right hand, partly hidden by his cape. The figure is 29mm tall.

The *sneak thief* appears to be trying to sneak quietly along. He leans forward, looking to the left as if trying to determine whether he has been detected. He holds his left hand partially to the rear and his right, holding a short knife, slightly forward. He wears bedroll and backpack, several pouches, a scabbard for his knife, and a coil of rope. The figure is 27mm tall.

The *thief in hood* looks startled as he stands with a sack in his left hand and a sword raised over his left shoulder in his right hand. He wears a tunic and high boots, bedroll and backpack, several pouches, a coil of rope, and a scabbard for his sword. The figure is 30mm tall.

The *bandit* appears to be shouting something to his left as he runs forward with a small pouch in his left hand and a sword pointing down in his right hand. He wears no hat or hood, but has shoes, trousers, and shirt, backpack and pouches, sword scabbard, and a coil of rope over his right shoulder. He also wears chainmail, something expressly forbidden thieves in *D&D* for the very sound reason that it makes too much noise for silent movement and weighs too much for ready climbing. More of a bandit or bard figure. Considering the effect of chainmail on the figure, this might even be usable as a female character, albeit a not very pretty one. The figure is 30mm tall.



1206 Female Magic Users

Female Magic Users, pack 1206, will undoubtedly sell well, as should pack 1207, since female figures are still relatively rare, and these are attractive. The *mage with bird staff* appears to be running away from something. She holds her staff in her right hand, as she leans to the right while looking left and gesturing to the left with that hand. She has a pouch at her belt. The figure is 27mm tall.

The *mage with snake staff* wears a cape and hood, boots, and a girdle around her waist. It is not clear whether she is naked aside from these items, but I am inclined to doubt it since Max has not run to naked females in the rest of this series. She holds a tall snake-headed staff in her left hand, and an open scroll on which writing can be seen in her right hand. The figure is 32mm tall, 29mm to the top of the mage's head.

The *mage with skull staff* appears to have been startled by something. She is swivelling to her left side, where she holds a short staff with a skull mounted on it, and holds her right hand out to the right, either for balance or to gesture. She wears a low-cut gown with girdle, a pouch and a scabbarded dagger. This is a fine example of motion caught in sculpture. The figure is 28mm tall.

The *mage with hook staff* wears robes and girdle, and a hood clasped around her neck but folded over her shoulders. She holds a tall knobby staff with a short hook at its top. She leans slightly to the right as she gestures in that direction with her right hand. The figure is 35mm tall, 30mm to the top of her head.



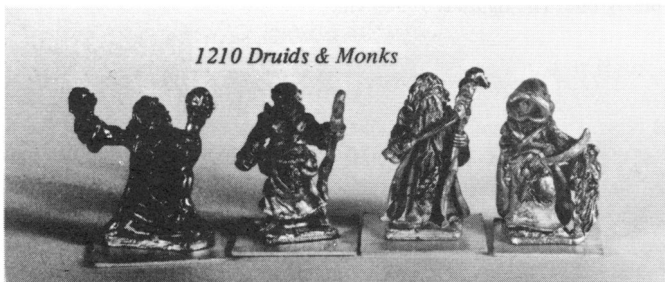
1207 Female Fighters

Female Fighters, pack 1207, is four female human fighters. The *barbarian woman* wears no armor but her furs and a horned helmet. She holds her sword out behind her in her right hand while holding her wooden shield (oval with a small semicircle cut out of each side, with a metal boss) in her left hand. She has no sword scabbard, but wears a scabbarded dagger at her belt. Her long hair is draped partially across the top of shield, a nice touch. The figure is 30mm tall.

The *woman in scalemail* carries an axe in her right hand and a round wooden shield in her left hand. She wears a metal helmet with horns, a cape, tall boots, a scabbarded sword, a bow, and a quiver of arrows (which is smooth on top, not well modelled); a regular walking armory. The figure is 30mm tall.

The *woman in plate* wears no helmet, and her long hair completely covers her back to her waist, but two pouches and a bulky dagger are visible at her belt. Her sword scabbard is strapped across her shoulder to her left side. She carries a kite shield in her left hand, and her sword is in her right hand with its tip on the ground. The figure is 28mm tall.

The *woman charging* is a female fighter in full charge, her sword raised in her right hand all the way back at the beginning of a swing, her cape flying behind her, and her shield pointing back (a kite shield with a semi-circle cut out of the top). She wears a tunic with a heavy belt supporting her sword sheath, a pouch slung over her shoulder to her right, and high boots. She wears no helmet, and her hair streams out behind her. She does not seem to be wearing armor; at least none is visible, but you can always imagine chainmail hidden under her tunic if you like. A wonderfully dynamic figure, and my favorite of the pack. The figure is 33mm tall, 29mm to top of head.



Druids & Monks, pack 1210, completes Heritage's initial group of packs. The *monk* is a bald male human in robes, with hood folded down his shoulders. He wears bedroll and backpack and five pouches, and carries a gnobby quarterstaff in his left hand. The figure is 29mm tall.

The *druid with scimitar* is a male human with a waist-length beard. He wears long robes but no hat or hood, and has a fancy girdle through which is thrust a sprig of mistletoe. He holds a scimitar across his chest in his right hand, and a hooked staff in his left hand. The figure is 30 mm tall.

The *druid with carved staff* is a male human with a mustache but no beard. He leans slightly forward in an aggressive pose, holding a gnarled staff carved with a bald human head upright in his left hand while he raises a sprig of mistletoe in his right hand. He wears long robes and an open long overrobe (somewhat like a cape with sleeves), a belt with a fancy buckle, and a large pouch strapped over his shoulder on his left rear side. This could also serve as a magic user figure, with the mistletoe serving as material for a spell, or painted to look like flames bursting from his right hand. The figure is 30mm tall.

The *female druid* appears to be unique; at least I've never seen a druid figure for a woman before. She wears heavy robes with an exposed bodice (somewhat improbable, perhaps), and with girdle and hood. She also wears bedroll and backpack, whose straps cross her chest. She holds her scimitar in her right hand, pointing with it to the severed head she holds in her left hand (well, that's one way to prevent forest fires). The figure is 29mm tall.

Max Carr has done a fine job on these figures. They display a reasonable amount of individualization in the faces; they don't always look handsome, but they are full-featured—look closely. Most striking is the way Max incorporates motion in many of his figures, which is far more satisfying than figures of people just standing there. I also like the way he provides various backpacks, bedrolls, pouches, waterskins, etc., for the figures to carry their equipment around in. I hope he'll do a couple of packs of warrior clerics, one male and one female, and more females in armor with various weapons in the future, including nonhumans such as elves and dwarves.



ADVENTURES IN FANTASY

The next generation in Fantasy Role-Playing Games

by

DAVID L. ARNESON & RICHARD SNIDER

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SCENARIO REVIEW



The Keep ON THE BORDERLAND

By Anders Swenson

Dungeon Module B-2, *The Keep on the Borderland*, is an adventure booklet written by Gary Gygax. It is 28 pages long, plus a separate cover folder with color paintings on the outside and a dungeon map on the inside. It is published by TSR Games, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53140, and sells for \$5.50.

The Keep on the Borderland calls itself an "introductory module," and it is specifically intended for the beginning Game Master to use in his first adventures. It is for level 1-3 characters and uses *Basic Dungeons & Dragons*. It should get the adventure campaign off to a good start, offering both adventures and a place of refuge for the adventurers between sorties. It is also a reasonable source for anybody who needs a 'canned' castle of the ordinary, realistic variety.

The book is written in two parts, the castle description and the surrounding adventures. The castle is a typical Dark Ages style border keep. It is well planned technically, the layout conforms to what I know about such places. The castle is a border bastion of the human "Realm," and stands at the edge of the chaotic wilderness. Within its walls are all the facilities the adventurers should need, except for extra healing spells. The adventurers are intended to rest and re-equip themselves in the castle between sorties against the monsters. The player-characters may be able to advance themselves within the castle hierarchy, but this is not an important part of the scenario.

The second part of the book concerns the monsters resident in the vicinity of the castle. There is an encampment of bandits in the woods, a nest of lizard men, a giant spider, a madman, and a warren of unfriendly types living in a place called the Caves of Chaos. Exploring the caves is the main adventure of the book. The caves open on a small ravine, and consist of tunnels dug back into what must be relatively soft rock in the side of the ravine. The caves are inhabited by various creatures of relatively low level (in *D&D* terms) and of not impossibly large numbers. Their alliances, relationships, and hostilities are described by the author, and of course the caves and their denizens are keyed with adequate detail and some interesting touches. It seemed to me that the cave complex mirrors the function of the keep as a border outpost, in this case for the forces of chaos.

In addition to the adventure itself, Gygax has written many paragraphs of advice to the beginning GM. There is material on developing rooms within the castle, advice on the proper conduct of fantasy role-playing, and explanation of the details the GM must be prepared to have ready to continue play beyond

the scope of the present volume. There is even a glossary of some of the more unusual terms used in the text. Finally, there is a small section of notes on the conversion of the adventure to *AD&D* rules, although little hard advice is presented in this paragraph.

This book helps fill the gap between the capabilities of low-level characters and the rather harsh environment of the typical TSR outdoor encounter tables. Characters can work through these relatively easy scenarios and gain the experience which will allow them to cope with the tougher monsters beyond. The classic castle in its non-classic setting provides an ideal environment for beginning characters, and the pattern given of characters not leaving the context of the adventure between expeditions will provide a useful precedent for the later construction of an entire campaign.

There were a few things I did not like about this book. First of all was the length — 28 pages plus cover is short for a book priced at \$5.50; most publishers provide 40 or more pages for this price. Second was the cover, while the color was nice, the drawing was not very good; and the fighters depicted were obviously drawn from metal figures rather than from life or imagination. I was disappointed that the castle was not more obviously set up to repel opponents armed with magic, and I question the large number of small siege engines Gygax has on top of the towers, exposed to the elements. Finally, the scale of the area map showing the castle and local monsters is too small both for the movement rules proposed and for a realistic assessment of the distances to which monsters could expect to approach the castle and not be apprehended by the garrison.

Overall, though, these are quibbles. For all its shortness, the text is meaty and well-written. When I run this scenario, I intend to expand the scale of the area map ten-fold, except for the actual Caves of Chaos, to bring things into a more realistic perspective. Once this detail is corrected, I shall have a reasonable adventure for the players in my campaign, and I anticipate several evenings of enjoyment from it. It is well balanced, and suitable for the levels of characters for which it was written. *D&D* is a good introductory set of adventure gaming rules, and *The Keep on the Borderland* is a good introduction to *D&D*.



ZELAN The BEAST



By Ron Weaver

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY

A. BEFORE TIME

Kyger Litor founded many houses of Noble or Mistress Race trolls to rule over her Men of Darkness. One of the more notable of these was the House of Garasha Litor. During the period of the Greater Darkness, the House of Garasha Litor grew and prospered, ruling vast areas of the surface world; including much of the area of the Rockwood Mountains where Kygor Litor built her legendary Castle of Lead. During the battle between Storm Bull and the Devil, an emissary of this house, Zelana Litor, observed and followed Storm Bull's retreat into the Storm Hills and there found him lying beside a pool, grievously wounded. Having seen his magnificent battle against the Devil, Zelana approached Storm Bull and offered him comfort. As she cleansed his wounds with water from the pool, Storm Bull grew increasingly amorous (due to an aphrodisiacal property of the water) and using his greater size and strength sired in her a child. Shortly thereafter Chalana Arroy arrived to heal Storm Bull and Zelana disappeared into the mountains. The child borne of this union had powers and abilities both akin to, and far removed from those of his parents. Known as "Zelan the Beast," he inherited his father's bestial nature and a touch of Darkness from his mother. From the water's of the pool he gained the chaotic power of changing from man to beast. This touch of Chaos caused Zelan to be shunned and hated by man and troll alike and only the lycanthropes or shape-changers offered him succor. Within their community he became a great leader and fought for acceptance of his people by the races of the world.

B. SINCE TIME BEGAN

Zelan slowly but surely united all lycanthropes and under his leadership they commenced their unending war against persecution of their race. Expanding outward from Beast Valley, lycanthropes settled in forests throughout Glorantha and seek only to live in harmony with their surroundings. Zelan died in 469 S.T., but his writings and teachings have been carried down throughout history by lycanthropes everywhere.

C. LIFE AFTER DEATH

The cult of Zelan the Beast claims that his followers will join Zelan after death and continue their fight against the persecution of their race.

D. RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS

The Runes of this cult are Beast, Man, and Darkness.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT

A. REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE

The purpose of this cult is to bring an end to the persecution of lycanthropes by all races.

B. SOCIAL/POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER

Because of their affinity for forested lands and the fact that close contact with others (crowds and noise) cannot be tolerated for any great length of time, the power of this cult is severely limited in scope.

Another factor which does not endear them to the general populace is the taint of Chaos adhering to their shape-changing ability. Although not necessarily chaotic in nature, their actions are continually suspect. This reaction is enhanced by their extreme paranoia and unwarranted outbursts at the least sign of degradation.

C. PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES

The cult of Zelan maintains minimal contact and relationships with other cults. This is due mainly to the taint of Chaos prevalent throughout the membership. Cults of Light and Fire are especially antagonistic towards lycanthropes.

There are exceptions to this, however, and the cult of Kyger Litor is one of them. Unlike the cult of Storm Bull, which rejects vehemently any association at all with Zelan, Kyger Litor grudgingly allows contact due to the familial ties through Zelan's mother, Zelana.

There is also an inexplicable tie with the Lunar cults. The moon has an uncontrollable effect on members of this cult and is accorded respect among its members. Members of the cults

of Yanafal Tarnils and the Red Goddess are even friendly towards the cult of Zelan.

III. ORGANIZATION

A. INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION

The cult of Zelan has no formal structure beyond its high priests and priestesses who claim inspiration directly from their hero, Zelan. Whenever family units of lycanthropes meet, the eldest warrior will become the leader for the occasion.

B. INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION

Each type of lycanthrope (bear, tiger, etc.) has their own high priest or priestess, and as such is the eldest priest of that class. If he should die, the next eldest takes his place. There are any number of priests or priestesses for a given class depending only on the number of family units that are in existence. The priest has the final say on matters of religious belief, but can only advise the clan head (eldest warrior) on other matters requiring decisions.

C. CENTER OF POWER, HOLY PLACES

The cult centers of power lie in Beast Valley where Zelan lived and died, but many places of meditation may be found in thickly forested areas of Glorantha. These are usually small, peaceful glens containing an ivory statue of Zelan with arms outstretched in friendship.

D. HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS

Each season has a holy day during the Harmony week. This is always held on Wildday, when the moon is full. It is at this time that the reputation of the cult suffers most as members lose their self control and race through the darkness howling at the moon and in other ways debasing themselves.

The cult's high holy day comes during the Dark season. Members migrate from all over Glorantha to Beast Valley for this celebration. The howls and inhuman screams coming from Beast Valley have been said to have been heard from as far away as Rich Post and anyone who is not a member of the cult gives this area a wide berth during this time.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP

A. REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN

Lay membership is granted automatically to all lycanthropes without regard for their class. They remain lay members until they attain the status necessary to become initiates.

Members of other races are welcomed into the fold also, providing they meet the requirements of the cult. They must swear fealty to the high priest of the class to which they are joined. They must take on and use the shape-change spell of the cult and take and oath to marry only within the membership of the cult, thereby insuring that their offspring will have the natural were ability.

B. REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG

Lay members are required to follow the terms of their acceptance and to attend all cult functions on high holy days. They are to go out into the world and attempt to bring converts into the cult. They are also required never to "open" hostilities with any other race, but to accord themselves bravely when a fight is forced upon them. They are to maintain their honor and never desert friends or family in time of need.

C. MUNDANE BENEFITS

The cult promises to protect its lay members while within

the confines of Beast Valley. The shape-change spell is given to all members free of charge.

D. SKILLS

The cult teaches the following skills to lay members at half the normal cost: Track by Smell, Hide in Cover, Move Quietly, and Spot Trap.

E. BATTLE MAGIC

Lay members may purchase any standard battle magic spells as given in *RuneQuest* except Fire Arrow, Fire Blade, Ignite, Light, and Lightwall. Lay members are also taught the Rune spell of Shape-Change free of charge.

SHAPE CHANGE

Cost—4 POW points

Range—160 meters

Duration—15 minutes

Non-stackable

Reusable

1D4 Beast

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1 | Bear |
| 2 | Wolf |
| 3 | Tiger |
| 4 | Tusker |

This spell is special to followers of Zelan and is given free of charge to members of his cult. The first time a person uses this spell he rolls 1D4 to determine what type of lycanthrope he has an affinity for. From then on he will always become that creature when the spell is used. This also is used to determine what clan a person

will join and take as his family. This spell is given by imbedding a crystal with the Beast Rune on it in a person's wrist. From thence comes the saying "He has the mark of the beast on him." When thrown, this spell causes the character to take on the shape and all physical attributes of his chosen form, including fighting ability. He will also be completely healthy and have new points for hit locations. However, if he should suffer any damage while in his were-shape, this damage will be carried back to his human form upon changeover. Hit points per location for his were-shape will be determined using the new physical attributes gained in this form.

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP

A. REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION

Candidates for initiation must know at least one weapon at 60% and a weapon or shield parry at 60%. They must also have CHA of at least 12.

B. REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED

Initiates must obey the instructions and rules of their high priest or priestess and tribal chieftain.

They must return to the place of their initiation on every high holy day and sacrifice 2 points of POW.

They must tithe 10% of worldly goods to their cult.

C. MUNDANE BENEFITS

Initiates who elect to spend time at one of the temples of Zelan in Beast Valley will receive training in the weapons of their beast form up to the 60% level. They will also receive full board while in this training program.

D. SKILLS

Initiates may purchase all skills at half normal cost except Pick Pockets, Lock Picking, Riding, and Armorer skills.

Initiates will be taught to find water in any type of terrain if it is available and also to retrace their steps to a starting point despite any inclement weather conditions.

E. SPELLS

Initiates may purchase Darkwall, Strength, and Vigor at half price and the special Beast Mind-Link at normal cost.

BEAST MIND-LINK

Cost—2 POW points

Range—160 meters

Duration—12 hours

Non-stackable

Reusable

This passive spell allows the user to be in mind-link with the subject for the next 12 hours. This spell can only be used to control one unintelligent beast at a time. It is extremely useful in controlling beasts of burden, such as riding horses, who can sense the taint of Chaos about the person and cannot be ridden or even approached without it.

As is usual for initiates, they may purchase one-use versions of cult specialty spells, including Confusion and Padding.

VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

A. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

Rune Lords are the warrior leaders of the various clans. Their main duty is the safety of the clan. Every clan can and does normally have more than one Rune Lord associated with it. In cases such as this, the eldest is always the clan leader and remains so until he dies. There is no warrior competition for the position of clan leader and to fight an elderly clan leader for his position would be considered a crime of the lowest sort. When assigned to a clan upon initiation, the number of Rune Lords in that particular clan should be determined by rolling 1D4. Every year after a member becomes a Rune Lord, there is a 10% chance of being advanced one place towards clan leader status by the death of another Rune Lord. If a player is advanced to clan leader status he is called back to the clan and removed from adventuring.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

To become a Rune Lord a member must have been an initiate for at least one full year. He must have at least a 90% ability in one weapon and a 90% ability in weapon or shield parry, and have at least a 90% ability in one of his were-form attack modes. He must also be at least 90% in any two of these skills: Track by Smell, Hide in Cover, Move Quietly, Spot Trap, and Spot Hidden Item.

C. RESTRICTIONS

Rune Lords are required to marry within the lycanthrope community and sire at least one child before resuming a life of travel and adventure. This is to insure that anyone with the physical and mental abilities necessary to become a Rune Lord does not die without leaving an heir.

Rune Lords are required to return to their place of initiation into the cult every seasonal holy day for meditation and worship.

Rune Lords can never take part in an ambush of other parties, no matter what race they belong to, and if knowledgeable of such an ambush he must make every effort to warn the unsuspecting party.

D. BENEFITS

Rune Lords will have the appropriate skin of their were-form magically grafted to their skin as 5 point armor.

Rune Lords may have a familiar (allied spirit bound into it). This will always be his were-form counterpart.

Rune Lords are respected members of the community and will be treated as such.

Rune Lords will be given their own glade of meditation and will never be disturbed while therein.

Rune Lords determine the disposition of spoils after a battle.

VII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD

A. GENERAL STATEMENT

The Priests or Priestesses of the were-cult are the religious and social leaders of the community. They control all cult functions except defense during everyday life. They control all cult functions during holy and high holy days.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

Candidates must have been initiates for at least two years. They must have a POW of 18 or better and a CHA of at least 16. They must also have brought at least two converts into the were community.

C. RESTRICTIONS

Priests of this cult can never actively combat other cult members with either skills or magic unless given special permission from the high priest. This permission will only be given for something of interest to the cult itself or as a boon to a high priest of another friendly cult.

Their DEX based skills are limited to DEXx5 as a percentage, as with most Priests.

D. BENEFITS

Priests are treated with dignity and honor in the community. They receive a 10% tithe from all initiates in their clan and use this income for expenses, both their own and those of the cult.

Whenever Priests are required to travel they are accompanied by at least two Rune Lords.

Priests control all religious functions of the cult on holy days and speak for the entire clan in relations with outsiders, including trade benefits, diplomatic treaties, etc.

E. RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY

All standard Rune spells are available from the cult of Ze-lan. Rune Priests may summon were-beasts as per the spell.

F. SPECIAL CULT RUNE SPELLS

PADDING

Cost—1 POW point

Range—160 meters

Duration—15 minutes

Non-stackable

Reusable

Causes smashing weapons damage to be absorbed by the entire body suffering only half of the damage rolled. Also reduces a critical hit to a normal damage roll. This spell is quite handy in that members of the were cult cannot wear armor when they change to their were-form.

OBSCURE TRAIL

Cost—1 POW point

Range—160 meters

Duration—15 minutes

Non-stackable

Reusable

Completely removes all traces of user's passing including his

scent. This spell does not allow traces of tracks, broken branches, scent, etc. No trail can be found without the use of Rune magic.

SUMMON WERE-BEAST I Cost 1—POW point
Range—60 meters Duration—15 minutes
Non-stackable Reusable

This spell is used to summon a wolfbrother to aid the caster of the spell. The spell works and has the same limitations as that of summoning an elemental. The wolfbrother sacrificed for will be the same one to appear every time and will fight for 15 minutes or until destroyed, whichever comes first. If destroyed by lowering its POW to zero, it will never return and must be resacrificed for again. As in using an elemental, it takes one melee round to summon a wolfbrother and one melee round to give it instructions. The caster is also in Mind Speech with the wolfbrother and may change its instructions at any time.

SUMMON WERE-BEAST II Cost—2 POW points
Range—60 meters Duration—15 minutes
Non-stackable Reusable

This spell acts just as Summon Were-Beast I except that the user receives either a tiger son or a tusker (50-50 chance).

SUMMON WERE-BEAST III Cost—3 POW points
Range—60 meters Duration—15 minutes
Non-stackable Reusable



This spell acts just as Summon Were-Beast I except that the user receives a bearwalker.

CONFUSION Cost—1 POW point
Range—160 meters Duration—15 minutes
Stackable up to 4 points Reusable

This spell allows the caster to create an exact double of himself, one for every point of POW used in the spell. This double is indistinguishable from the user except through the use of Rune magic. The double will imitate in every way the actions of the user, but will disappear if the user is struck by either a weapon or a spell.

POISON CLAW Cost—1 POW point
Range—60 meters Duration—15 minutes
Stackable up to 4 points Reusable

This spell allows the user to coat his claws in were-form with a potency 5 poison per point of spell used. This spell also adds one point of damage per point of spell to damage done by claws; therefore a person using 4 points of POW in the spell could gain +4 damage and potency 20 poison effects.

VIII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS

A. SPIRIT OF REPRISAL: THE BEAST

Anyone who quits the cult of Zelan or breaks his clan vows will have the shadow of the Beast with them for a time. The Beast will remain with them causing adverse reactions in everyone that the person meets until, in order to survive, he is forced to assume his were-form. At this time the Beast will remove his shape-change power causing him to retain the form of his were for the rest of his days.

IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS

A. KYGER LITOR

Due to Zelan's mother, Zelana Litor, the cult of Zelan is closely tied to that of Kyger Litor. However, very few trolls have joined the cult of Zelan due to the taint of Chaos contained therein. The priestesses of Kyger Litor, although remaining aloof, do aid the lycanthropes by teaching them the spells of Darksee and Blinding.

DARKSEE Cost—1 POW point
Range—160 meters Duration—15 minutes
Non-stackable Reusable

Allows creatures which see best in full daylight to see in the dark as if it were full daylight. Creatures which are primarily nocturnal can see in full daylight as if it were the dark to which they are accustomed. It also negates the effect of Blinding.

BLINDING Cost—1 POW point
Range—160 meters Duration—15 minutes
Stackable Reusable

Blinds the target entity. The chance of the target hitting or parrying with a weapon goes down to the basic 5% and visually targetted spells cannot be cast (Detect Life or Healing still could be). Every extra Rune point used in this spell adds 25% to the chance of it working. Thus, if the caster had a POW of 18, it would attack as if he had a POW of 23, if he casts 2 points of it instead of one.

B. SEVEN MOTHERS

The cult of Zelan is associated with only two of the subcults of this Lunar religion; that of Yanafil's Tarnils and the Red Goddess. Unexplainably, the moon, especially the full moon, has always had a substantial effect on lycanthropes. This effect has resulted in a not unfriendly union between the cult of Zelan and that of the Red Goddess. From this Lunar subcult comes the spell Chaos Gift. The power of this spell, however, is of such a magnitude as to preclude its use by anyone except a Rune Priest.

CHAOS GIFT

Cost—2 POW points

Range—self

Duration—variable

Non-stackable

Reusable

This spell allows the Priest to adopt a random chaos creature from the Chaotic Features Table in *RuneQuest*, as determined by D100 (if 99 is rolled, roll again). This spell is subject to cyclical magic:

DARK/DYING MOON—will not work

CRESCENT MOONS—feature will work for 10 minutes

HALF MOONS—feature works for 15 minutes

FULL MOON—feature works for 4 hours

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

A. LYCANTHROPE CULTURE AND MENTAL ATTITUDES

Having the taint of Chaos, yet not being chaotic by nature, has made most lycanthropes extremely touchy about points of honor. If they consider themselves, their family, or their religion put down in any way by one outside their cult, they will challenge that person to immediate combat.

Lycanthropes have a severe handicap in that they cannot use battle magic spells while in were-form. However, their lessened intelligence does not preclude the use of their special Rune spells of Poison Claw, Padding, and Confusion.

Lycanthropes also have a disadvantage in that they find metal armor useless. Any armor worn is fine while he remains in human stature, but breaks apart when a person assumes his were-form. The only armor that can be worn by lay members and initiates of this cult is a special cuirboilli that is tied together by a strong set of leather thongs. As a person assumes were-form, the thongs break allowing the armor to fall away unharmed. The thongs are easily replaceable at the end of combat and most lycanthropes carry a dozen or so with them.

Lycanthropes have a definite aversion to city life. They cannot take crowds and excessive noise for more than a few days at best. This attitude seems to be a side effect of the shape-change spell as all humans who join this cult soon find themselves suffering from the same affliction.

Even with the existence of their cult, lycanthropes will probably continue through the ages being maligned and misunderstood. And even if they never reach their final goal of eradicating persecution throughout the races of the world, at least the cult of Zelan seems to be a step in the right direction.



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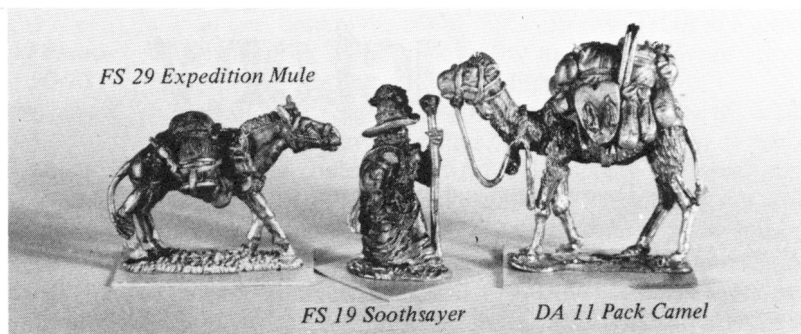
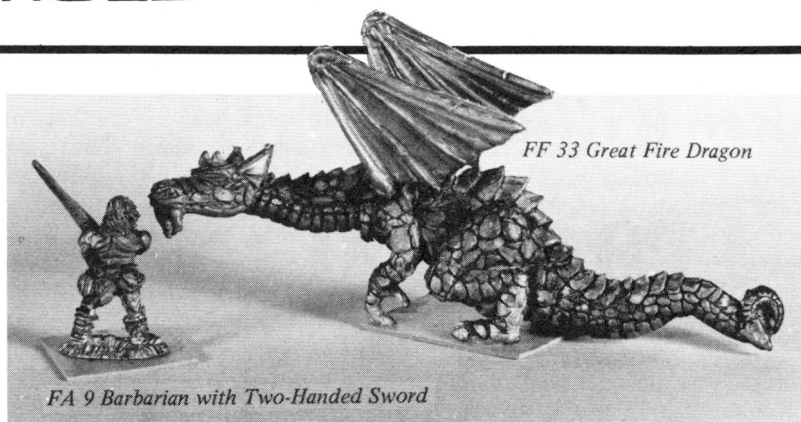
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REVIEW

Walter William's

Tradition of Victory

By Dave Arneson and Steve Perrin

This game consists of the two books named above and sells for \$10, or either volume for \$5 each. Available postpaid from Erisian Games, PO Box 14358, Albuquerque, NM 87191.

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Or, at least, it is a try at such a game. It has its successes and failures, both as an Age of Fighting Sail naval game and a RPG. To closely examine its triumphs and failings as a naval game, Different Worlds, asked Dave Arneson, author of TSR Hobbies' Don't Give Up the Ship, to comment on the first book, Heart of Oak.

HEART OF OAK

By Dave Arneson with editing by Steve Perrin

Paramount to any rules for sailing ships is the sailing of the vessel. According to these rules, to start sailing takes five minutes. In fact, 15 minutes from a standing start with a crack crew was considered good.

Once underway, a ship's captain must deal with the wind. The captain of a ship in this game must first consult the barometer. The barometer? Where's the barometer? Oh, there it is, on the pullouts. The barometer, and the wind direction tables, are set up on scales of 01-100. They must be consulted every ten turns (ten minutes). They are faintly modified by previous results. Still, it is possible to go from flat calm to roaring hurricane, with the wind whipping from NE to SW, in ten minutes. Weather can change abruptly on the open sea, but not that ab-




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ruptly. Players using these tables should use them much less often than called for in the rules or develop much stronger modifiers to changes in the wind.

The instructions for how ships deal with the capricious alterations in weather, and just plain get from one place to the next, are quite good, with several enlightening illustrations.

A lot of care has been taken to simulate the fine points of sailing, but I suggest preparing sections of cardboard ahead of time to reflect "point" headings. When a change of 22.5 degrees in heading is important to how well the ship moves, it is worth the effort to make the headings more accurate.

The pullout sheets have the sailing and fighting qualities for the sailing ships of most of the navies of the world in the period described. However, the rules comment that no ship charts are provided for the Turks, Russians, and Swedes "... because of the lack of information available on these navies, the Turks in particular." This is correct on the lack of data for the Turks. For the others, however, the information is in *Janes' Naval History of Great Britain*. That the Russians and Swedes "... tended to buy ships from the British and French, or to build copies" is a totally unfounded comment. A study of the Baltic wars of the period shows that these navies were large and varied, with many interesting variations.

The rules on signalling (optional), crew allocations (very important), fire ships (a rare play in the period), and movement (strangely dislocated from crew allocation, though the two are closely connected) are good though somewhat disorganized. We then come to the heart of the game, the combat.

The combat rules place a heavy emphasis on ships catching fire. Wooden ships were normally very vulnerable to fire, and for that reason the crews were quick to put fires out. They were particularly careful not to set themselves afire. Yet, this game calls for a 5% chance *every broadside* that the ship will set itself afire. In a battle lasting an hour, there is almost a certainty there will be a fire and a good chance the fire will burn up the ship. At the Battle of the Nile, twelve British fought 13 French for over four hours and only one ship, the French flagship, blew up from fire damage. Under this section of the

rules, four burning up would have been a conservative result. Perhaps a 1% chance would be better.

The regular gunfire seems extremely deadly in the light of how long many close actions lasted in reality. There are also excellent chances for Critical Hits from any range. Granted, at long and medium ranges the chances for the Critical being a miss is large, but this seems to be a contradiction of the very idea of a Critical Hit. Maybe it should be called "Special Damage"?

The procedure also makes for extensive bookkeeping and dice rolling. Rolling dice several times to figure out the wind speed and direction is reasonable, as it has little to do with the movement and fire of one round of battle. However, when the charts must be consulted again and again for every broadside, and the game involves several ships, the procedure can get tedious. Many of these tables could have been combined with little difficulty and the same effective odds for various events.

The boarding rules (obviously the main action in a RPG) are also quite strange, with penalties being assessed for larger vessels boarding smaller ones. The author also attempts to convince the reader that the "tumblehome" of a ship of the line would make for a gap of 30' between ship decks if two sails of the line were grappled together. The figures given would mean that Nelson's flagship *Victory* would have a top deck of 20-30' width. In reality, it is over 40' wide, as I (Dave Arneson) have seen in person.

The author has a prejudice against boarding actions, and in fact they were rare except when the target was already ready to strike. Given the deeds of Hornblower, Bolitho, Ramage, Fox, and Aubrey, no one else in the Royal Navy must have ever boarded, for they have used up all the occasions, and then some.

But, if boarding is to be as difficult as stated, the players should simply make it more difficult to grapple, or cut down on the chances of success, or something more in line with reality, rather than inventing complications which did not exist.

All in all, the combat is basically reasonable, but the ship afire and boarding rules are poor, and games will turn into short, bloody flaming encounters, over too soon to make use of the maneuvering possible through use of the good sailing rules.

PROMOTIONS AND PRIZES

By Steve Perrin with notes from Dave Arneson

Within the green covers of this book are the gleamings of the uncut gems of what might be an excellent RPG. Care is taken to explain each characteristic (the usual Strength, Intelligence, Constitution, Dexterity, and Charisma, plus Hit Points and Social Level) at the point it is rolled, with all applications it might have to the career of the character. I feel there is too little interaction between the characteristics. For instance, the character's Constitution has little to do with his Hit Points, though it does affect his ability to recover from wounds.

It soon becomes apparent that the player has a lot of page-flipping ahead of him. The pullouts for this section of the rules are minimal, involving only some encounter charts and assignment charts to determine where the character will be stationed. Character generation charts, combat charts, equipment costs, are all squirreled away throughout the book. The author would have done far better to repeat all charts in both book and pullouts. Players of this game will need to do a lot of creative photocopying to get a set of ready-reference charts for play.

The personal combat rules are simple enough and fairly authentic, perhaps too much so. The probabilities of acquiring a

crippling wound are high. This is authentic but is quite a danger to any up-and-coming Hornblower, Bolitho, etc., the player may playing. Game Masters may need to fudge results if they are trying to maintain the "luck" of such characters among the characters their players are playing. Those who prefer to have characters maimed or dying with every engagement may leave the rules as they are.

One factor of these rules is the inability of a character to improve. I object to this in any set of rules. A GM should build in some sort of experience factor into any campaign. This does not apply simply to hand to hand combat (a character could become Admiral of the Red without ever participating in a boarding party, fighting a duel, or getting caught in a brawl) but also to navigation skills, languages, etc.

The only way a character can improve under these rules is by promotion and gaining money through prizes. This is perfectly fine, but a character should have the chance to improve himself physically and intellectually, at least in matters (such as navigation or gunnery) which will aid his career. As it is, a character who starts out as a poor navigator will never become a good one, despite the fact that his career will start as a junior lieutenant, with ample opportunity to gain experience to augment the training he had as a midshipman.

Part of the backgrounding for the campaign is the establishment of "cardboard characters," the game's version of NPCs. These charts could be useful for developing the personality traits of NPCs in almost any campaign, though they are a bit too random for my tastes. Again, there seems to be no interrelationship between the various attributes, leaving the GM to try to explain how a person can be both stupid and very perceptive, have a Love of Battle for Motivation but a Fighting Stance of "Shy," etc. A really competent GM will overcome this problem, a beginner might create a series of totally unbelievable background characters for his players to be bewildered by.

After generation of characters and immediate background, the book goes into 20 pages of essays on the period, ranks, attitudes, terminology, and everything else needed to establish the atmosphere of a campaign. These essays are excellent and told me (Steve Perrin) many things I didn't know about the period I've been reading about for many years. Friends who have read these rules and have done more research than I have tend to comment about what has been left out. For instance, honorary titles on shipboard are spelled out, but other, shore-bound, offices are not. The duties of Port Captain are still unexplained, to take one example. Still, I can consider the rules worthwhile simply because of these essays.

IN SUMMATION

These two books are the start of a fine system. To this reviewer's mind (Steve Perrin's), the execution suffers from bad layout and the inclusion of some pet biases which may add to the authenticity of the game but do so at the expense of the heroic attributes of Age of Sail fiction. RPGs should inspire the heroic, even at the expense of the authentic. This game waffles between the two, and could not make up its mind to be heroic in the face of authenticity. The GM who wants to use these rules for an Age of Sail campaign should brave himself for a lot of extra work. The final result, though, will be a new and different campaign for bored dungeon delvers.



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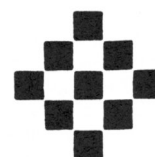
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DESIGNER NOTES

How I Designed LAND OF THE RISING SUN

By Lee Gold



I've been interested in Japanese history and legends ever since I found myself living in Tokyo for four months back in 1975. Even then, after over a century of being heavily influenced by Western civilization, Japan was still a strange and alien country. A thousand years ago, it was even more so.

It's conventional to think about feudal Japan as resembling feudal Europe. But no medieval baron would have given up his ancestral fiefs at the king's command and moved himself and his knights to a completely different province; Japanese *daimyo* occasionally found themselves called upon to do just that. European knights were loyal to their liege lords, but only a *samurai* would dream of committing suicide because his lord has been killed in battle while he himself was too sick with smallpox to fight. European medieval peasants feared werewolves and vampires. Japanese medieval peasants feared crafty animals who were able to shapechange into human form and cast spells of illusion on the unsuspecting. They also feared the *gaki*, those who had for their sins been reincarnated into the hungry dead, unable to slake their thirst save with one particular substance: perfume or blood or music or. . .

Back in '75 the only fantasy role-playing games on the market were *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Empire of the Petal Throne*. Somehow neither seemed really suitable for a Japanese setting, so I brought home the books I've bought and went back to the usual routine of gaming with friends and acquaintances.

Then *Chivalry & Sorcery* came, over 100 pages of rules in micro-elite type — and no index. But many of the ideas were too stimulating to ignore. I liked having a Charisma that depended on the character's primary characteristics rather than being independently rolled. I liked a Combat Ability which wasn't just determined by level and species, but by level plus initial characteristics (including carrying capacity, which in turn depended on Strength, Constitution, and Weight). I liked separating Hit Points into Fatigue Points, which got used as you expended energy on

evading blows, spellcasting, resisting spells, and moving — and Body Points, which got used up as your body became wounded. I liked having to learn spells and enchanted materials to create devices to contain spells — rather than just buying spells on the open market or acquiring them as you went up a level. And I liked having different methods for gaining Experience Points depending on a character's profession; it seemed that EP might actually be made to encourage role-playing, instead of getting in the way of it as they so often did in other games.

So I sat down and read *C&S*. About three times. Then I sent a set of 20 questions to its authors, Ed Simbalist and Wilf Backhaus, care of its publisher, Fantasy Games Unlimited. I got back a long letter in response from Ed. I published my questions and his answers in my *APA, Alarums & Excursions*, and sent a copy of that issue to Ed and Wilf — plus another set of 20 questions.

We kept up this pattern for some time. (Many of the questions later popped up in the section at the end of the *C&S Sourcebook* entitled "Dispel Gremlins.") Somewhere along the line Ed and Wilf decided to subscribe to *A&E* and contribute to it directly from time to time, so as to take part in the APA's give and take. Among other things, this exposed them to my occasional pronouncements on the authentic way to run a samurai, a Japanese shapechanging fox, a *ninja*, etc.

Then in early '79 I got a letter from Ed saying that there seemed to be considerable interest in FRP games set in the Orient — and since I seemed to know more about that area than anyone else he knew, not to mention having mastered *C&S* to his satisfaction — would I be interested in writing a *C&S*-based game set in the medieval Orient? I replied that the Orient was highly diverse set of cultures, and that without an extra year of research all I felt competent to do was write an FRP game set in Japan, but that I'd be delighted to write a "*C&S* in Japan." A couple of weeks later I got a letter of intention from FGU and an accompanying letter from Ed giving me permission to reprint or rewrite sections from *C&S*

so that *Land of the Rising Sun* would be an independent game, not needing purchase of any other set of rules to be played properly.

Now it's about a year later, and I've finished the task. It took about a ream of typing paper, another ream of corrasable paper, lots of Whiteout and erasers (and occasionally vacuuming the typewriter for eraser crumbs), and two typewriter ribbons. I pressed my husband, a computer programmer, into service to do the glossary/index (which is keyed to section numbers, because there's no way I can find out the page numbers before the rules go to press). I used not only the books I brought home from Japan but a lot more I bought here in Los Angeles — and also my encyclopedias, my almanacs, and a Japanese dictionary. (If the word for diamond in Japanese is "diamondo," then I can be sure that the gem was not available in the medieval period — and I'd better not specify it as necessary to any magical devices.)

There was also a lot of rewriting. Some of the sections got rewritten five or six times. At a recent convention I attended a panel on game designing, and during the question section asked Steve Perrin, Dave Hargrave, and the other panel members how often they'd revised their rules before being satisfied with them. They laughed hysterically, and one answered, "Until the publisher took them away from us." I can now give the same answer.

What are the rules of *LOTSR* like after all that work? Well, originally I'd envisioned a game pretty much like *C&S* except for a few necessary changes. There's no Japanese tradition of alchemy, so we'd put in a Herbalist sub-type instead. And the Magic Square Mystic (a numerologist mage) could be replaced by an I Ching Master. And the Christian-oriented miracles and clerical functions could be replaced by two new sets: one for Shintoists and one for Buddhists. And there would have to be an outline of the personalities and powers of the various *kami* and Buddhist spirits. And. . .

Eventually I found out that I was going to have to write a whole new game. Oh, I kept the basic *C&S* framework. There are still the

same characteristics, the same formula for Charisma, the same formula for Combat Ability and Magic Ability. There are still Fatigue Points and Body Points, and spells still have a Basic Magic Resistance that mages must conquer to learn them. But almost all the higher layers of the game had to be changed.

For instance, neither Shintoism nor Buddhism has any tradition of healing wounds. A Shinto priest, in fact, becomes ritually impure if he touches a person who is sick, bleeding, or in mourning. And a Buddhist priest is accustomed to exorcising evil spirits (and sometimes diseases) but not to treating wounds as anything other than a physician. So there's a fairly detailed writeup on *isha* (physicians), but only special cures are those done by the herbalist — and those are worked by magic, not by divine power.

And I had to rewrite the mass combat section (with the aid of some friendly wargamers). A European knight charging with fixed lance and wearing plate armor and mounted on a heavy warhorse has a totally different effect in a cavalry charge than a Japanese samurai charging with *tachi* (saber), wearing light steel plates laced together with leather thongs and mounted on a medium warhorse. On the other hand, the fact that the Japanese longbow is usable on horseback while wearing full armor made the samurai far more dangerous at a distance than his European counterpart — except for the fact that the samurai's normal behavior in battle was to loose a few bowshots, then ride up to the enemy, declare his name and allegiance and issue a formal challenge to battle. (One authority said that Japan had the world's worst organized armies made up of the world's best fighters.)

The mass combat section is not for wargamers only. There's also a carefully outlined method (adapted from the one in *Swords & Sorcery*, another FGU publication) by which a non-wargamer can set up two opposing armies and determine their relative strengths in about a minute — and in about another minute determine the winner of the battle. And if any Player Characters or significant Non-Player Characters are involved, their Level of Bravery (chosen by the role-player) determines their own performance in the battle relative to their side's success or failure: their chance of slaying enemy soldiers or getting loot, their chance of having been noticed by their commander or of having been wounded, captured, or killed.

More interesting than the rewriting, of course, was the original writing. Trying to evolve my own system for handling aerial and underwater combat. Working out the Buddhist and Shintoist Paths of the Death (and trying to make them as compatible as the Japanese seem to feel that they are). Devising an integrated system to handle Dexterous Activities and Perception Skills, so that not only thieves would have a chance to pilfer or hide in shadows or eavesdrop. (The encyclopedia wasn't much help here, but I do recommend the *Boy Scout Fieldbook*.)

And then there were the new mage subtypes. *C&S* has 21 mage-types, most of them playable as PCs. They are drawn from a wide diversity of cultures, but none from Japanese/Chinese tradition. (Even Astrology has different formulae in the Orient than in the Occident.) *LOTRS* has 18 sub-types (all playable as PCs). Some of them have similar names to *C&S* sub-types, but don't let that fool you. There's quite a difference between a Shaman or Dancer who's in touch with a Totem (Dae-

mons in animal-guise) and one who's in touch with the kami (the Japanese gods). Among the mage sub-types in *LOTRS* are the Symbolists (who work through Art: painting, carving, or paper-folding), the Herbalist, the I Ching Master, the Weaver, and the Summoner. (One useful advantage here of the *C&S* system is that spells are given both level (which determines ease of casting) and Basic Magic Resistance (which determines ease of learning). The spell of Summon Lesser Demon is Level 4, BMR 0; the spell of Charm Lesser Demon is Level 5, BMR 6.)

And speaking of spells, there were lots of new spells to work out too. Like many of us, I've always felt ambivalent about Sleep as a first level spell (in both *D&D* and *C&S*). Now in *LOTRS*, it's been replaced by Sleepiness: a First Circle Spell of Command (saves based on Wisdom). Sleepiness causes those who fail to save to become sleepy with a 5% chance of falling asleep per 10% Fatigue Points down; check once per turn.

It was also fun working on the Ancient Lore spells (a class *C&S* reserves for spells not generally available but occasionally known by hermit scholars or found on scrolls). One of my playtesters remarked that it was good at last to have spells that provided for effects mages so often come up with in literature like Walk Between Raindrops and Walk on Clouds.

And all through the rules I found myself equally concerned with cultural perspective as with game mechanics. Devising the game rules for how to learn Martial and Fine Arts and what advantages they gave one on the battlefield or in society wasn't enough. Not if I did not explain at least some of the cultural rules as well.

"DUTY TO ONE'S LORD: The samurai's duty was to carry out any and all of the orders of his lord to whom he had pledged his loyalty and that of his family. . . This relationship became the model of that between pupil and teacher, employee and employer. . .

"Anybody could find someone to teach him the rudiments of how to use a given weapon, musical instrument, etc. However for each samurai weapon or fine art practised at court, there were also sophisticated techniques, handed down through the generations and taught only by those worthy to be called the Masters of the Martial or Fine Art. . .

"Each Master of an Art has certain secrets which he reserves to a chosen few of his students. Students have been known to lie, steal, or murder to learn the esoteric portions of an Art. The Master may confide those secrets to D6 people during his lifetime — or he may choose not to confide in anyone. A Master who thus fails to pass on his Art in its fullness has a 5%xD6 (Degree of Difficulty) of the Art of coming back as a yurei (ghost) after death, searching to find someone worthy to confide his secrets to."

A few of the sections in *LOTRS* will be usable only by Oriental campaigns or characters. One is entitled "Overriding Duties" (and the first paragraph quoted above comes from it). Most of us are sufficiently familiar with the cultures of our characters to know what their prime values are. Japan is different. Lafcadio Hearn records having told his Japanese students the stories of King Arthur and his knights. They were surprised and shocked that men would waste that much time and

trouble rescuing mere women (i.e., damsels in distress), when their own relatives and their king needed their help. A Westerner similarly experiences culture shock when told of how a Japanese general's son was shown what was believed to be the head of his father — and promptly killed himself, *because he recognized that it was not his father's head and that he might not be able to deceive the enemy for too long, while his death might indeed persuade them and allow his father to live.*

Other new sections in the rules will be useful to anyone who wants a Japanese flavor in his game. There are all sorts of new monsters. Goblin-types like *tengu* and *kappa* and *oni* and *yama hito*. Dragons in the Oriental-style, with powers over rain and fog rather than fire. And there are other traditional Japanese monsters which to my knowledge no other game has written up: the *Yuki no Onna* (a snow spirit), the *Kojin* (shark man), the *Goryo* and *Ikiryō* (the Vengeful Spirits of the Dead — and the Living), and many more. As I mentioned in my article in *DW 6* ("How to Make Monsters Interesting") all these are outlined with a general range of characteristics and powers — plus for easy use during chance encounters, the average and superior types of each NPC type or monster will be outlined with fighting, magical, and clerical abilities at any given experience level.

Finally there are some sections in *LOTRS* which should be useful to anyone running any sort of FRP game. For instance, the section on "Home Defenses" and "Valuables."

"Remember two basic rules of thumb on defenses:

a. The cost of magic defenses should not be greater than 50% of the value of what is defended.

b. The yearly salary and upkeep of defending fighters should not greater than 10% of the value of what is defended."

"Valuables in a home (D&Ders read "lair") fall into three groups. The first is supplies of fuel, food, water, drink, bedding, extra clothing, extra weapons and armor, etc. Second there's also assumed to be a money hoard of about ten times the amount usually carried about by individuals of that social status and level — and a smaller chance for jewelry (again depending on social status). Finally there are treasure items — and their number and value depends on the EP worth (how many EP you get for successfully encountering the being) of the owner(s)/defender(s). You'll find the actual randomizing table in section 46.02."

If all goes as planned, *LOTRS* will be published by FGU for ORIGINS 80 in June. The cover and interior illustrations will be by Ken Pick, whose artwork has previously appeared in *A&E*. Ken has always been fascinated by Japan and jumped at the chance to illustrate a Japanese FRP game. As for the rules, the type-size should be slightly bigger than *C&S*'s — and there'll be an extensive index/glossary. There'll also be a character sheet and character calendar (for keeping track of days spent learning spells, travelling, etc. — important for campaign and EP purposes). I look forward to seeing the game's reception by FRPers; I hope you'll like it.



Alignment on Trial

By David R. Dunham



any of the role-playing games available today, such as *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Chivalry & Sorcery* contain rules on alignment. It is my belief that an alignment system is a burden to role-playing. The systems I have seen are too simplistic and encourage generalizations, and use confusing terminology.

Where did the idea of alignment come from in the first place? Apparently, the original *D&D* drew its alignment system from Michael Moorcock's *Eternal Champion* novels. In them, the planes of Earth are disputed by the Lords of the Higher Worlds: the Chaos Lords, also known as the Dukes of Hell or the Lords of the Dark, and the White Lords, or gods of Law. Set above the gods is the Cosmic Balance, which should never tip too far towards either Law or Chaos. The Balance must be maintained because, although Chaos changes constantly and offers all possibility, it never progresses. Complete Law, on the other hand, destroys possibility, and results in eternal stagnation.

Mortals are generally on the side of Law, since the human tendency is to make order out of chaos. Even those pledged to Chaos betray many signs of order. They build cities and ships, and field armies. Elric, whose patron was Arioch, the most powerful of the Dukes of Hell, was told by one of the Lords of Light, "Though you be of Chaos, you have within you several of the qualities we of Law admire."¹

Actually, mortals are not considered either Lawful or Chaotic, but are instead pledged to one side or another, if indeed they choose either side. Most prefer not to get involved at all. As a typical villager tells Corum, "We have no particular interest in either Law or Chaos. We wish only to live our lives as we have always lived them."² If they do choose a side, humans are likely to take the side which is more likely to give them power, or seems stronger. The black and white distinction between Law and Chaos exists with the gods, not with mortals.

What purpose does alignment serve in the game? Basically, it can be used to help both the player and the referee. The player finds it easier to develop the personality of her character by starting with a particular alignment. The referee can use alignment as an easy way to briefly describe each character's personality. Another use for alignment is to help balance the game. If magic items were aligned only towards Law, few people would wish to run a Chaotic character, since they would be unable to use such items. Powerful Chaotic items, such as Elric's sword Stormbringer, can provide an inducement for characters to be Chaotic.

Let's look now at two different alignment systems. *C&S* uses a simple scale from 1 (Lawful) to 20 (Chaotic). In between are varying degrees of Law and Chaos, with 8-15 being degrees of Neutrality, defined basically as self-interest. Although the game gives a good explanation of each alignment value, its use of the term 'Chaotic' is strongly at odds with Webster's definition: "a state of things in which chance is supreme." *C&S* calls the ultimate Chaotic "devoted to hellishness," which seems to me rather different. Chaos is confusion, not devotion. This difficulty in terminology probably stems from Moorcock's writings. In Elric's world, Law and Chaos "are values supposedly set above the qualities men call Good and Evil."³ In this world, Chaos is probably associated with Evil because humans prefer order, but this does not necessarily apply to all worlds. It is quite possible that Chaotics try to do good—in fact, Elric is such a person.

Advanced D&D offers not a wide spectrum of alignment, but a 3x3 matrix. The two dimensions are Good-Evil and Chaos-Law. This represents the fact that a person, while seeking order, can do evil, and likewise another might seek good through total freedom of choice. *AD&D* also defines all the possible combinations. Neutrality is defined as seeking a balance between a pair of opposing forces, thus making no provision for those who simply wish to live their own lives without getting involved. Although the added dimension is an improvement over the undefined, one-dimensional system used in the original *D&D*, it only allows three values in each dimension, instead of the 20 *C&S* provides. A character can only be Lawful, Neutral, or Chaotic, and Good, Neutral, or Evil. One could improve the *AD&D* scheme by adding to it a graduated scale as is found in *C&S*, but this would not solve one of the basic problems.

People are complex. Most people have both good and evil in them, and both chaos and law. It is impossible to accurately lump people into only nine classes.* I will give several examples of individuals who would not even fit into the expanded *AD&D* alignment system.

a) Imagine a person who enjoys beating the system. She likes finding loopholes in laws and exploiting them, and doing things the system will never catch her at. Since she laughs at laws, she must be Chaotic, right? But where would she be

* People can be broken down into two classes: those who divide people into two classes, and those who do not.

without laws? In addition, she probably follows her own set of rules for beating the system. After all, she has to give the system a chance.

b) Suppose there exists somebody who despises man-made laws, but is enthusiastic about what he considers natural laws, such as survival of the fittest, and market supply and demand forces. The "true" Neutral label of *AD&D* probably fits best, except that he cares nothing for balance. He does not believe Good and Evil should be balanced, as does the true Neutral. Good and Evil will prevail depending on the laws of the universe, but man should not tamper with those laws. This person is not Neutral-Good, because he does not believe that there should be "regulation in combination with freedom." There should be no regulation, because it would interfere with the natural balance. Is he then Chaotic? No, because he does not believe in randomness.

c) It is quite possible that a person just doesn't care what happens. She may care only for herself, and what happens to others is not her concern. Or she may have decided that all the alternatives are equal, and is willing to accept any of them. Either case is not Neutral by *AD&D*'s standards, because it defines Neutrality as Balance. The *C&S* Neutral is close to this person, but it makes the Neutral a middle point between "Law" and "Chaos." Our example is Good only in the sense that she seeks good for herself, and Evil only in that what is good for her may not be good for others.

d) A typical stereotype is the 'mad scientist,' who often seeks to do good but only succeeds in doing evil. Dr. Haber in *The Lathe of Heaven* is one example. He tries to improve the world, but ends up making it worse. Is he Evil? If you judge his works he is, but his intentions are good. The Salem witch trials are a similar example. Certainly the intent was to make the world a better place by ridding it of witches, but as a result many innocent people died.

e) *AD&D* considers animals, such as wolves and mules, to be Neutral. This strikes me as absurd. Why should a dumb animal care about the balance of the universe? Surely the animal's concerns revolve around one central point: food.

Some of the examples could be fit into an expanded alignment system using the alignments 'Hungry' and 'Amoral,' but no matter how many classifications there are, it is impossible to fit all people neatly into them. But what harm does this do?

One problem with an alignment system, especially one with a very limited number of alignments, such as *AD&D*, is that it confines characters to a restricted, usually small, group of beliefs or religions. Since real people do not subscribe to this group only, it limits the bounds of role-playing. If the Game Master or the rules state that a character must fit into an alignment (even if only striving for simplicity), characters who don't fit can't be played.

The *AD&D* alignment rules make it very difficult to change alignment. Why? In Moorcock's writings, there are examples of people who switched alignment and met severe consequences. Rackhir the Red Archer forsook Chaos, and was banished to Limbo. Prince Gaynor betrayed Law, and was condemned to eternally serve Chaos. On the other hand, Elric turned against his patron Arioch, and never suffered because of it. In Moorcock's world penalties for changing alignment are more understandable. There are only two alignments, locked in bitter struggle, and it is quite likely that a god would not be pleased when a pledge to him is broken. *AD&D* however has nine alignments, and does not specifically mention the gods of each. It seems to treat alignment more like a personal philosophy, and that a person should be able to change more or less at will. Literature is full of examples of people who have become

cynical or otherwise changed as a result of some event in their life. On the other hand, if alignment is a religion, why wouldn't the new alignment want you? Most missionaries on our earth do not require "certain stringent sacrifices . . . probably a quest" of converts, as *AD&D* recommends. Again, the rules make it difficult to role-play all aspects of humanity.

The other problem I see with alignment is probably more serious. Many RPGs are set in improved societies. Females (and other sexes, presumably) are usually considered equal (ignoring the female strength debate) and are not prohibited from taking up any profession. While there are often specific racial prejudices, others are not disliked merely because they are different. True, hobbits are usually looked down upon, but they don't have to ride in the back of the bus.

Why then shouldn't we improve on one of the problems of our society? The use of alignment gives players an excuse, and even encourages them, to make generalizations about other characters. By saying Law dislikes Chaos, and that Good and Evil are always antagonistic, are we not promoting hate? Must a Chaotic always be hostile to a Lawful? Can't they live together in peace, each trying to convince the other of the folly of her ways? But what of Good and Evil? Is it good for a Good character to kill an Evil character? Is he by so doing really promoting Good? Do the ends justify the means? And what about the Evil character? Surely her every action does not have to be evil. In fact, she might achieve her own ends better by working with Good characters. Even if she does feel that she must do the greatest harm to the greatest number, it is not always best



to attack directly. It is possible to do evil by using Good characters, as Lord Foul did in *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*.

If players are given an easy opportunity to make generalizations, they will usually fall into the trap. Consider the case of Lareg, the king's Lawful-Good zookeeper, and Sretnal, a Neutral-Evil magician. If Lareg discovers that Sretnal is Evil, he will never know that, despite her striving for world domination, Sretnal loves animals. In fact, during a battle, she once took time out to put a splint on a bird's broken wing. If he ever did find out about this, he might be inclined to ignore the fact that she would never give a human the same care, and would be able to get along with her. In fact, the two might even be able to establish a preserve for rare animals. But, since Sretnal has the stigma of being Neutral-Evil, this will never happen.

What then should be used instead of alignment? Basically, nothing. Society should have its norms and values, which most people, although not all, will regard as good. Although the society may show little toleration, characters should not be persecuted for their beliefs, but, if necessary, prosecuted for their actions. Society's motto will probably not be "Chaotics! Kill them!"

Another possible replacement for alignment is religion. Each religion has its own set of beliefs. This idea is used in *RuneQuest*, and its companion volume, *Cult of Prax*, spells out the beliefs of many of the religions. Different religions may actually be hostile to each other, but this will probably be as a result of some action (i.e., "The Christian dogs have taken sacred Jerusalem, we must slay them!") The GM may have to do more work making up all the religions, but she can delegate part of this to her players, suggesting that they come up with their own religions.

If the GM likes the convenience of knowing what every character's alignment is, he can have players write a short paragraph or two about their character's beliefs, which need not conform to any alignment. For example,

Enwn likes order, because it makes other people more predictable. She herself never bothers to follow any laws, since she feels she is above being told what to do. For this reason she prefers being a leader to being a follower.

She thinks Orcs are so ugly they are cute, and can't understand why others don't like them. True, Orcs do tend to be a little boorish, but she expects this, and so it doesn't really matter.

This also helps the player develop the personality of her character, since she has to think about it before writing something down.

GMs who like aligned swords can do the same for weapons that they did for people: make them individual. For example, a sword might be devoted to Evil, but it might just as easily be

devoted to killing at least one person every day before breakfast. Instead of doing damage when a character of the wrong alignment picked it up, it would do damage or exert its influence when its wielder did something against its values (i.e., the user just stabbed a demon, and the sword happens to like demons, so it gives the user a die or two of damage to make sure it never happens again).

Even if I have not convinced you to discard alignment, I hope I have at least gotten you to think about it. Remember, your decision affects the inhabitants of an entire universe.

NOTES

1. Moorcock, *Stormbringer*, p. 154.
2. Moorcock, *The Swords Trilogy*, p. 185.
3. Moorcock, *The Stealer of Souls*, p. 65.

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DIFFERENT VIEWS

COMMENTS ON ISSUE SIX

Dear Tadashi,

Congratulations on issue six, your best issue yet.

The review of *Gangster!* was pretty good and the new rules for *Superhero 2044* just might get me to play the game. "Finding Level in *RQ*" didn't interest me as I would never contaminate my *RQ* universe by allowing a *D&D* character into it.

Lee Gold's "How to Make Monsters Interesting" was just too short. What is really needed is a series of articles on how to make yourself a better GM. There are so many crummy GMs around (such as myself) that I play FRP games less and less. A FRP game can only be as good as the rules and the GM who interprets the rules. If one is bad the other suffers.

"Quick Plugs" is very useful and I hope you continue to expand it.

"Insanity Table" will be really nice to have when I'm GMing *RQ* and get into a nasty mood. "The Cult of Gestetner" is the kind of humor that's been lacking in *DW* and hopefully we'll see more of this. The letters were the best thing again, and to Ken Hughes and others who didn't like the Cult of Geo: I thought it was great! Besides being slightly humorous (which apparently is not allowed in FRP), you must keep in mind that there is such a thing as the non-genious adventurer, who might be down on his luck and the Cult of Geo would suit him perfectly. Shouldn't there be a cult for procrastinators too?

Jack Everitt
Greenlawn, NY

A BEGINNER MOANS

Dear *Different Worlds* —

I've just received issue 6 of *DW*. I am new at FRP games. Never-the-less, I read the magazine cover to cover trying to find some guidance for an isolated but interested person like me. No luck! I have the *RQ* rules and have explored alternatives. My impression is that *D&D* is more complex therefore not for me yet.

Your magazine is not for a beginner like me.

Richard A. Baker, Ph.D.
Morristown, NJ

CIVILIZED COUNTERPUNCH

Dear Tadashi,

I totally agree with Greg Costikyan's letter. "Civilization in the North American continent stops at the city boundaries." Maybe someday it will venture within them. . .

David R. Dunham
Schenectady, NY

IN DEFENSE OF A BROTHER

Dear Tadashi,

I would like to respond to some of the late criticisms of Steve Lortz' series of articles, "The Way of the Gamer."

Firstly, I will say that I agree with some of the criticisms, especially that Steve's style of writing is dry and occasionally stilted. It does



not follow, however, that these failings produce "boring" articles. I would direct those who believe differently to read the histories written by William H. Prescott.

Secondly, I believe that the criticisms concerning the value of the series' content arises from a limited view of *DW* and RPGs in general.

One of the major reasons that recreational role-playing has not grown as large as boardgaming is that until just recently, few of them were organized in a readily understandable fashion. Boardgaming grew rapidly, both qualitatively as well as quantitatively, because the understanding of the basic systems involved in them was so widespread that people were able to set down and design games. The reason that this is not happening with RPGs is twofold: 1) whereas everyone knows generally what constitutes a boardgame, there is little agreement and few attempts to define exactly what constitutes a RPG; 2) most published RPGs are so ill-organized with regard to the basic systems involved, that it is hard to draw any universal conclusions that could be used in the design of an RPG. In short, the problem involved in the design of RPGs has not been defined.

In addition to the above, there is a fundamental difference between boardgames and RPGs. Boardgames simulate narrowly defined situations. What this means is that the rules

can be a set of rigid procedures that do not generally change from one game to the next, and that it is much easier for the designer to anticipate almost every situation that may arise during the play of his game. On the other hand, since an RPG is limited in scope only by the imagination of the players, the designer cannot anticipate, and write a rule to cover even a major percentage of the situations which may arise in the play of his game. Therefore, he must write a set of workable rules that is consistent from system to system and points the way to the players and GM.

Now as I have said, Steve's style is dry, but his effort to define an RPG and examine and speculate upon the structures and interactions of the various systems therein, is both greatly needed in our corner of gaming and of admirable intent. Furthermore, I believe that such matter is properly included in *DW*. While "hack-and-hew" articles certainly have their place in a magazine such as yours, so do articles such as "The Way of the Gamer."

Kurt Lortz
Anderson, IN

LETTER FROM JOHN

Dear Tadashi,

Letters from Jack Everitt and Steve List in *DW 6* raised a question that is worth further discussion. They expressed a wish that long articles be cut and run in more than one issue so as to leave room for other articles in each issue. This in fact has been done, as with the specialty mage series and my combat articles. But it should be pointed out that this frequently is not possible or appropriate. Remember that when you run an article as a serial, you deny the reader the use of those pieces that are either not yet printed or that were printed in prior issues that the reader never saw. Thus, it is necessary in fairness to print articles in sections that are self-contained and usable independently. Some articles lend themselves to this treatment, but many do not and thus must be printed as a whole or not at all. As a general rule, a long article that is well written is better than a short article that is well written, simply because the long article is more likely to cover the subject thoroughly. That, by analogy at least, is why more people prefer novels to short stories.

John T. Sapienza, Jr.
Washington, DC



QUICK PLUGS

THE TEMPLE TO ATHENA — This is a FRP adventure not keyed for any particular system. Two levels with 41 encounters in level one and 71 in level two. Includes background, glossary, maps, and character record sheet. This is a 40 page book, designed by Ken Ritchart. Available for \$4.50 postpaid from Dimension Six, Inc, 4625 S Sherman St, Englewood, CO 80110.

THE SPACE GAMER 27 — Now edited and published by Steve Jackson, this first effort by the new management still contains articles mainly concerned with products from Metagaming but that shouldn't continue with future issues as it promises to cover the entire F&SF game hobby. This issue is 32 pages. Now monthly, single issue price is \$2 and one year sub (twelve issues) is \$21. Available from *The Space Gamer*, Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760.

SKINWALKERS & SHAPESHIFTERS — This is a guide to lycanthropy for role-players. Better researched than most, it starts off by stating that " 'lycanthrope' is simply the Greek word for 'werewolf' " and the word " 'shapeshifter' is more accurate." Topics cover wolves, painting wolf and werewolf figures, totemism, skinwalkers, congenital lycanthropy, worldwide guide to werebeasts, and others. By C. A. Hundertmark and Marjorie Janotta, it is a 72 page book. Available for \$5.95 postpaid from Morningstar Publishing Co, 223 Morningside NE, Albuquerque, NM 87108.

BUSHIDO — This RPG on feudal Japan by Paul Hume and Bob Charrette is now available through Phoenix Games, 12180 Nebel St, Rockville, MD 20852 for \$10. Other than that, it is exactly the same as the original edition.

MODRON — This second edition of an approved *D&D* water adventure comes with an 8½"x11" player's map and an 11"x17" judge's map of the town of Modron, a map of the Estuary of Roglaroon on the back of the judge's map, and a 16 page rulebook. Over 50 places to visit, the book contains various tables and other encounters. Designed by Bob Bledsaw and Gary Adams, it sells for \$3.50. Item 34. **SWORD OF HOPE** — Approved for use with *D&D*, this adventure has eight sections with 50 rooms. Sequel to *Tower of Ulis-sion* (item 119), this adventure involves the quest for the Sword Myrlani in the Gar Cavern. Designed by Dave Emigh, 32 pages, it sells for \$3. Item 118. **ESCAPE FROM ASTIGAR'S LAIR** — Designed by Allen V. and Ree M. Pruehs, this tournament dungeon is approved for use with *AD&D*. The book is 16 pages, the adventure has 22 rooms. There is a special scoring system for determining winners. \$2, item 124. **CITY STATE OF THE WORLD EMPEROR** — This package contains a 22"x34" map of the City State, 17"x22" player's map and a same size judge's map of the wilderlands west of the City State (labeled Campaign Map Six), a 48 page guidebook, an 80 page description of the shops, and an 80

page description of other parts of the city. The guidebook contains descriptions of the surrounding areas, the other parts of the city contain temples, bureaucrats, military personnel, markets, taverns, and clubs. Approved for use with *D&D*, it is designed by Creighton Hippenhammer and Bob Bledsaw for \$12. Item 150. **RUNEQUEST JUDGES SHIELD** — Consists of two 8½"x17" cardstock pages of tables for *RQ*. Sells for \$2.50. Item 170. **THE TREASURE VAULTS OF LINDORAN** — By Geoffrey O. Dale, approved for use with *AD&D*, this is your standard adventure dungeon. The ground level has four encounters, the first level has 50, and the second has 25. There is a special monster description of a Kur, a wandering monster table, and various special items. Sells for \$4, item 190. **LEGENDARY DUCK TOWER AND OTHER TALES** — Approved for use with *RQ*, this 64 page adventure contains a description of a ruined citadel with over 100 encounter possibilities with over 60 monster descriptions. There are three found items tables. Designed by Paul Jaquays and Rudy Kraft, it sells for \$5.98. Item 220. All of the above are available through Judges Guild, Inc, RR 8, 1221 Sunnyside Rd, Decatur, IL 62522, postpaid.

IMPERIUM ROMANUM — This is a board-game simulating the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. Designed by Albert A. Nofi, it comes with a 28 page rulebook, 36 page scenario book with 36 historical, hypothetical, and solitaire scenarios, 800 counters, 22"x64" strategic map, 16"x22" tactical map, die, and tray, all in a box. There are rules for treasure, taxation, plunder, weather, leaders, naval operations, barbarians, rebels, usurpers, foreign powers, and miniatures interface. Available for \$25 from West End Games, Inc, PO Box 156, Cedarhurst, NY 11516, postpaid.

SKULL & CROSSBONES — This is a RPG of swashbuckling adventure in the era of piracy. Comes boxed with a 17"x22" map of the Caribbean area, a 17"x22" map of ship's deck plans, 228 counters, play aids, two dice, and a

32 page rulebook. Designed by Gerald D. Sey-pura and Anthony LeBoutillier, the game involves playing the role of a pirate. There are rules for the usual characteristics and specialties as well as ship rules and encounters. All for \$12. **SPACE MARINES** — This is a SF miniature rules for land combat in the interstellar age. The 80 page book describes rules for unit integrity, terrain & cover, observation, air combat, robots, races & army organizations, and all sorts of weapons & equipment. New edition of a game formerly published elsewhere, price is \$7.50. Both of the above are available from Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc, PO Box 182, Roslyn, NY 11576, add 50 cents P&H for *Skull & Crossbones*.

NECROMICAN — This is a book of spells supplementing spells of existing FRP games. Contains spells from first to twelfth levels with over 125 new spell descriptions, it is a 60 page book. Sample spells include Improved Anthropomorphic Abilities, Gaze of Cthulu, and Demon Conjuror, the latter requiring four pages to describe. With alphabetical index at the back, sells for \$5. **BOOTY AND THE BEAST** — The volume contains new monsters, including demons, robots, and parasites, and new magical and technological treasure for use with FRP campaigns. Creatures include land, sea, and sky monsters. They include Fungus Men, Thresher, and Neptunians. Treasures include Tube of Immobility, Mote of Galvanic Scintillations, and Universal Translator. Many well illustrated by Erol Otus. There are Organ, Hit Allocation, and Bone charts for specific damage area combat as well. Includes index at the back. The book is 96 pages and sells for \$8. Both books are by Erol Otus, Mathias Genser, and Paul Reiche III, and available postpaid from Fantasy Art Enterprises, 486 Boynton Ave, Berkeley, CA 94707.

ADVANCED MELEE — The combat section of *The Fantasy Trip* RPG system. Expands the Microgame *Melee's* basic combat system. It is a 32 page book with rules on movement,



surprise, initiative, attacks, weapons, armor and shields, beserking, ambush, prisoners, and examples. By Steve Jackson and sells for \$4.95. **ADVANCED WIZARD** — This is the magic section of *TFT* system and expands the Microgame *Wizard's* basic magic system. By Steve Jackson, 40 pages, it covers rules on casting spells, incantations, wishes, scrolls, inventing new spells, potions, magical items, and gates. Price is \$4.95. Above items are available from Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761, with 50 cents per order for P&H.

DATESTONES OF RYN — This is a computer moderated adventure using the *Dunjonquest* system. This is a typical dungeon adventure designed by Jeff Johnson lasting at most 20 minutes. Comes with a 16 page story/rulebook written by Jon Freeman. Price on tape is \$14.95, disk \$19.95. **MORLOC'S TOWER** — This game also uses the *Dunjonquest* system. With three levels of difficulty, the general aim is to slay the mad wizard Morloc. Comes with a 16 page story/rulebook written by Jon Freeman with hints. The dungeon is designed by Jon Freeman and Jeff Johnson. Game lasts 20-60 minutes. Price is \$14.95 on tape and \$19.95 for disk. **RESCUE AT RIGEL** — This is the first in the *Starquest SF* computer moderated game series. With three levels of play, the object is to rescue ten human prisoners scattered in a complex inhabited by aliens. Game design and 32 page story/rulebook written by Jon Freeman, it comes with a separate sheet with a list of commands. Price is \$19.95 for tape and \$24.95 for disk. All of the above are available from Automated Simulations, PO Box 4232, Mountain View, CA 94040, postpaid, Calif. residents add sales tax. Tape version available for the PET, TRS-80, and APPLE microcomputers, disk only for TRS-80 and APPLE.

MOORGUARD — Comes in a 24 page book plus a four page players handbook. The adventure involves a search for a legendary axe and shield that can aid in returning to the adventurers' own land through enemy territory. This involves searching through the land, the Chalice Tower, the Temple Moorguard, and then the escape. Designed by Jeffrey C. Dilow, it is published by Fantasy Productions, Inc., and available through stores and mail order dealers.

VALKENBURG CASTLE — This is a fantasy boardgame of adventure and combat in the depths of an ancient dungeon. The map is 17" x 22" sectioned into five levels. There are 54 counters representing characters, monsters, and weapons. The 26 page rulebook contains descriptions of squads, individuals, monsters, hidden doors, encumbrance, pits, magic, treasure, and others. Designed by Stephen V. Cole, there are five scenarios and a campaign game. Published by Task Force Games, it sells for \$3.95 through retailers and mail order companies.



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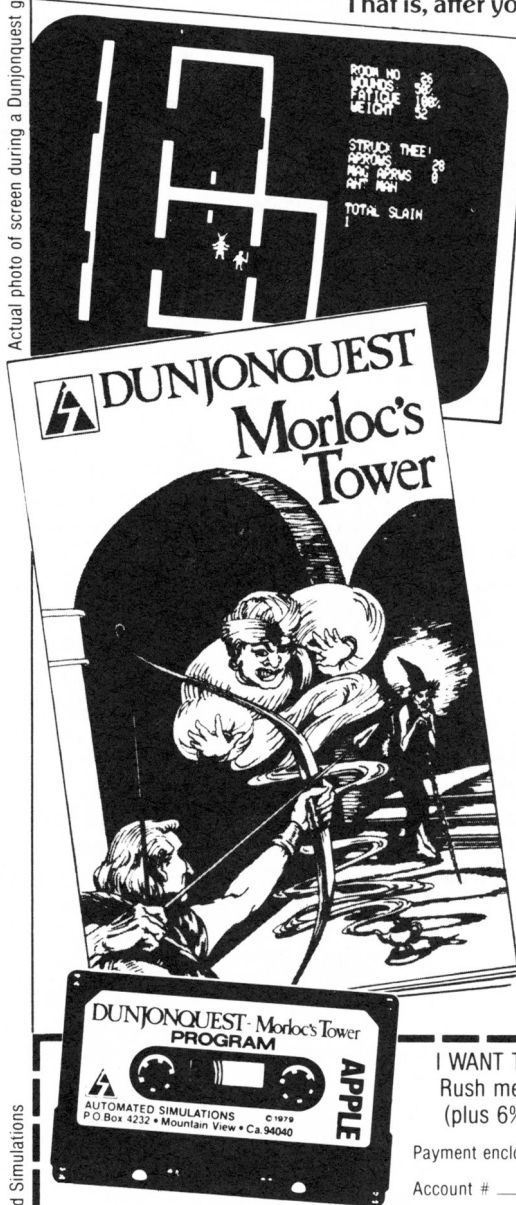
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Advanced Melee & Wizard

By Steve Perrin

ADVANCED MELEE

Advanced Melee is the combat part of *The Fantasy Trip* role-playing system. The book sells for \$4.95 and consists of the book alone. It is written by Steve Jackson. Published and available from Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761, include \$.50 per order for postage and handling.

When *Melee*, Microgame 3, came on the scene almost three years ago, it was an interesting system for combat with archaic weapons. It was a quick and fun system with little of the role-playing appeal of *Dungeons & Dragons*, but it had the virtues of consistency and not too much complexity.

Now we have *Advanced Melee*. The first page has a caution that the buyer should also have the *Melee* Microgame. Wrong. Unless the player feels a need for the *Melee* map (and the megahexes provided in the centerfold are perfectly adequate) or the cardboard counters (but miniature figures are much more fun), there is no need for the Microgame.

The rules include all the rules of the original plus many more. Here are the missing rules: fire, exotic weapons, aerial combat, critical hits, specific location hits, gunpowder, aimed blows, terrain problems, mounted combat, use of cover, and everything else which takes *Melee* out of the arena and into the "real" world. Well done.

The main problem in the rules is the lack of table of contents and/or index. The layout doesn't help, with indistinguished headings and little variety in type style. These lacks take the rules from a rating of around nine to around seven.

The appearance has one problem, as well. When they made the decision to go from one huge boxed game to booklets, Metagaming cut costs by keeping the same cover by Roger Stine on all the books, just changing the titles. The cover is a "good once," but they should have sprung the bucks for some variety. It also makes things difficult when you want one particular book and you have to paw through three to find the one you want. The printing of the titles is in a lettering style called "black letter" in calligraphy circles. It looks terribly archaic and old English, and is correspondingly difficult to read. A little sacrifice of style to practicality would have been a better choice.

As usual, the interior illustrations by Robert Phillips are quite excellent and occasionally have something to do with the text.

For those of you who are not familiar with the *Melee* combat system, it is quite simple in its basics. The character (*TFT* uses the rather dehumanizing word "figure" instead of the usual "character") has a roll of 3D6 against his Dexterity or less in order to succeed in an attack. Anything over means failure. DX (as it's called) is adjusted by armor, the weapons being used, the distance to the foe (for thrown or missile weapons), and many other situations. The main complexity is in figuring the particular adjustments to a character's DX *this* round, but this is not too burdensome. Armor absorbs damage, and any damage getting past takes points away from the character's

Strength (ST). *TFT* must have the fewest characteristics of any game, being reduced to Strength, Intelligence, and Dexterity.

Combat is regulated by being done on a hexsheet and a figure must pick one of several options each combat turn. In some ways this is perhaps overregulated, but that is a matter of taste. It does make for a clean system without the ambiguities of some of the others.

All in all, *Advanced Melee* is well worth the money. Don't pay any attention to the publisher's attempt to get you to buy the Microgame, *Melee* is dead, long live *Advanced Melee*!

ADVANCED WIZARD

Advanced Wizard is the magical part of *The Fantasy Trip*. The book sells for \$4.95 and consists of the book alone (40 pages). It is written by Steve Jackson and published by Metagaming (see above).

Like *Advanced Melee*, this book stands alone without the support of the *Wizard* Microgame. It is no more complex than the original, and the buyer does not really need to be familiar with the Microgame.

Like *Advanced Melee* again, this book is far richer than its predecessor. It contains potions and poisons, creation of magical objects and a listing of sample objects. There is a rule (The Rule of Five) about how many magical items a character can carry, which would be a useful adaptation to any Game Master's campaign.

The magic system is simple. The figure must memorize spells using his Intelligence, throw spells using Dexterity and pay for spells using his Strength. As he goes up in levels the character may increase any of these characteristics he chooses, and thus become better at memorizing, throwing, or fueling spells. Because the wizard must fuel spells with Strength, a simple two point blow could kill a wizard who had used all his Strength for magic. It is a simple, relatively straightforward system, and quite effective.

The spells and magical items are familiar to any fantasy role-player. Different versions of all the basics have appeared in all the games. The rationale and system for use in *Wizard* is consistent and meant for play on *TFT* hexes and megahexes.

Like *Advanced Melee*, there is no table of contents nor index. At least this book has a page in the back for notes! Like the others, the same cover from Roger Stine is used. Robert Phillips' illos are again quite good, but have nothing to do with the content.

Like its partners, this is a well-done set of rules and well deserves purchase.





Dear Tadashi:

OK, convention season is here. There's lots of news!

KEN ST ANDRE is out as editor for *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. . . the new ed is LIZ DANFORTH, a classy lady and as far as I know the first female editor for a gaming prozine. Best wishes to all concerned.

Games and Puzzles (England) revealed their 1979 Poll results in the Spring '80 issue - F&SF games scored seven titles among the top 20. *Kingmaker* (the old reliable) came in first again, but *D&D* tied for second with *Diplomacy*. *Sorcerer's Cave* came in sixth. *C&S*, *Magic Realm*, and *RQ* tied for eleventh; *Cosmic Encounter* and *Traveller* tied for 15th. *G&P* covers nearly all facets of gaming, and for my money is a much better mag than Playboy Enterprises' *Games* (which I find often superficial and directionless, kind of the *Psychology Today* of gaming).

Eisenwerk Industries, Inc. is licensed bilaterally with McEwan Miniatures to do official T&T figures; Eisenwerk will be producing Judges Guild *City State* stuff independently. (General query: is or is not McEwan thinking about selling the company?)

San Francisco area notes: DAVE HARGRAVE reports that the three volumes of the *Arduin* series have sold about 40,000 copies. . . RUDY KRAFT resigned from Judges Guild and returned to his home (this had something to do with JG's attitude toward firearms and heroic deeds) to continue as editor for *Gryphon* and as freelance designer. . . Rumour reports Archive Miniatures may release *Star Rovers* by ORIGINS. Ah.

I'm told by somebody who might know that a certain major game company already publishing two magazines is studying a third, possible title *Aphrodite*, to cover F&SF. This publication would cover the repressed sexuality angle, with lots of bikinied Viking women wearing opera armor, etc. MCPs, present checkbooks!

Games Workshop (*White Dwarf*'s publishers) lost their exclusive distributorship for TSR Hobbies in England. Possible riposte: Games Workshop could strip TSR of their US *WD* distributorship. There seems to be a chance that GW might come out with their own FRP game. . . they're at work now on a book of monsters.

Competition for *C&S* - there's rumor that GDW is working on a role-playing chivalry game.

Twinn-K (distributors of *High Fantasy*) announce production of their own percentile dice at \$1.60 a pair. . . Balboa Games is bringing out *Menagerie of the Warlock*, a collection of monsters for their FRP. . . Ral Partha will be releasing 15mm fantasy figures soon; RP is raising prices June 1.

SPI's *Dragonslayer* may be delayed because of a conflict involving the trademark owned by Martian Metals - MM has held that title for a while. Does this mean we're back to *Dragonlayer*? SPI's latest F&SF releases: *World Killer* (in *Ares 1*) and *Pandora* (*Ares 2*). I didn't think much of *WK*, but *Pandora* (a version of the cinema *Alien*) looks pretty good: *Ares* itself is still kind of mushy. . . do we really need so much fiction when good

gaming writing is still scarce? Other productions are *Time Tripper* (seems to be a game for FRPers who want to rule the world with claymore mines) and *Against 4 Worlds*, which sounds like a fascinating game with a silly rationale.

Chaosium Inc. (is that right - no comma after the m?) will publish the *Gateway Bestiary* for ORIGINS. And there is some book of *RQ* Priests and Lords in the works for GENCON.

Sad note: the school system of Heber City, Utah, has chucked *D&D*. Some townspeople found it anti-Christian, communistic, liable to leave the players open to Satanic influence, etc. Well, I remember when I was a kid I was afraid of boogie men, but this!

GREG COSTIKYAN is reported working on *Barbarian King* (multi-player strategic fantasy boardgame, for *Ares 3*), and *Trailblazer* (stellar exploration and tanstaaf economics for Metagaming). His *High Fantasy* (to be retitled), or a portion of it, has been making the rounds of game companies, and is probably a sure winner.

The author of TSR's *Dungeon*, DAVE MEGARRY, seems to be working on *Wizard of the Pentastar*, a fantasy boardgame for FGU, and expects to finish it sometime in the next eight years. . .

Other than working on a samurai FRP for Chaosium, DAVE ARNESON is plugging away on two Blackmoor campaign supplements, *Egg of Coot* and *Land of the Skandaharian*. His Adventures Unlimited company will publish RICHARD SNIDER's *Mutant* later this year.

Congratulations to FGU's Scott Bizar and Cheryl Feretto on their recent marriage!

Come on, Tadashi, don't you think Metagaming is being cheapo, using the same cover art for the first three parts of *The Fantasy Trip*?

Judges Guild may have a new darkroom, but their photos are no better.

Convention notes - there'll be a 3-day AD&D tournament for 800 people at GENCON this year. . . Metagaming has put up \$1125 in prize money for ORIGINS tournaments this year. . . Gigi predicts record attendance despite (or because of) the crumbling economy. . . ORIGINS booths have been long sold-out.

What Texas game company was sounding out what West Coast game company for outright acquisition?

Now that Zocchi has the rights to *Empire of the Petal Throne*, M. A. R. BARKER is hot at work on a new draft to be published later this year; the new version will probably be retitled, and it will have different, less complex mechanics which are more 'state of the art.' Those interested in doing EPT material should contact MARB at 118 E Elmwood Pl, Minneapolis, MN 55419.

Here's something that looks great, and thanks for letting me finally talk about: Chaosium will be doing a *Thieve's World* (yes, the one edited by BOB ASPRIN and reviewed in *Ares 1*) FRP supplement springing directly from the stories. It will have a detailed map of Sanctuary, encounter charts, named character stats, and more goodies. Contributors will in-

clude KEN ST ANDRE, WES IVES, STEVE PERRIN, DAVE HARGRAVE, DAVE ARNESON, and (apparently) a cast of thousands. . . if a couple of more people were added, the book would be like one of those 'jazz at the summit' productions, with a ton of first-rank FRPers under one little cover. Worth waiting for!

Late Break: Martian Metals has merged with Zocchi/Gamescience, and will move to Mississippi. If this works out, 1+1=3, and that will be a lot of talent under one roof. Martian Metals will release 200+ new 15mm figures for the *Traveller*, *Rivets*, and *Dragonslayer* lines; Gamescience is publishing something called *Book of Gods* later this year.

LARRY DITILLIO did the hat trick: he got published in the *Dragon 36*, *DW 7*, and the Spring '80 *Sorcerer's Apprentice*!

Interested parties should notice that Martian Metal's ORIGINS nominations were left off the current list as published in JOHN MANSFIELD's *Signal*. And it was Judges Guild, not Chaosium, which published *Broken Tree Inn*. It was this sort of well-meaning incompleteness which led to some sizable rancor at last year's Charlie meeting.

Dragon 37 is \$3! Am I going to get a budget or not? Well, of course I'd buy it anyway, but I figure it must be costing me upwards of \$200 a year just to stay connected with the prozines and major fanzines.

The Space Gamer's 1979 survey results game some fascinating stats. Did you know 8.6% never heard of Chaosium and that 14.3% had never heard of TSR? Talk about a captive audience! I see *DW* nosed out *The Dragon* and came in just after *Omni*. . . and also that 41.4% have yet to read one of my splendid columns. Congratulations to *TSG*, *Traveller*, and *RQ* for getting top honors in their respective categories. *TSG* really made an effort to be complete, and the whole survey is the best concentrated coverage I've ever seen. If you study the *S&T* rankings, you'll like these results. . . so much more of them, for one thing.

LOU ZOCCHI is developing glow-in-the-dark polyhedral dice. . . seems to be a problem getting non-radioactive filler. . . are the things really going to be called *Disco Dice*?

Love,

Gigi



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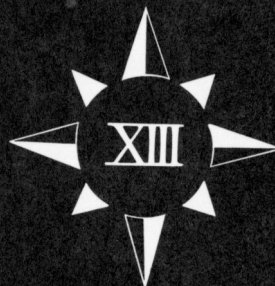
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