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NOVEMBER 1981
ISSUE 16
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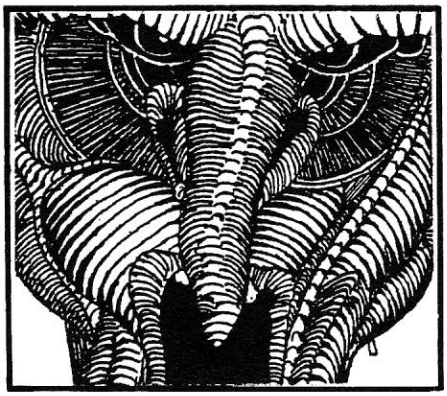

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EDITORIAL

Gigi

Remember that poll I took in *DW* 14? Here are some of the answers to question 13, "Who do you think is Gigi?"

"A committee composed of the **DW** *staff."*

"John Sapienza on drugs."

"A woman who keeps in touch with every major game company."

"Gigi is a magical fairy who flitters around throughout the role-playing industry gathering little tidbits of information and rumors to share with us in her column."

"Howard the Dolphin of **Illuminatus!** *fame."*

"A fascinating woman."

"Gary Gygax in drag."

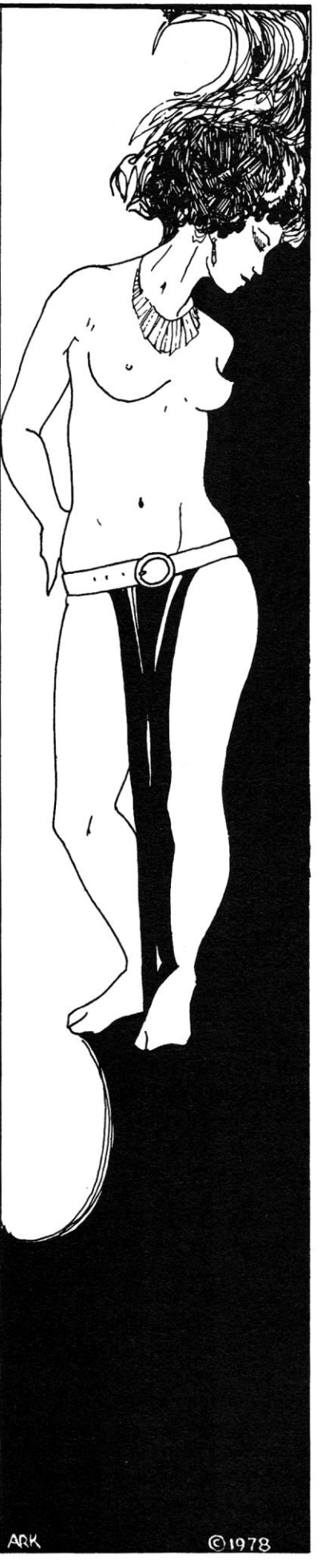
"Who cares?"

These are the ones Gigi laughed at when I showed them to her. You see, she is a real person. She lives in southern California and writes occasional feature articles (Rose Bowl Parade, Miss Culver City Contest, "Save the Fruit Fly Movement!", Rhubarb Festival, etc.) for a local newspaper/advertiser. She is an ardent fan of the entire gaming hobby, not just role-playing. And she jealously guards her real identity.

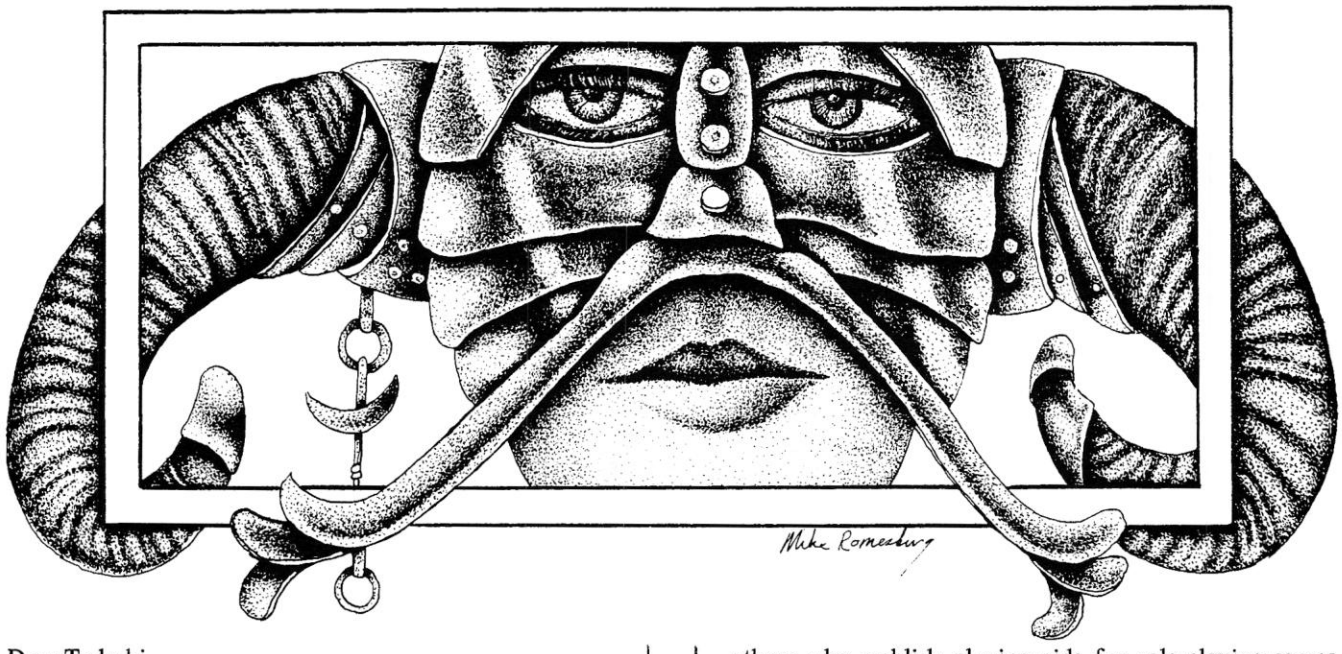
Someday I will tell you about the first time we met.

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ehara



DIFFERENT VIEWS



Dear Tadashi,

Who is this Patrick Amory? (*DW 14*, "Judges Guild and D&D – A Guide for the Discriminating GM") I have perused most and used many of the Guild's *D&D/AD&D* products, and find that his Judges Guild judgements are quite sound. I might accuse Mr. Amory of stealing my thoughts, were it not for the fact that I heretofore have shared few of these thoughts either on paper or verbally with others, we have never met, and I doubt he is telepathic.

His comments on unimaginative design (*Citadel of Fire*), on apparent ignorance of rules ("Judges Guild also seems to think that alchemists and sages are normal character classes who can rise in levels"), and on the "embarassingly poor, repetitive and sexist art," are all valid criticisms of some of the products which have been released by Judges Guild.

On the other hand, his praise of such Judges Guild products as Dave Sering's *Sea-Steeds and Wave-Riders*, Paul Jaquays' *Book of Treasure Maps* and *Dark Tower*, and of Dave Arneson's *First Fantasy Campaign* is well-deserved.

Mr. Amory is to be commended most for his balanced evaluation of the many available Judges Guild products.

Regarding his statement that "tournament dungeons should not be published," I would point out that TSR has published several former tournament dungeons, and these modules are generally equivalent in quality to their non-tournament modules. TSR spends more time putting together their tournament modules in the first place, and then does additional work to ensure it is playable in a non-tournament situation before publishing. I know that is part of their business, and TSR may have more money than other houses, but JG and others who publish playing aids for role-playing games would do well to follow TSR's lead in ensuring the quality of their products (including such details as spelling, punctuation, and grammar) before sending them out to retailers. By the way, Mr. Amory did have some positive things to say about one made-for-tournament-play adventure, *The Maltese Clue*. It has several good (and some zany) ideas, and though it has some holes in its explanations, can be fun to GM or play.

Fellow readers, heed my advice: read Patrick Amory's article in the September issue of *DW*. You will find that he is, indeed, a discriminating GM.

Kim McCoy
Seattle, WA

Good day to you *Different Worlds* person,

I have been a DW subber from the start and have enjoyed every issue thoroughly. Originally, I bought it because I was looking for *RuneQuest* cults but the diverse well presented articles on other games have broadened my horizons considerably. For this I and my gaming friends (I have encouraged several of my friends to subscribe) owe you a debt of thanks. Keep up the good work but please don't stop printing *RQ* cults. They are still the first article I read.

M.R. Ferley
Penticton, BC, Canada

Designer Notebook

By Robert Plamondon

HAND-HELD THERMO-NUCLEAR DEVICES

Players in fantasy role-playing games constantly search for new and more potent weapons. In any long-running campaign, the players will eventually work their characters up in power to a point where they can have just about anything they want. In some campaigns, a preferred weapon by high-level characters is a hand-held nuclear fission device, called by weapons buffs the "thermonuclear hand grenade."

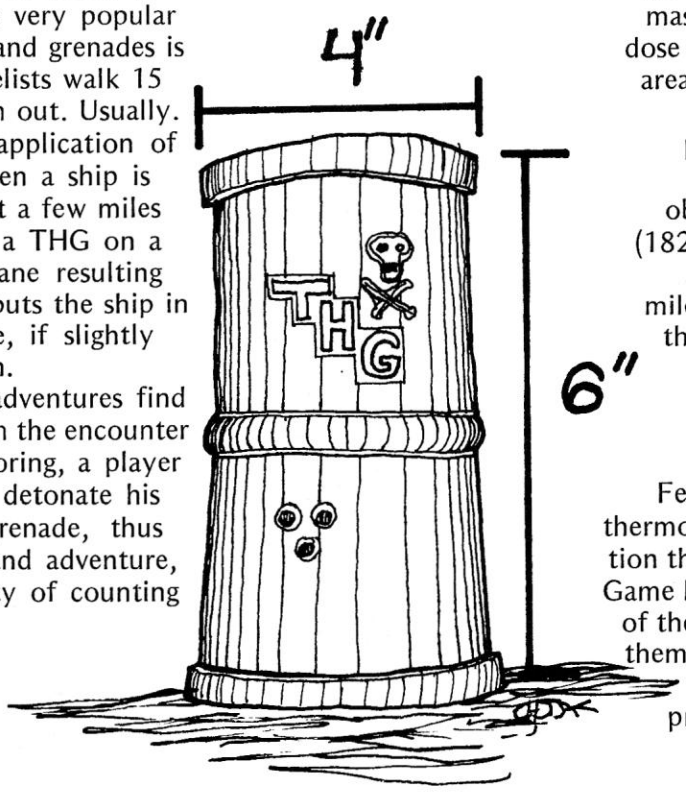
This paper discusses the proper role of the thermonuclear hand grenade in a fantasy role-playing setting.

TYPICAL APPLICATIONS

Although THG's have only one mode of operation, they can be useful in many applications. One very popular use of thermonuclear hand grenades is in dueling. The two duelists walk 15 paces, turn, and chicken out. Usually.

Another interesting application of THG's is in sailing. When a ship is becalmed, a crew is sent a few miles behind the ship to set a THG on a long timer. The hurricane resulting from the blast usually puts the ship in port ahead of schedule, if slightly charred around the stern.

Players in dungeon adventures find THG's very useful. When the encounter becomes hopeless or boring, a player will have his character detonate his thermonuclear hand grenade, thus saving a grueling overland adventure, and the boring necessity of counting experience points.



DESCRIPTION

The thermonuclear hand grenade (THG) is usually a small cylinder, six inches (15.2 cm) tall and four inches (10.2 cm) in diameter. It is often mistaken for a can of hot chile. A THG typically weighs around three pounds.

THG's glow in the dark, as do people who are near them for more than twelve hours. The metal case is made of cheap iron; the inside is of unknown composition — opening or piercing the case is one effective way of detonating the device.

Thermonuclear hand grenades are used whenever a huge explosion, massive heat flash, or fatal radiation dose is desired over a reasonably large area. Possible uses include post-natal birth control, pest control, and practical jokes.

The blast from a THG will obliterate everything in a 600 foot (182.8 m) sphere, and will knock the *blank* out of anybody within ten miles (35,200 cubits) with no saving throw. People further away will be thankful for that distance.

CONCLUSIONS

Few dungeon campaigns have given thermonuclear hand grenades the attention they deserve. It is my opinion that Game Masters should encourage the use of these fascinating devices by making them available to characters for about the price of a six-pack of ale, to promote study of this vital gaming resource.

METHOD OF OPERATION

Thermonuclear hand grenades are very easy to use. Detonation occurs when the metal case is pierced. There is no discernible delay between the time the case is penetrated and the explosion.

There are two methods of detonating the THG which allow the owner to survive. They are:

1. Let someone else do it.
2. Devise a time-delay can opener, and teleport away before the explosion.

Thermonuclear devices are not reusable or recyclable.

BETTER GAME MASTERING

TOURNAMENT Role-Playing part 2

By Ken Rolston

We had just received our briefing from our Game Master (GM) for our session of the AD&D Open and had been handed our characters. We were given five minutes to organize ourselves. The GM had given us a couple of forms to help us organize ourselves, asking us to specify our marching order, our ready weapon, and planned first action in case of a surprise encounter. In a matter of few minutes, a group of eight strangers swiftly and efficiently organized themselves for an entertaining adventure.

Contrast the scene above with another familiar scene:

In my campaign at home we had an institution called "the Mandatory Hour of Fumbling." It seemed like it always took us an hour to get any adventure started. Confusion reigned supreme, and a common feeling of malaise began to set in before we even started play.

Ironically, after all this set-up time, we still had to struggle later in the game with the same issues that were clearly and efficiently dispensed with in the tournament game in a few minutes.

The contrast is clear; presumably the more attractive gaming style was one that permitted more play with less confusion. Oddly enough, I did not realize that play could be more enjoyable with a swift and organized beginning until I had an opportunity to experience both styles. Many features of play in your own campaign can not be perceived as being less than ideal until you can compare them by playing in a tournament.

We learn what is desirable or superior behavior by watching a model that we pattern our own behavior after. In its simplest formulation it takes the form of "He's my hero," or "Monkey see, monkey do." At a more sophisticated level, we study the behavior of our society's heroes (presidents, movie idols, literary characters) to discover the concepts of acceptable methods, beliefs, and behaviors held by the people that respect those heroes.

Let us suppose that we are curious about what is considered good form for a person who plays fantasy role-playing games. We might then look around among the recognized better players in the hobby for models and attempt to make some generalizations based on what we see. We might, for example, look to famous names in the hobby, Like Gary Gygax, who is certainly at least universally known; however, rarely will anyone have an opportunity to observe him playing the game. At least one might attend a lecture where he discourses upon the more admirable qualities of gamers, or read an occasional article where he discusses his idea of what good play is. For

another source of models of superior play, we may look to the writers for the better known magazines, where we will get occasional tips on how to be a better player, even though we still have no chance to view them playing FRP games. For example, in a fine article in *Gryphon* magazine Bill Keyes offers much practical advice on good playing styles; nonetheless, we still don't have the option of observing our model at work in a fantasy adventure.

Our playing styles are influenced by these models of FRP gaming; however, we tend to be most profoundly affected when we actually play with superior players, or under the eyes of acknowledged gaming experts. Here we come to the heart of my proposition. Our gaming styles are greatly influenced by the playing styles of those gamers who run events at conventions. It is not important whether their preeminence is real or simply formal, or whether the judges are indeed players worthy of emulation or simply people who went to the trouble of organizing and running an event. In either case, we expect a little more from these people simply because they presume to judge us in the playing of our hobby.

Because a game judge may be regarded as a model of a good FRP gamer, because a participant in an event may mold his style of play to emulate a game judge, it is appropriate for each person who becomes a game judge to reflect on what kind of style he wants emulated.

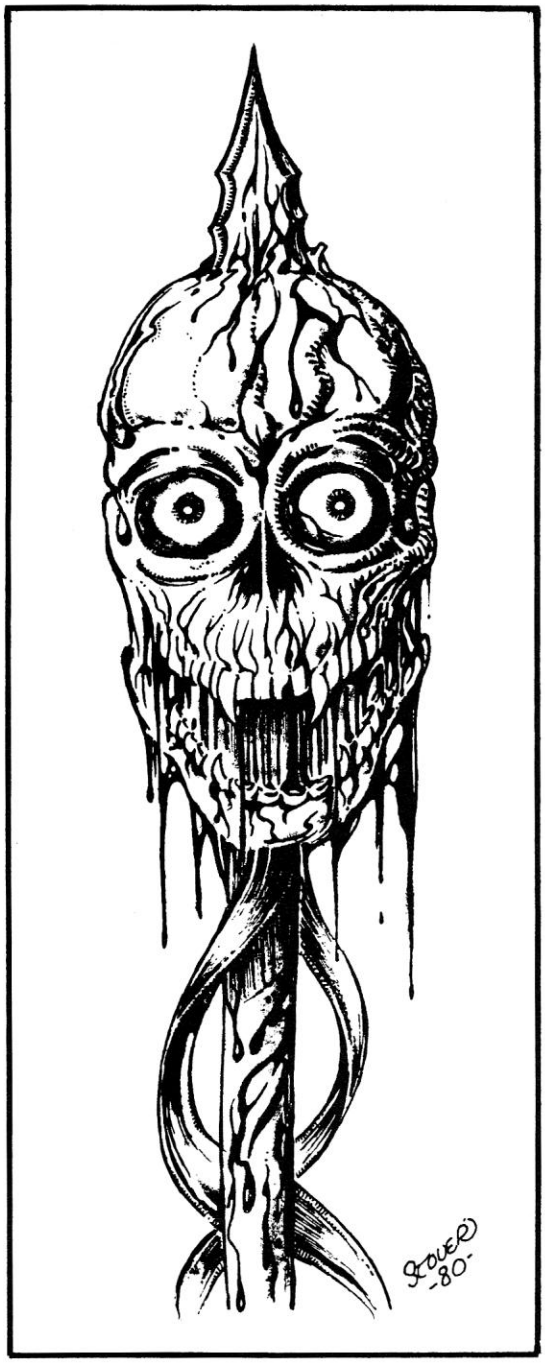
Perhaps it is pretentious to consider that one is teaching good play to the participants; on the other hand, it is naive to suppose that we are not going to influence those we judge, whether we so intend or not. Since we judges do influence those we come in contact with, I think we should consider, at least briefly, what values we want to impart to other players, and what types of poor play we want to discourage.

Though many positive styles can only be observed in extended campaign play, the following positive aspects of gaming styles can easily be demonstrated in a tournament setting. This article in no way intends to emphasize the skills of good tournament play over the skills of good campaign play. Rather it intends to show how certain FRP skills and techniques can improve both tournament and campaign play, and how tournament play can vividly demonstrate the value of these skills and techniques.

PREPARATION

One area where a tournament judge can provide a positive model of FRP gaming is in the preparation and organization of his materials. It is a pleasure to play with a judge who is so well organized that he is always ready to give you the next bit of description, or answer your more detailed question about the setting. One example of a time-saving technique is the preparing of player maps before the adventure. I first encountered this in a tournament, and was so impressed with the way it speeded up play that henceforth I have followed this example whenever possible in my own campaign. Another technique that I encountered first in tournament play was the use of preprinted background descriptions for a scenario, rather than orally presented backgrounds. With the printed background we avoided the annoying delays while players asked for repeats of certain sections, once, twice, and then perhaps one more time, slowly, so the player could copy the important details.

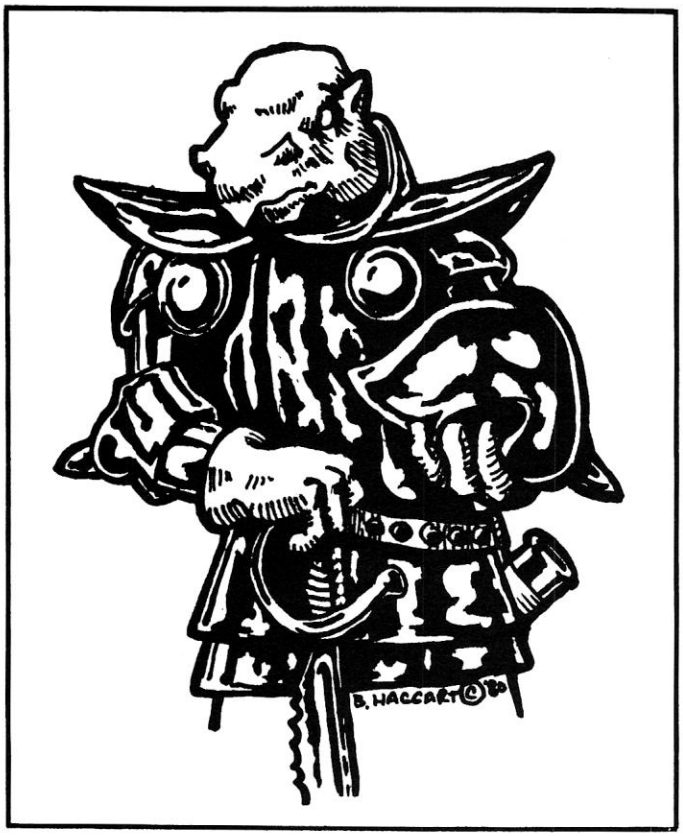
That it is good for a group of players to be organized seems trivially obvious, yet until you see a well-organized party at a tournament, it is often hard to imagine what a well-organized party can do, and how rewarding such well-organized play can be. There are two ways a judge can emphasize the value of an organized party. One method is to preorganize the party, with the roles of leader, magic specialist, rear guard, etc., already built into the character descriptions. It may go so far as specifying the typical party order. Such a demonstration serves to show an inexperienced player what things need to be done to organize a party, and demonstrate how much more smoothly a party can run when it is organized.



Another method is to leave the party absolutely on its own in its organization, but to explicitly warn the group of sanctions on time wasting or disorganization. One of the judges in a large tournament noted that the most memorable quote of the night had been from a player in a group that failed the mission dismally. He observed, after the session had been under way for about two hours, that they had better choose a leader. In the debriefing after the event, this judge tried to gently explain how organization might have mitigated their debacle. Such a lesson is hard, but it is also well learned.

ROLE-PLAYING

Another area where a judge can encourage better play is in role-playing. Here a judge can point out to a player that he could not be discussing the appropriate spell to be thrown with another player, since (1) he is in another room, (2) he is a fighter who knows nothing about magic, and (3) he happens to be engaged in a mortal combat with a troll.



A common fault of players is using the information he can see or recall from his mundane life, rather than attempting to limit himself to what his character would see or know. In most casual games little attention is paid to such nice details, while in tournament play, a player may suddenly become aware of the absurdity of his casually coordinating an attack of a character who is two rooms away, and then announcing that his character "surprised" the creatures he is attacking.

A good GM encourages a player to envision his character in the character's surroundings, and discourage the player from using information his character would not have access to, even though the player himself might. "Of course, these truths are unremarkable and obvious," an experienced player may observe, but until these features are graphically called to the attention of the player in a tournament session, he may never have the occasion to reflect on any fault in the quality of his play.

RUNNING COMMENTARY

One interesting GM technique I encountered in a tournament caused me to consider the general concept of providing a running commentary on a party's degree of efficiency in play. Every GM gives various hints to speed play or prompt players to try a different tack, but the judge in question formalized his running commentary, making explicit to his players what was good play, and giving the players a constantly revised evaluation of their play – instant feedback, as it were.

This GM used a group of six gnome-like figures called "schmoos" to communicate to his players how they were doing at any given time. All six figures were on the table as constant reminders, but one or two of them would be placed out in front of the others as an indication of the relative efficiency of the group at any moment. One schmoo was grinning broadly: this indicated that you were clever and on the right track. Another schmoo was sad and tearful: this communicated that you had erred to your great misfortune. Another schmoo was riding a motorcycle: when the schmoo was doing a wheelstand, you had just accelerated to a very efficient pace; when the schmoo was lying on its side, you were not moving along at all; routinely the figure does ride normally when the party was functioning normally.

In this way, the GM had so formalized his comments so that the group understood his hints unambiguously and used those hints to avoid bogging down in confusion, indecision, or trivia.

HINTS

Meanwhile the GM was conscious of every hint he gave the party. Often as we play, a GM will give many hints, and perhaps never be aware of them, or realize that he is giving hints. The point of discussing this particular example is not to recommend the use of the schmoos, but to show how the use of them made explicit a feature of judging that we are often unconscious of – our hints. Regulating the degree to which we give hints, or at least realizing how important our hints play in managing the success of a group, is the value that is demonstrated here. We need not formalize our own style of giving hints, but we should carefully consider what hints we ought to give. We should also give hints equally and consistently, particularly in tournament play.

ORDERLY SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Another area where a model from tournament play is helpful is in demonstrating how an orderly sequence of play speeds the flow of action in a game. It demonstrates that gimmicks and self-discipline can prevent confusion, unjust judgements, and time loss.

One technique I viewed in several games was the seating of players who had characters with the best dexterity in descending sequence from right to left around the table. In this case, the best dexterity character was permitted to state his action first, and so on around the table. Depending on what fantasy system you use, the order of seating players can greatly assist in structuring the sequence of play.

Another conventional procedure that eliminates confusion includes segmenting combat into movement, melee, and spells. In our early campaigns we lumped all actions together rather thoughtlessly, then argued about who got who first. It was not until I played in a tournament game that I saw how an orderly sequence of resolution of events eliminated the lengthy discussions and arguments over what happened when.

Also, in tournament play I discovered an universal principle that seems to be commonly misunderstood: though, in a real world situation, a party could search a room more quickly if they split up and individually searched different parts of the room, in a game one player can search a room as

The information bottleneck in FRP games is the GM: he cannot listen to more than one person at a time, nor can he give more than one piece of information at a time.

quickly as ten. The information bottleneck in FRP games is the GM: he cannot listen to more than one person at a time, nor can he give more than one piece of information at a time. Players who understand this principle realize that "hurrying" in an FRP game can most effectively be done by remaining in an orderly sequence of play. On the contrary: what usually happens is that everyone will start to talk at once when the party is in time trouble, working on the assumed and incorrect premise that if everyone starts acting, more will get done in a shorter time. It is common to see even the best players disintegrate into this form of panic as the time limit approaches in a tournament game. Here an observer can see most graphically the importance of developing a style of play that permits the GM to have to speak to no more than one player at a time.

One system that has arisen to fulfill this requirement is the "caller," where only one person speaks for the group. This is the method specifically described in the *D&D* systems, but it is by no means the only system. The problem with the caller system is that, though it achieves the ideal of having only one person speaking to the GM at a time, it limits the participation of the other players.

I viewed an interesting alternative to the traditional caller system in one tournament. A "chairman" was appointed, and the role of caller rotated in an orderly fashion, directed by the "chairman." In this way no more than one player was speaking to the GM at one time, yet every player got to speak and participate, and no time was lost in relaying information through a caller. This system serves as a model not only for the value of organization and efficient use of time, but also the value of permitting each player to participate equally in an adventure.

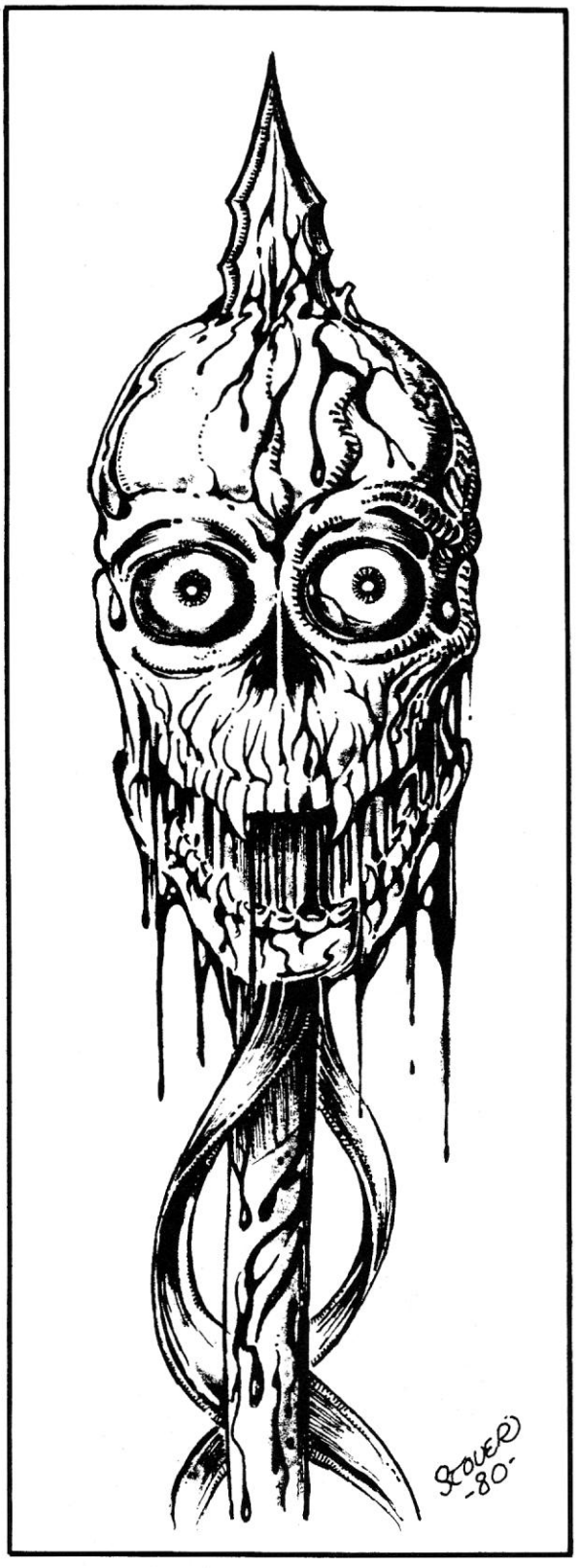
PLAYER ROLES

Another area where good role-playing may be modeled in tournament play is in the division of player roles. The role that almost everyone recognizes as necessary is the role of the leader, but all too often that leader role becomes too all-encompassing to be either efficient or fair to other players who want to have a meaningful role in forwarding the goals of the adventure. It is a good idea to divide the various tasks a leader may perform among a number of players, whenever possible giving each player some important area to handle.

One useful role is the role of discussion leader or chairman. His task is to decide who can talk and in what order. Another effective use of this role is to make him the spokesman for the group, speaking directly to the GM, while the other players brainstorm ideas and write them down on scraps of paper and hand them to the discussion leader.

This particular technique is very useful when the GM gives you a blank check for additional equipment and information before the beginning of the adventure. Not only is it inefficient for each player to contend with one another for the right to ask the GM for his item or bit of information, but often very good ideas and questions are forgotten as a player waits for his turn. If the players brainstorm their needs and questions, put them on paper, and cycle them to the GM through the discussion leader, who notes down the answer to the request or query, it is possible for the other members of the party to be furiously brainstorming while the only player who really needs to listen to the GM, the discussion leader, makes notes that the players may review in spare moments when ideas are not coming to them.

This is an extreme example of structuring play for the maximum use of time, but the principles underlying such



efficiencies can easily be applied to all forms of FRP play: keep a record of neat ideas as they come to you. Take notes so you don't forget them, and whenever possible remove yourself briefly from the flow of action for brainstorming, so that you can concentrate uninterrupted and let your brain overflow with ideas; such can only be done if you withdraw yourself from the dialog at times, as the player in our example has done, leaving the dialog role in the hands of the discussion leader.

GAME AIDS

Another component of the FRP gaming problem that I have seen well handled in tournament settings is the GM's handling of information about the abilities and basic attributes of the players. I take a typical example from *RuneQuest* play: each player has a different percentage chance of hearing sound that may be particularly important. The GM ought not have to memorize the different percentage chances of his players, nor can he signal a player that something important is happening by asking him what his percentage roll is; if the GM asks for the percentage, rolls, and announces that the player hasn't heard anything, the player is still warned that something is about to happen. To handle this problem, a chart has been designed that summarizes each character's attributes, attack and parry percentages, hit points, and his percentage chances to perceive hidden objects and traps, and to hear sounds. In this way the GM can make his rolls secretly, without hinting to the party what type of danger or benefit they are close to. This sort of GM's summary sheet was also used in this year's *AD&D* Open, where the GMs had charts showing each individual player's roll necessary to hit each particular armor class.

The virtue of these sheets, and the desirable FRP value of these devices, is to present the information needed by the GM in a form that admits an easy and quick reference, improving the pace of play. In general, we tend to admire a GM who can handle the inputs from several different players in rapid sequence and resolve the consequences of their actions, without lengthy references to charts and texts and without frequent queries to the players about their own stats. These devices also serve to remind the GM of relevant player skills. It is rather embarassing for a GM to produce a crowd of beasts attacking from the brush in the wilderness, fight, resolve the melee, and have one of the players ask, "Hey, wouldn't I have had a chance to hear those creatures coming?"

JUDGING

The area where a judge is most likely to explicitly suggest what he considers good play and bad play is in the specific judging of the characters' and team's performance. Here each judge should have some explicit idea of what he feels is good play, and he should be able to communicate this set of standards to his players. However, I find in tournaments that a GM will simply state that so-and-so is the winner, leaving the participants to wonder whatever might have been his method of arriving at that judgement. I have heard players speculate on a wide range of possible criteria that they thought was used: one suspected that being a female with very nice blond hair was a determining factor; another suggested that having a loud voice and obtrusive manner was the determining factor; another suggesting that the GM had simply rolled dice to determine the finest player. A specific discussion of how to judge an FRP tournament must be handled in more detail in another article, but a few general observations might be appropriate.

First, criticisms and compliments should be as specific as possible. Telling someone "You don't seem to know much about role-playing," or "You just played really well," doesn't tell the player anything at all about what he does well or what he doesn't do well. Tell players how their organization and planning either helped or hindered them in their quest. Tell a player that he kept forgetting his role while he concentrated on exploiting the rules to their best advantage. Tell players that their planning was effective or ineffective. Tell an individual whether he made good use of his magic items.

Second, limit the scope of your criticisms. Few people want to hear bad things about themselves to start with, and if you lay on an individual a long list of his shortcomings, he is likely to get either depressed, unresponsive, hostile, or defensive. People can often accept criticism when it is in small doses, leavened freely with positive comments on their good points. Also, an individual is not able to work on improving more than one or two general areas of their performance at a time: it is simply not productive to give them more to work on than they can handle.

Third, criticize only those faults that you believe are within the person's power to change. This is most important. There is little purpose in pointing out to someone that his role-playing is rather unimaginative: he just may not have a very imaginative personality. He may, on the other hand, have a real interest in the tactical and strategic aspects of gaming, and your comments on how he could improve his performance in this area will not only be eagerly received, but will also help the person recognize and develop skills in that area.

It is important to recognize that FRP gamers have very diverse personalities; their reasons for playing FRP games may vary widely, and its best to be able to recognize in others skills and interests in the hobby that may not be particularly important to you. One currently popular method of classifying the different general types of FRP gamers is to categorize them as either power gamers, wargamers, role-players, or story tellers. If we accept these categories simply for the purposes of discussion, it is possible to see how a judge who particularly respects role-playing might give short shrift to a fine wargamer in evaluating his play in a scenario designed by a dedicated role-player. This problem can be handled in several ways in a tournament, and it reveals a model through

which such conflicts can be resolved in the hobby in general.

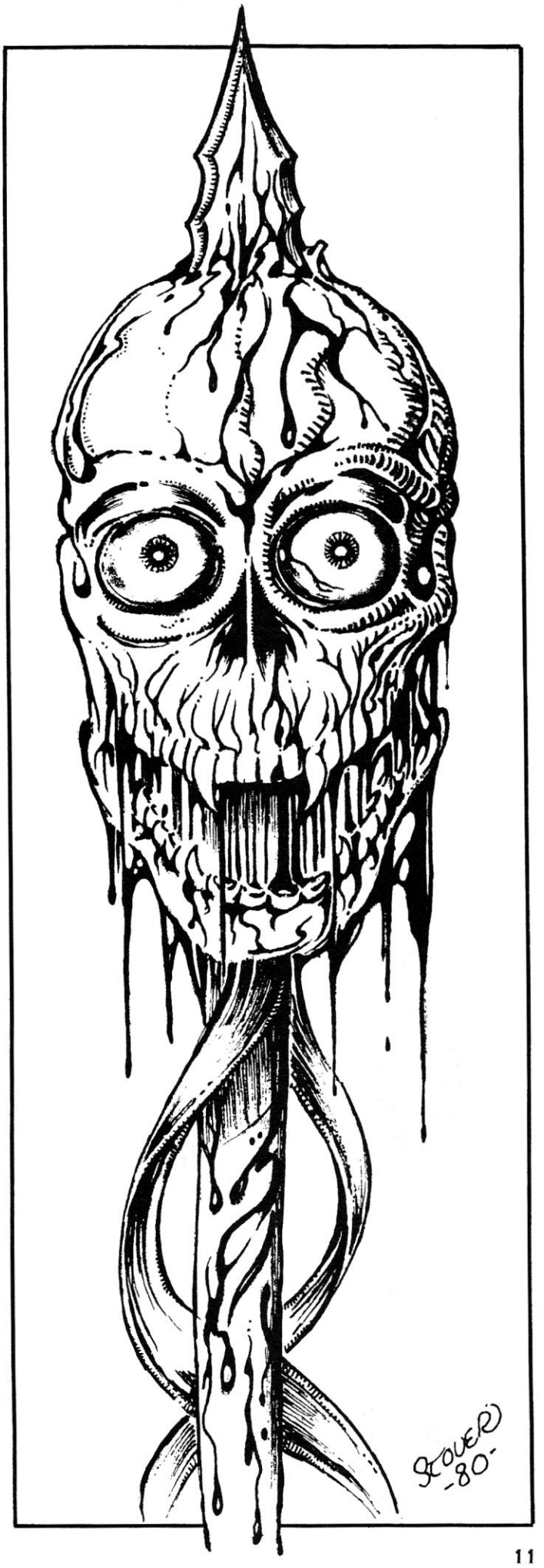
First, explicitly announce which aspects of FRP gaming will be stressed in a given event. For example, I specifically mentioned in one of my scenarios that the event was "to emphasize role-playing." I had no intention to exclude a player who had other particular interests in the hobby: I simply wished such a player to realize what my particular interests would be so that he might understand and accept my disinterest in, say, wargaming – not as a criticism of his style of play – but rather as expression of my taste and preference. Likewise, in the hobby in general, it would be well for GM's when they are opening up a new campaign and soliciting for players, to state explicitly their particular taste in gaming styles. This way a player has a chance to avoid a game that he may not find to his taste, without the difficult task of struggling along for a while, investing time and effort in a character, and finally having to drop out of a campaign. This can often be a source of strife among good friends, as a strong willed player may unmaliciously bend a campaign to his taste, to the discomfort of the GM and other players.

Another approach is to design events to cover many different aspects of FRP gaming. This is my approach when preparing opening rounds for general elimination tournaments. I try to provide opportunities for proponents of each particular style to distinguish themselves in the pursuit of their chosen enthusiasms. In such a case I develop a scoring chart which gives players several scores for each of the particular areas where a player may shine i.e., role-playing, strategy, use of magic items, gamesmanship and etiquette, achievement of goal, etc., and then each individual's score is a sum of his scores in the various areas. In these events the winner is often simply a good all-around player, while a player with brilliance in one area, and a blind spot in another, may only receive honorable mention.

In the same way, a campaign can be designed to give many different styles a good chance for interesting play. In our local group we have players who are particularly into one distinct aspect of FRP gaming, but when we get together, we try to be good general players, while expecting the specialists to take special responsibilities when certain situations are to be encountered: we leave combat tactics to our strategists, and negotiations to our role-players. In this way we have developed a broad respect for the different styles and their particular rewards, while still having occasional opportunities to indulge our pet styles.

INCORPORATION

In this article I have used several accounts of my experiences in tournament play to illustrate how tournament play provides models for superior FRP play. My selection of examples is not intended to be exhaustive, but merely suggestive of the positive skills and techniques that can be well demonstrated in tournament play. Hopefully, experienced tournament players will recall illustrating examples from their own play. My hope is that tournament judges and event designers will more carefully and specifically consider the kind of FRP model they wish to represent to their players, and consider carefully and specifically what skills and values they wish to communicate. I also hope tournament participants will thoughtfully and critically review the models presented by the tournaments they play in, and reflect on which skills and values they might wish to incorporate into their own styles.



Mythological Monsters For The Fantasy Trip

By Ronald Mark Pehr

Whether on the battlefield, in the arena, or in labyrinthine tunnels, one of the more enjoyable aspects of fantasy adventures is the prospect of encountering fantasy monsters. ***The Fantasy Trip*** *has given gamers a taste of the inhuman evildoers and ferocious beasties which can oppose well-experienced players.*

Players clamoring for new and more implacable foes for their characters might look to our own world's mythologies – to play in the fantasy world against the legendary beings that existed as genuine terrors in the minds of our ancestors.

Be warned! These are for only the smartest, strongest, most dexterous characters.

THE HARPY

The Harpy comes from out of Greek mythology. Harpies have an avian body, with the upper torso, arms, and head of a woman.

The hideous aspect of the Harpy was its ability to lure men by a mystically compelling song; the victim arrived entranced and the Harpy pounced to feed. In *TFT*, this power is represented as a Control Person Spell. They can utilize this automatic Control Person Spell against any victim they can see by direct eyesight. The Harpy casts the spell by selecting the option in its turn, the spell occurs regardless of DX and renews automatically without loss of ST, but the victim saves in the normal manner. The harpy will use the ability to hold the victim still for devouring. If the Harpy takes 8 or more hits in a turn or is knocked out of the air, any Control Person Spells are voided.

Harpies fly in the same manner as other winged creatures in *TFT*, however they can hover in the air over one hex and cast Control Person as if they were standing in that hex.

Harpies are one-hex figures. They have ST:15, DX:11, IQ:9, MA:4 walking / 20 flying, their feathers stop one hit.

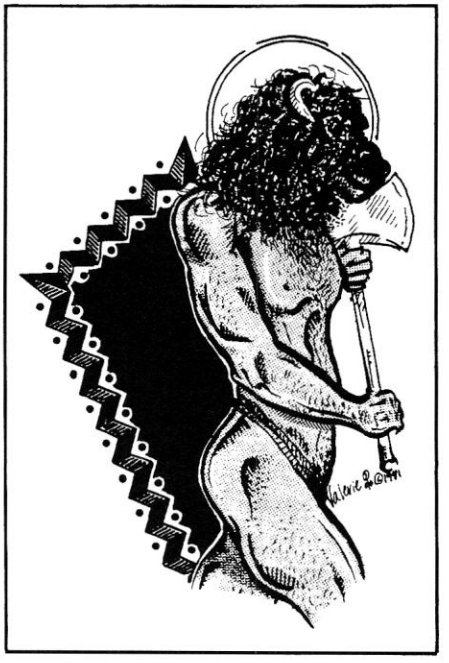
They may use weapons or fight bare handed as a normal figure. Because of their anatomical structure, they cannot employ two-handed weapons or bows.

THE MUMMY

A Mummy is the wrapped, preserved body of a long deceased person that has become animated for some mystical reason and left its tomb to wreak havoc. The bandage-like wrappings will have become hardened to a rock-like consistency, and the undead brain has a hatred for living creatures.

Because Mummies are kept going by eldritch forces rather than biological means, and have no real nervous systems, they have certain immunities in *TFT*: They are impregnable to any sort of Control Spells (although there may be special artifacts which can control them, and a Wizard who brings a Mummy to life may have a means to control it), they do not feel the pain of wounds and so ignore the penalties incurred by receiving 5 or 8 hits in a turn and can battle freely until their ST is reduced to zero or less, and if you use the Crippling Hits Option they are unaffected unless a limb is actually severed.

Mummies are one-hex figures, with ST:25, DX:10, IQ:8, MA:6. The wrappings stop 4 hits (except fire burns them as if unarmored). Mummies disdain weaponry, doing die+3 damage in regular combat and 2 dice damage in HtH.



THE MINOTAUR

This creature from the Greek legend of Theseus is a large man with the head of a bull. Consider it a one-hex figure with the mass of a Gargoyle.

Minotaurs can talk, and think as well as Hobgoblins, but they would rather eat people.

A Minotaur may use any weapon it has the talent for (the double-bladed axe is traditional) or it may fight with its horns. The horns may be utilized in a Charge Attack, as if a pole weapon, but give no extra hex reach. Drop Weapon / Break Weapon Spells cannot affect the horns. A Minotaur may melee with its horns and a weapon together, at -4DX. The horns are always treated as one single weapon even though there are two horns. Horns do 2 dice + 2 damage in regular combat, 2 dice - 2 in HtH combat. Minotaurs do normal damage with weapons.

THE LAMIA

In Greek myths, the Lamia was accursed by the gods to become a woman from the waist up and a snake from the waist down. Because of their affliction, Lamia hate all normal people, particularly women and children.

They may be considered one-hex figures, as large snakes, with the same abilities of causing an opponent to be - 3DX and with side hexes = front hexes.

The Lamia may fight with weapons, barehanded, and in HtH combat she may do an extra attack of constriction for one die damage. This attack comes at normal DX in addition to whatever other attack is performed.

Lamia may learn magic as if Wizards, talents as any other figure.

They have ST:30, DX:12, IQ:10, MA:8. Their scaly hide stops one hit.

THE CHIMERA

This is a word meaning an impossible, non-existent entity, but the Chimera was very real to the mythology of the Greeks.

It is a two-hex creature, the front is a lion, the hindquarters are as a goat, it has a dragon tail and dragon wings. Along with the lion's head in front are a goat's head and dragon head, thus it can fight simultaneously against three foes with no DX penalty, using the characteristics of each of the beasts it is composed of. It can also lash with its tail and fly with its wings as a two-hex dragon, and can breathe fire into its front hexes.

Chimerae have ST:24, DX:12, IQ:5, MA:12 whether running or flying in combat. It follows *Melee* rules for aerial combat.

Its hide stops one hit; the dragon head, wings, or tail stop two hits (this is an especially apt foe for use with the optional Aiming and Crippling Rules).

The lion aspect strikes with paws for 2 dice damage, the goat aspect strikes with horns for one die - 1 damage (no poleweapon-type attack), the dragon head breathes one die of fire for one ST, and the tail operates as for any two-hex dragon.

THE GORGON

Medieval bestiaries pictured Gorgons as bull-like creatures with iron scales whose noxious breath could turn people to stone.

In game-terms they will have the characteristics and abilities of an ox, yak, or water buffalo in *TFT*.

The breath power is employed by standing still, or moving only one hex, then breathing in the manner of a dragon. The breath can go only into a Gorgon's front hexes and cannot be used while also striking physically. Victims get a 4 dice saving roll vs. his DX. If failed, the victim is turned to stone (consider as a Freeze Spell) until the Gorgon is dispatched, a Remove Thrown Spells is placed on the statue, or the victim is eaten.

Because of their iron-scaled hide, Gorgons stop 4 hits for 30 ST and 5 hits if they are 40 ST.

RQ/SATIRE

The Cult Of Indlas Somer

By Angus MacDonald

MYTHOS AND HISTORY

Before The Dawn

Indlas Somer was born during Time.

Since Time Began

Indlas Somer was born the very hour that the Sun returned to the sky somewhere along the west coast of the Continent.

Though many townships claim to be his birthplace, all he remembers is that it was a warm, sandy beach. His parentage is anyone's guess.

Like everyone else, he heard glorious tales of Godtime and felt cheated out of the non-sequential Time before the Dawn. Its non-linear/non-cyclic time frame was more to his element, with everything happening, in what he thought, a fantastically haphazard manner. Having no other outlet for his frustrations, he turned to vandalism.

Since there was no one around who understood him, and having an itch to see the rest of the world, Indlas invented the chariot, to which he harnessed his two now-famous horses, Jhann and Deem, and rode off in search of adventure.

During his far-flung wanderings he found his True Love, Rhondabarbaraannannette; invented surfing; abalone hunting; clam bakes; spear fishing; guitar and snare drum playing; three part harmony; weight lifting; bass lines; chug-a-lugging; chariot racing; school vacations; fought savagely for and against almost every god and cause in history; and proved himself to be a totally hedonistic fellow, living for the moment, never thinking of tomorrow and forgetting yesterday, generally out for a good time, and subject to no rules except his own.

Life After Death

As Indlas Somer never thinks about Tomorrow, he never thinks about Death. Therefore his followers do not concern themselves with an afterlife, believing that they will live forever.

Runic Associations

Indlas Somer is identified with the Runes of Movement, Water, and Disorder.

NATURE OF THE CULT

Reason For Continued Existence

There is always a group in any population that believes in enjoying life for its own sake. These people find, if not a purpose, at least a mode of existence in the lifestyle of Indlas Somer.

Social/Political Power And Position

Members of this cult are generally looked upon as being lazy, hedonistic ne'er-do-wells. The only direct influence that they wield is through vandalism.

Particular Likes And Dislikes

Members of this cult like fast chariots, deep tans, sunshine, surfing, loud/wild music, beach parties, going steady, mayhem, debauchery, defying authority figures, vandalism, dancing, and generally having a good ol' time. They never wear armor, and rarely wear more clothing than swimsuits – except during Dark season, as it prevents even tanning.

Above all else they hate having someone else tell them what to do, especially if they have no choice but to follow orders. If

you want to depress them, cloud over the sun, put oil on their beaches, and steal their steady dates – but if you want to make them mad, steal their chariots, surfboards, and instruments.

ORGANIZATION

Inter-Cult Organization

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Intra-Temple Organization

The wandering temple, referred to as the Gang, is usually loosely-ruled by the strongest, most handsome, and/or best surfing Beach King; and his steady, who is usually the Head Beach Bunny.

Center Of Power And Holy Places

Indlas Somer has no center of power, but every warm, sandy beach is holy ground.

Holy Days And High Holy Days

Wildday of each week is the major party time of the cult, and as such, is its holy day. Waterday of Disorder week of Fire season is the High Holy Day of the cult, culminating in their major festival known as the Big Blowout.

During the Sacred Time, Bummers and Wipeouts (see Spirits of Reprisal) gather in large quantities around worshipers, whether they've transgressed cult dictates or not. The only way to avoid them in sacred time is for the worshipers to stay home with their families, and avoid beaches and fellow Somerites.

LAY MEMBERSHIP - MALE

Requirements To Join

Only humans may join this cult. The prospective member must be SIZ 9 or greater and must pass an examination to succeed (STR + CHA or less on 2D20). Lay members are expected to own a surfboard, chariot, ox cart, or musical instrument.

Requirements To Belong

Lay members are expected to bring some form of cult food (beer, pretzels, marshmallows, hot dogs, soda pop, etc.) to the weekly Holy Day. They must also expect to be the butt of many jokes, though they can do little or nothing in their own defense. All lay members receive one Gift and one Geas.

Mundane Benefits

Ya got buddies.

Skills

The following skills are taught by the cult to initiates for the prices indicated:

Reduced – Swimming, Surfing, Chariot/Cart Driving, Play Instrument, Singing, Fist Attack.

Normal – Predict Weather, Find Monster Wave, Spot Hidden Item (+20 for Spotting Beer).

Increased – Evaluate Treasure, Speak Other Languages, First Aid.

Prohibited – Reading/Writing, Most Weaponry, Shield, Armor Making, General Knowledge.

The only weapons allowed in the cult are: rock, dagger, brass knuckles (light cestus), bottle (light mace), 2x4 (heavy mace), guitar (maul), speargun (light crossbow), harpoon (spear), barbell (special), dumbbells (special), and surfboard (special).

Additionally all lay members are taught the special cult language, Slang, for free at the rate of 10% per week, assuming attendance of Holy Days, topping out at 80%. One cannot learn Slang above 80% as there is no further refinement of the tongue. In fact, the language changes from time to time and only cult members can keep up with the changes. There is no written form of Slang. Most outsiders are hopelessly confused by the language, particularly the followers of Lhankor Mhy.

Battle Magic

The following battle magic spells are available or otherwise relevant to cult lay members:

Reduced – Ignite, Light, Lightwall, Ironhand.

Increased – Firearrow, Fireblade, Healing.

Prohibited – Invisibility, Darkwall, Extinguish, Xenohealing, Bladesharp, Detection Blank, Detect Undead, Detect Magic, Detect Life.

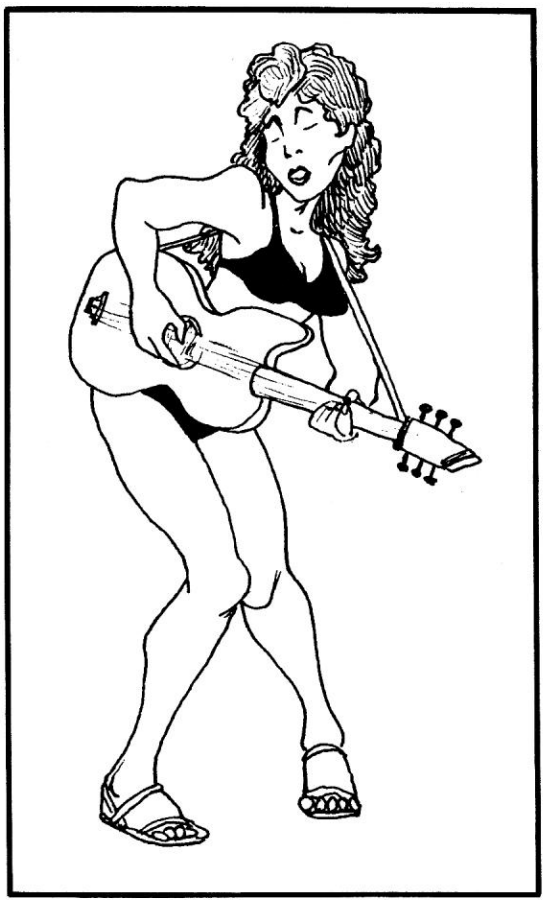
Unique – Breaker, Heatwave, Amplification, Electrical Hookup.

BREAKER — Cost to cast – 1 POW point
Cost to buy – 500L — Range – touch
Duration – length of ride — Unfocused, Active, Temporal.

This spell causes a very nice surfing wave to appear under the caster's surfboard.

AMPLIFICATION — Cost to cast – 1 POW point
Cost to buy – 300L — Range – Instrument or Voice
Duration – 1 Hour — Unfocused, Passive, Temporal.

Specifically designed to produce raucous rock music, this spell increases the sound produced five-fold.



ELECTRICAL HOOKUP Cost to cast – 1 POW point
Cost to buy – 300L Range – Instrument
Duration – 1 Hour Unfocused, Passive, Temporal.

Allows the caster to play one instrument that usually requires electrical power, such as an organ, electrical guitar, or synthesizer.

HEATWAVE Cost to cast – 2 POW points
Cost to buy – 1000L Range – 100 meter diameter
Duration – 4 Hours Focused, Passive, Temporal.

Raises the temperature in the circle to a comfortable (for surfer-folk) 80 degrees Fahrenheit (almost 27 Celsius). Just fine for surfing, swimming, and beach parties! Please note that it does not bring out the sun, stop wind, remove clouds, or halt rain; it simply raises the temperature. A surfboard is placed on end to indicate the center of the comfort zone.

LAY MEMBERSHIP - FEMALE

Requirements To Join

As for males, but the SIZ must be 15 or less, and DEX is substituted for STR. Posessions necessary are surfboard, instrument, or bikini.

Requirements To Belong

As for males.

Mundane Benefits

As for males.

Skills

The following skills are taught by the cult to lay members for the prices indicated:

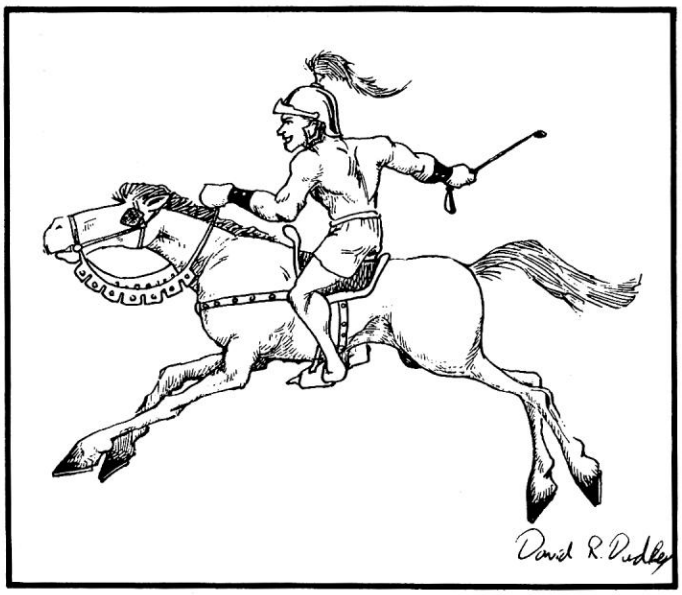
Reduced – Swimming, Surfing, Singing, Dancing, First Aid, Brew Healing Potion, Brew Power Restoring Potion.

Normal – Move Quietly, Listen, Spot Hidden Item, Find Path, Predict Weather, Cart/Chariot Driving, Rowing, Sailing, Speak Another Language, Treat Disease.

Increased – Cult Weapons (except Barbells and Dumbells), Read/Write Local Language.

Prohibited – Shield, Other Weapons, Armor and Weapon Making, General Knowledge, Barbells, Dumbells.

Special – Slang (as for males).



GIFTS OF INDLAS SOMER

D20	*GIFTS*	*GEASES* Number of geases
1	+10% Fist Attack	1
2	Songwriter	2
3	+1 pt to a raisable characteristic	1
4	+1 pt to a non-raisable characteristic	3
5	Mastery of an instrument	2
6	Mastery of Ox Cart or Chariot	2
7	Mastery of Surfboard or Swimming	2
8	On one instrument: permanent elec. hookup	1
9	On one instrument: permanent amplification	1
10	+10% with a cult weapon attack	1
11	Sex Symbol	2
12	+5% with a cult weapon parry	1
13	Mastery of Singing	2
14	Ironhand or Healing 2 (depending on sex)	1
15	Free Rune Spell: Extension 2	2
16	Always defend with full POW against spells	3
17	1 point skin	1
18	+5% defense	2
19	Mastery of dancing	2
20	+10% Oratory	1

Battle Magic

The following battle magic spells are available or otherwise relevant to cult laymembers:

Reduced – Glamor, Repair, Healing, Harmonize, Light, Ignite.

Increased – Bludgeon, Ironhand.

Prohibited – Fireblade, Firearrow, Bladesharp, Invisibility, Darkwall, Extinguish, Detection Blank, Detect Undead, Detect Life.

Unique – Breaker, Heatwave, Amplification, Electrical Hookup.

INITIATE MEMBERSHIP - MALE

Requirements For Initiation

The candidate must have at least two of the following requirements: Fist Attack 75%, Singing 75%, Play Instrument 75%, Surfing 75%, Chariot/Cart Driving 75%, Swimming 75%, STR 16+, CHA 16+. In addition, he must know at least one battle magic spell other than the Increased Cost spells or Glamor. Finally he must have been an active member of the cult for at least one year.

Requirements To Remain Initiated

The initiate must speak Slang whenever he can be understood by at least one other person and must continue to bring munchies to the weekly parties. In addition, the initiate is expected to either have a steady or join a Band. Again a Gift and a Geas are received.

Mundane Benefits

Benefits include being able to pick on lay members, being able to form a Band, and having buddies.

Skills

As for lay members, but add Oratory to the Reduced Cost list.

GEASES OF INDLAS SOMER

D100 ROLL	*GEAS*
01	Favored by Indlas; no Geas
02-04	Eat cult foods only (hotdogs, popcorn, etc.)
05-07	Eat no veggies
08-10	Drink nothing non-alcoholic
11-13	Drink only alcohol and soft drinks
14-16	Never drink milk
17-18	Never eat from a dish
19-21	Ride no animal one day per week
22-24	Ride no animal two weeks per season
25-26	Ride no animal
27-29	Double POW sacrifice on holy days
30-32	Triple POW sacrifice on holy days
33-36	Mistrust all authority figures
37-40	Mistrust anyone older than yourself
41-43	Never bathe (swimming doesn't count)
44-46	Challenge all authority figures (first blood only)
47-50	Snub all non-cultists
51-57	Commit one senseless act of vandalism per week
58-60	Destroy your instrument after every concert
61	Speak only Slang
62-65	Wear only swimming clothes
66-67	Never sleep in a building
68-71	Never clean up your surroundings
72-75	Use no magic once per week
76-79	Use no magic one week per season
80-81	Fight with fists only
82-85	Challenge everyone who insults you, (not girls)
86-89	Never learn to Read or Write
90-93	Never obey traffic laws
94-95	Develop a sexual kink
96-98	Roll again twice more
99-00	Roll again three times more

Spells

As for lay members, but may also purchase cult special Rune spells on a one time only basis.

INITIATE MEMBERSHIP - FEMALE

Requirements For Initiation

The initiate must at least have two of the following requirements: Swimming 75%, Singing 75%, Dancing 75%, Healing Potion 3, First Aid 75%, Play Instrument 75%, DEX 16+, CHA 16+. In addition, she must know at least one battle magic spell other than the Increased Cost spells or Xenohealing, and must have been an active member of the cult for at least one year.

Requirements to Remain Initiated

As for males, but may opt for Groupie status in a Band.

Mundane Benefits

As for males but no Band may be formed.

Skills

As for lay members, but add Oratory to the reduced Cost list and cult weapons other than speargun, barbells, Dumbells, and harpoon to the Normal Cost list.

Spells

As for lay members. Cult special Rune spells are available on a one-use-only basis.

RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

General Statement

Rune Lords, known variously as Beach Kings, Leaders of the Pack/Band/Gang, Bronzed/Surfing Gods, Beach Bums, and a variety of other names, are almost exclusively male (see notes on the Heroquester). They are the rowdy, fun-loving, trouble-making leaders of the Gangs.

Requirements For Acceptance

Acceptance for Rune Lord status in this cult requires a POW of 15 or more and asks that the candidate have been an initiate for at least one year. They must also have 90% or greater proficiency with at least five of the following skills:

At Least One Of These	*Any Number*
Fist Attack	Singing
Surfing	Play Instrument
Chariot Driving	Swimming
Oratory	Cult Weapon Attack

In addition the candidate must know Slang at 80% and know at least Ironhand 2. There is no formal 'test' to pass but the candidate must be able to down two six-packs of 'brew' without passing out.

Restrictions Of The Status

The Rune Lord must, at all times, stay within one day's travel of a sunny coastal region unless he is traveling with a Band. He must have a Steady and several Groupies. He must strictly follow the cult likes and dislikes at all times, follow initiate restrictions, get rip-roaring drunk at least once a week, and never let an insult from any human male pass without a Fight or a Rumble (see Notes). He may never hit a human female, though he may grapple them, and he may never marry. He must accept yet another Gift and Geas.

Benefits Of The Status

As a benefit, the new Rune Lord always stumbles across an iron knife on the beach. He never ages or grows ugly or weak and is immune to all major diseases, though colds and the like will still trouble him. He may start a new Gang if he wishes and acquires 1D4+1 male initiates as a bodyguard referred to as his Boys or Bros (no, not Broos!). He also receives a surfing medallion that houses his Allied Spirit and acts as full iron plate armor (Indlas Somer protects his own!). Finally, Rune Lords have a Rune spell unavailable to Rune Priestesses:

K.O. (knockout) — Cost – 1 POW point
Range – Touch — Duration – Instantaneous
Stackable – No Limit — Reusable

When the Rune Lord hits, whatever area was hit is useless for a number of hours equal to the number of stacked points put into the spell. (If he misses, the points are gone anyway.) Double incapacitation time if the abdomen is hit. (While armor will affect the amount of damage done, it will not protect from the general effect of the spell although magical protection is effective.) If a critical is scored, the area hit has taken maximum damage rollable as well as incapacitation. If a fumble is rolled, the Rune Lord has broken his hand and takes an additional 1D4+1 damage.

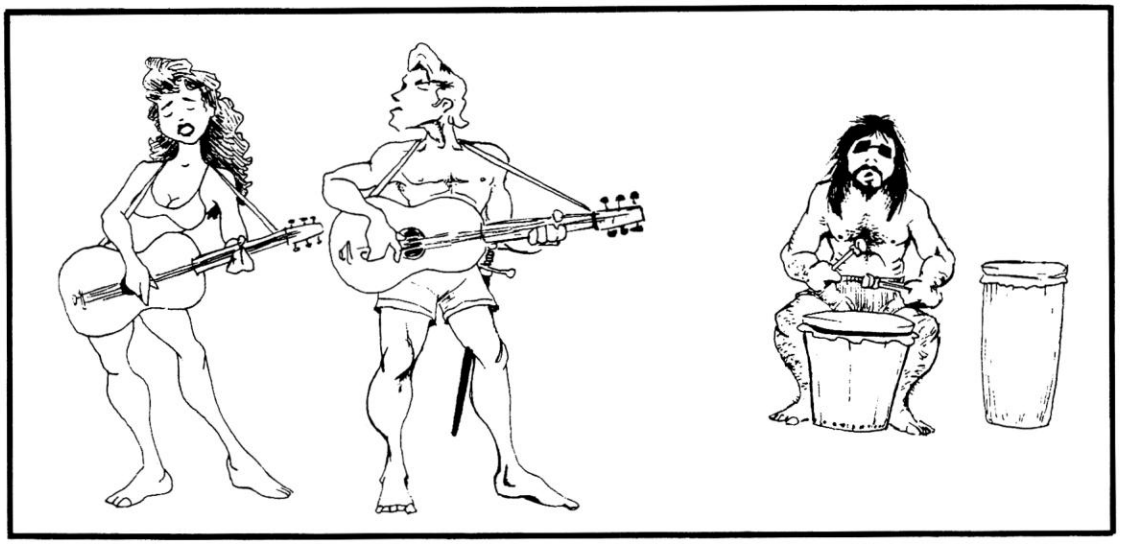
RUNE PRIEST(ESS) MEMBERSHIP

General Statement

There are no true Priests of Indlas Somer, per se. These Priestesses, known as Beach Bunnies, Surfer Girls, etc., actually follow the dictates of Indlas Somer's True Love, Rhondabarbaraannannette. If there are few female Rune Lords, there are even fewer (admitted) male Rune Priests. This is because the Rune Priestess status goes against the basic macho-male image (there are exceptions, see Notes).

Requirements For Acceptance

To become a Priestess, the candidate must have been an initiate for at least one year. The basic requirements for priesthood are Speak Slang 80%, CHA and POW of 18 or more, DEX 15, and know Healing 3. Literacy is waived, but first aid at 80% is required.



Restrictions

Priestesses are never allowed to marry. They must have a Steady, follow initiate restrictions, strictly adhere to cult likes and dislikes, and spend their lives within one day's journey of a sunny coastal region, unless on a Band gig.

Benefits

Unlike most other cults, there is no restriction placed on DEX based skills. In fact, the Rune Priestesses tend to be the most agile and limber members of the cult. As with Rune Lords, the Priestesses never age or grow sick or ugly. They are allowed to form Bands of their own. They gain an Allied Spirit, of course, which inhabits the body of a Permakitten.

All Priestesses also gain an exotic ability to protect themselves from outsiders. Anytime a male of any race wishes to do harm to a Rune Priestess, he must first match his INT vs. her CHA and try to overcome it as if he were casting battle magic. If he does not succeed, he may not harm her, indeed he has no desire to, though he may grapple her, attempt to carry her off, cast spells that do no damage, etc. If there is more than one male around attempting to attack, use their average INT-1.

Rune Spell Compatibility

Beach Bunnies have access to all one point Rune spells except Discorporation and can Summon Small Salamanders and Medium Undines. They can dismiss any size elemental.

Cult Special Rune Spells

One Point Spells

CREATE BEACH PARTY Cost – 1 POW point
Range – Stretch of beach (200m) Duration – 12 hours
Nonstackable Reusable

This spell, similar to Warding, sets up a suitable beach party area. The limits of the area are marked by four beer kegs. If the battle magic spells Breaker, Heatwave, Amplification, and/or Electrical Hookup are also cast by the Priestess into the area, their duration is that of the party. No other magic can be cast in or into the area unless a successful Divine Intervention is cast for each spell first. Anyone not of the cult attempting to enter the party is hit with a Befuddle spell as long as they remain.

CREATE CONCERT Cost – 1 POW point
Range – Theater or stretch of beach Duration – 12 hours
Stackable Reusable

Quite similar to Create Beach Party. The limits of the concert are defined by four speakers. At least one Band must be present to play. The audience gives its (almost) undivided attention to the Band(s) playing, thus there is no fighting and no spells can be cast, unless it is done by a Band member or the organizing Priestess. The spell automatically includes Amplification and Electrical Hookup for its duration.

If more than one point is put into the formation of the concert, a spell may be cast through the music to affect all members of the audience who are Somerites or under 30 and not belonging to Truth Rune cults. Choose a spell from the following list: Befuddle, Demoralize, Fanaticism, or Glamor (the band looks *real good*). Each additional point acts as Extension (up to Extension 3).

Two Point Spells

COMMAND SHARK Cost – 2 POW points
Range – 160m Duration – 15 minutes
Stackable Reusable

Calls one shark to the assistance of the Priestess. Extra points call more sharks or extend the range. Please note that sharks must be given simple, explicit instructions via Mind Link or Seatongue.

SCUBA DIVE Cost – 2 POW points
Range – 160m Duration – 15 minutes
Stackable Reusable

Allows the recipient to breathe, see, and function underwater as if he were on dry land. Each point extends the length of the spell.

BAKE Cost – 2 POW points
Range – 160m Duration – Instantaneous
Non-Stackable Reusable

Affects one target in metal armor. This spell heats armor on one hit location, delivering damage equal to the protective value of the armor (i.e., chainmail 5 points, plate 6 points, etc.). The armor will in no way protect the target, as it is the armor that is actually doing the damage. Note that the location hit must have metal armor on it or the spell merely delivers a mild sunburn. Padding will still protect.

Three Point Spell

COMMAND GIANT CLAM Cost – 3 POW points
Range – 160m Duration – 15 minutes
Stackable Reusable

As for Command Shark, but it affects giant clams. Extra points extend the range of call or call more clams.

SUBSERVIENT CULTS

Spirits Of Reprisal: Bummers And Wipeouts

Bummers are relatively low power spirits that attach themselves to those who transgress the Laws of Indlas Somer in some lesser form, such as not speaking Slang when others are around, missing a weekly beach party, or cowing down to an authority figure. The Bummer will follow the person for 1D6+6 days, clouding the sun wherever he goes, flattening waves, breaking guitar strings, making beer go flat, etc.

Far worse are the dreaded Wipeouts. For those who truly disregard the Laws of Indlas Somer there is no rest. Whole beaches cloud over when they are present and rain usually sets in (or snow in extreme cases). They throw you off your surfboard into shark-infested waters. Under their terrifying guidance, whole flocks of seagulls have been known to envision offenders as giant loaves of Wonder Bread. Don't even think of driving a chariot!

Ruben Clamzo

A noted coastal hero, well known as a warrior forever fighting the dreaded, beach-destroying giant clams. He teaches cult members the skills of Speargun, Javelin, and Harpoon (or, as he liked to call it, Clampoon), and the Rune spell, Command Giant Clam.

Rhondabarbaraannannette (Mama R.)

As noted eariler, she is the True Love of Indlas Somer and formed the female side of the cult. She also brought the spell Create Beach Party.

Mongo The Jock

Though he was never noted for his intelligence, Mongo was tough to beat in a fight and was one of the great Bronzed Gods of Indlas Somer. Besides inventing the cult game of Foopball, he provided the cult with the skills of Fist Attack, Barbell /Dumbbell Attack, Surfboard Attack, and the famed spell K.O. See notes for rules to Foopball.

The Feables (aka The Pale Ones, The Pre-Fab Four,)

This was a famous singing group from the East Isles, all of whom were untanned, 98lb wimps. Despite these dreadful handicaps, they were well liked by the Somerites. They only heard the word of Indlas Somer when they reached the beaches of the West. Though they didn't stay long and never developed tans, they were successful in teaching the Somerites the rudiments of harmonics and brought to Indlas the famed spell Create Concert.

ASSOCIATED CULTS

Unlike most other cults, it should be noted that most of the cults associated with Indlas Somer have done so against their own wills and better judgement.

Yelmalio

As Yelmalio is a very structured, organized, authoritarian god, he has long been the subject of much razzing and harassment by the members of the cult of Indlas Somer. Once there was a Sun Dome Temple built along the west coast. No more. During one of the raids on the temple, the Somerites (or Punks, as they are referred to by the Sun Dome Templars) stole what for them is a highly important spell.

CLOUD CLEAR Cost – 2 POW points
Range – 160m Duration – 15 minutes
Stackable Non-Reusable

Drives clouds away between the Sun and the caster, or any spot the caster designates, as long as he can see it. A three-meter-diameter circle is thereby illuminated. Each additional two points increase the diameter by another meter, or extend the spell duration by 15 minutes. If conflicting with a Storm /Air god's cloud-calling ability, the total POW stacked into each spell must be compared and adjudicated like Countermagic. In the case of a tie, the Air spell wins, however, in respect to the ancient victory of Air over Sky.

Chalana Arroy

Rhondabarbaraannannette was once a member of this cult, but then fell in love with Indlas Somer. Without the permission of her cult, Mama R. taught curative skills to her ladies and brought one spell with her. Luckily for Chalana Arroy, she was able to lay Geases upon this knowledge before it spread any further. She was also lucky in that Mama R. had a poor memory and, therefore, couldn't transfer all her skills to the cult.

COMFORT SONG Cost – 1 POW point
Range – Hearing Duration – Length of song
Non-Stackable Non-Reusable

This spell allows the user to sing a Song of Power which will keep the hearer from feeling pain, effectively anesthetizing the body while they may still remain conscious. It is often used during childbirth and after battles (or Rumbles).

Humakt

After many deaths from head-on confrontations with the Humakti (fists don't do well against broadswords), members of the cult captured some initiates and forced them to reveal the cult training methods for knife attacks, but in a gambling match later on between cult big-wigs on both sides, the Somerites were forced to give up the use of the spell Bladesharp.

Zorak Zoran

Zorak and Indlas were great friends and from him Indlas's cult learned two fighting spells. In return Indlas gave his buddy Zorak the spells Command Shark, and K.O. It should be noted that the two friends usually met around bonfires late at night.

CRUSH Cost – 1 POW point
Range – 40m Duration – 15 minutes
Stackable Reusable

Each point of this spell adds 10% to the user's chance of hitting with the affected blunt weapon and adds +1D4 to the damage done. Weapons so treated take on a black sheen.

BERSERKER Cost – 2 POW points
Range – 80m Duration 15 minutes
Non-Stackable Reusable

This spell combines Fanaticism, Vigor, and Countermagic 2 into one spell. If the attack percentage exceeds 100%, the user can hit twice in a melee round by splitting his percentage against two different targets, as does a weapon master or Rune Lord. (There is no bonus against Chaos in this cult.) Persons affected by this spell must make a roll of their INT on D100 each melee round to stop fighting before the 15 minutes are up. Should no foe be alive or visible, they will attack friends, mounts, surfboards, chariots, and each other.

The Seven Mothers

This is the only cult that has been able to successfully defeat Indlas Somer at every turn. In fact, it is due to a Lunar curse that the chaotic tongue of Slang was taken as the cult language. Needless to say, the Somerites hate and fear the Lunars for this reason, though they love the language.

Lhankor Mhy

Seeing the success of the Lunar curse, Lhankor Mhy tried one of his own. Fortunately it backfired for, while males of the cult can no longer read or write, some of the females dilligently stole the secret back. Another problem has been that the male Somerites tend to destroy all written documents that they come across, considering them worthless. If you want to see a Grey Lord go insane, let him watch a few Somerites let loose in a library.

NOTES

General Notes

As you might have guessed, this group is not usually noted for its intelligence or even its helpfulness. In fact, its presence is usually considered a blight on the neighborhood. The one good thing going for it is good looks. The women in particular have a reputation for being extremely beautiful. Nonetheless, they are a noisy and troublesome group.

Relationships With Outsiders

Followers of Indlas Somer are known by a variety of names in the outside world: ruffians, punks, hooligans, lazy bums, ne'er-do-wells, and the like. Of course, those of the outside world are just as quickly named: squares, pigs, tin soldiers, dead heads, leftovers, etc.

The cult basically views itself as being young, progressive, innovative, and freeform (others might say shortsighted and disorganized). The outside world is therefore dull, backwards, old-fashioned, and stagnant.

For the most part, the followers of Indlas Somer view things in terms of Us and Them. In fact, the only cult they get along well with is Zorak Zoran. They also like Storm Bull, but the admiration is not returned, since the followers of Storm Bull feel that Indlas Somer smacks of Chaos (a very questionable point, one much discussed by the Grey Lords, when not protecting libraries, that is, since Indlas Somer is tied to the Disorder Rune, not the Chaos Rune, but the distinction between the two is vague).

Fights And Rumbles

These are semi-ritualized forms of combat used by the Somerites to settle disputes. A Fight is a one-on-one confrontation between two arguing parties. No weapons are allowed and the only magic allowed is Ironhand and K.O. There is no outside interference – the two Fighters are usually ringed in by a crowd of onlookers. The Fight is over when one or the other is dead or incapacitated (i.e., knocked cold). Another way to end the Fight is to call on protective spirit, Onkel.

The Rumble is a large scale Fight. The opposing sides decide on a place, time, the numbers allowed, and any weapons and/or magic restrictions. There are no spectators (those who sneak a look are blinded). Again it is a Fight to the death or incapacitation, whichever comes first.

Despite the violent way of settling grievances, the losers are usually still mad and may try a Gang-up (i.e., all the fighters in his Gang ambush one person or a small group from the opposing Gang). This usually leads to vendettas and Gang warfare, which is a No-Holds-Barred bloody mess.

The Hero-Quester

The combining of the two bases for the Hero-Quester in this cult is unusually difficult. Whereas in most cults both the Rune Lord and Rune Priest are merely two different aspects of the particular God on Earth, in the cult of Indlas Somer the two require different outlooks on life; two different basic mentalities. The Rune Lord signifies individualism, worship by others, brute force, and independence. The Rune Priestess denotes protection, healing, and working together. The merging of these two ideals creates a truly unique, rare, and talented individual, but it calls for an initial struggle. The person must be able to fulfill all obligations and qualifications of both ranks. To learn the skills of the opposite sex in this group often makes one a social outcast in a group that is almost nothing but a social gathering, which makes this a very difficult period. Also for a male to become a Rune Priest or for a female to become a Rune Lady requires extra skills and a test. Therefore a man must be able to Read and Write some local language at 80% and a female must be able to wield a harpoon at 90%. This basically requires the person to start over again as a lay member of the opposite sex. Another full year must pass and then the test is given, abstracted as ½ the average of INT, CHA, STR, and DEX or less on D100. If the test is failed, another attempt can be made, but the candidate must wait another full year. If a 'fumble' is made, the person is exiled from the cult.

Bands

You might call these the preachers of the social gospel of Indlas Somer. Bands act as wandering beaches for Somerites and thus allow travel away from coastal areas. To form a Band you must have at least four members, including a bass guitarist, a lead guitarist, a drummer, and a lead singer, all at least at 50% proficiency. Other positions include rhytm guitar, tambourine, keyboards (both piano and organ), horns, percussion, back-up vocals, flute, glockenspiel, fiddle, acoustic guitar, etc. There are also various secondary people, such as

managers, roadies, groupies, and schills. All in all, a traveling Band can be quite a caravan.

Gang Relationships

Every Gang belongs to one of twelve Schools, each of which has its own history, specialty, and colors. The origins of the Schools are vague and the origin of the names is even vaguer. Though quite a bit of importance is laid on which School one belongs to and great rivalries have developed, no one knows why.

When rival Schools meet there is always an insulting match. This can be abstracted as the average INT of one side times five versus the same of the opposition. The first group not to make their roll or less on D100 is the loser. The winners hold the field and the losers slink away in anger. Note that there is a +5% intimidation bonus for each 'odds level' one side has over the other. In other words if a group from P.S. 157 has 5 people and a group from Centralville has 10, Centralville has a 2 : 1 advantage or plus 5% (3 : 1 is plus 10%, 4 : 1 is plus 15%, etc.). If a fumble or critical is scored, it's time for Gang Warfare (i.e., you mentioned something bad about the opposing Rune Lord's steady's surfboard style, etc.).

Once a person joins the cult, males receive a cap and females a skirt in their School Colors. As initiates, they receive School Rings (there is much ceremony involving these rings which will not be dealt with here due to space limitations). As jewelry, the rings are worth 500L. Finally, all Rune levels gain a sweater in the appropriate colors with the first letter of the School name. Members of foopball teams gain a jacket in the correct colors and a Foopball uniform (these are only for the official School teams).

The specialty bonus of the School gives the members a 5% reduction in the price and allows the following bonuses:

Singing: If one point of battle magic POW is cast while singing, the singer can command the listener to perform one non-destructive, non-dangerous task (time limit for the task: one hour). Only one listener can be so affected and his POW must be overcome as usual.

Swimming: Allows the swimmer to use cult weapon attacks in the water at -25%.

Dumbbells: Allows the weightlifter to increase his STR and CON beyond cultural maximum, but for every point that both are increased over the max, the max DEX is reduced by one. Also, if the max is passed by five or more cumulative points, one point of INT is lost for every five points gained.

Electric Guitar: If one point of battle magic POW is cast while playing, one listener is deafened for 15 minutes.

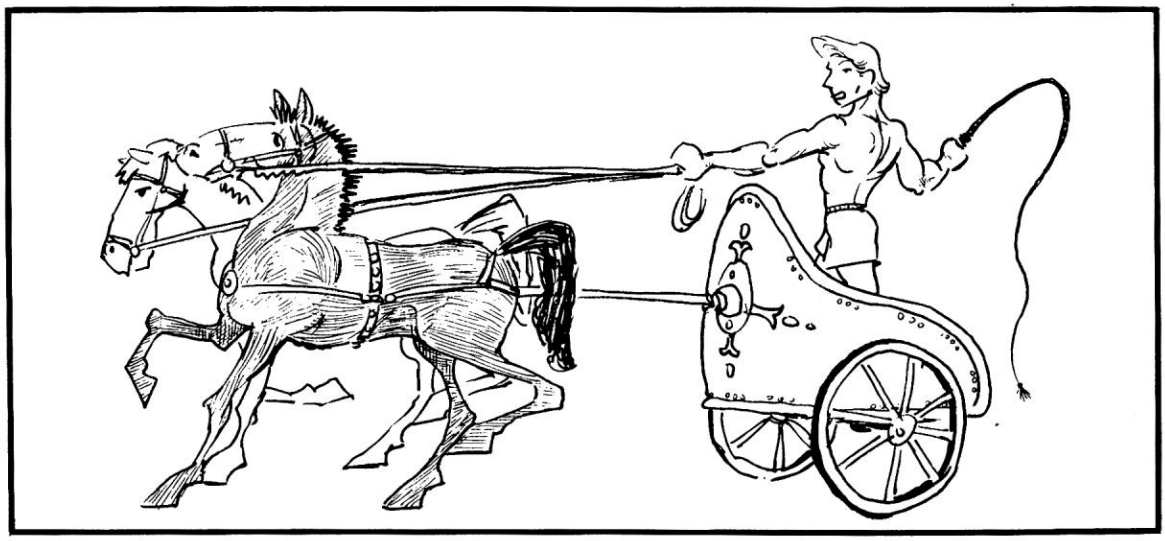
Dancing: Allows the dancer a skill/4 Defense bonus (i.e., if dancing is known at 20%, the dancer has a +5% Defense bonus).

First Aid: Allows the person one half his/her ability in First Aid towards Cure Disease.

Surfing: If one point of battle magic POW is cast while on the board, the surfer is able to move along any body of water at move 9 for 15 minutes in any direction desired.

Chariot Driving: Allows the driver to use weapons while driving at -25%. Only one handed weapons may be used.

SCHOOL NAME	ANIMAL	COLORS	SPECIALTY	RIVAL
George Washington	Eagles	Blue and White	Singing	Plaines General
P.S. 157	Lions	Green and Gold	Swimming	Centralville
Centralville	Sharks	Maroon and Gray	Dumbbells	P.S. 157
Izaiah T. Jones	Hawks	Orange and Black	Electric Guitar	Vocational
Plaines General	Bears	Red and Gold	Dancing	George Washington
Black Hills	Rams	Purple and Silver	First Aid	Gamassaway
Santa Cruz	Tigers	Blue and Red	Surfing	Inland
Inland	Mustangs	Red and White	Chariot Driving	Santa Cruz
Vocational	Wolves	Brown and Gold	Knife Attack	Izaiah T. Jones
Huan Lu	Dragons	Black and Gold	Fist Attack	Irvine
Gamassaway	Cardinals	Maroon and Silver	Predict Weather	Black Hills
Irvine	Aardvarks	Black and White	Oratory	Huan Lu



Dagger Attack: If one point of battle magic POW is cast the dagger used becomes as if made of iron for ten melee rounds.

Fist Attack: The attacker learns to do +1 point damage for each 25% or part thereof gained in the skill.

Predict Weather: Rune Priests of this branch may summon Small Sylphs.

Oratory: Gives the speaker equal skill in bargaining.

Foopball

The traditional sport of all Somerites. It is a game with variable rules played at variable times. Here are the basics:

Needed: 3-20 men per side (sides should be even)
a field with sufficient room to run (i.e., few trees)
an inflated animal stomach or bladder (the 'ball')
maybe a referee
at least one cheerleader per side
fans
cult foods (hot dogs, popcorn, etc.)

General rules: Foopball plays something like Trollball. The idea is to move the ball from one end of the field to the other. If you run the ball in, or throw it to someone waiting, you score 7 points. If you kick it in you get 3 points, but only under specific conditions devised for each field. If the opposing team knocks you behind your own line, they get 2 points. Weapons are not allowed and Fist Attacks only rarely. Grappling is used all the time. The optimum team has 11 men. Here are the positions and qualifications:

1 Middle Man – Big and mean
2 Protectors – Ditto
2 Killers – Even more so
2 Fallbacks – Fast and strong
2 Runners – Tough and fast
1 Catcher – Fast, fast, fast!
1 Captain – Charismatic, fast, and lucky

All other rules are determined on site by mutual consent.

SKILLS	*COSTS (IN LUNARS)*
Play Instrument	500/1000/3000/Exp
Surfing	100/200/400/Exp
Chariot Driving	100/400/900/Exp
Barbell	300/700/1500/Exp
Dumbbell	200/400/800/Exp
Surfboard (attack)	500/1000/2000/Exp
Dancing	200/400/600/Exp
Singing	200/400/600/Exp

Weapon Stats	*STR/DEX*	*Damage*	*HP*	*Enc*	*Length*	
Surfboard	17/20	2D8+2	18	6	2.0+	2-hand
Barbell	15/9	2D8	20	3	1.2	2-hand
Dumbbell	12/7	1D4+2	20	1	0.1	1-hand

GIANT CLAM

These mobile clams love to roam the beaches looking for food, usually in the form of human flesh. Though tough to beat, Somerites tend to gang up on them. In fact it is thanks to the efforts of the Somerites that people can go to the beach during Fireseason.

Anything that is ¼ or less the size of the clam that is doing the chomping has been swallowed and will be crushed with no further chance to defend himself.

It takes a giant clam one round to bury itself in the sand.

Characteristics		*Average*		
STR	8D6	28	Move	5
CON	8D6	28	Hit points average	31
SIZ	6D6	21	Treasure factor	10
INT	D4	2-3		
POW	3D6	10-11		
DEX	2D6	7		

Weapon	*SR*	*Attack*	*Damage*
Chomp	9	75%	5D6

ARMOR – 8 point shell.

PERMAKITTENS

Though not armored, anyone except a Broo, Scorpionman, or a heavy Lunar official must roll the average of POW plus INT versus the Permakitten's average of CHA plus POW. Otherwise it is the cutest little thing you've ever seen and no one would possibly want to hurt it.

Characteristics		*Average*		
STR	1D3	2	Move	8
CON	1D4	2-3	Hit points average	1-2
SIZ	1D2	1-2	Treasure factor	6
INT	3D6	10-11	Defense	5%
POW	3D6+6	13-14		
DEX	3D6	10-11		
CHA	18	18		

Weapon	*SR*	*Attack*	*Damage*
Claw	10	50%	1D2

SOLO ROLE-PLAYING

By Lewis Pulsipher

An aspect of adventure gaming puzzles me. This is the popularity of one-person role-playing games, either through solo dungeon or microcomputer programs. To me, "solo role-playing" is a contradiction, the antithesis of the finest (and most educational) qualities of role-playing gaming.

I play solo war games as much as anyone, playtesting my own designs, but solo role-playing just doesn't make it. I have tried solo dungeons, computer adventures, even the Atari Adventure program. Without exception they are sterile and limited, not worth spending hours on. Though the Atari game gives one a feeling of immediacy and participation through actual movement of "Yourself" along the tunnels. It feels more like *Space Invaders* than *Dungeons &Dragons*.

I have nothing against computers; it is the solitary aspect of play that ruins the role-playing. Insofar as computers can help make Game Mastering easier, particularly in visuals and sound, computers are potentially a wonderful adjunct to role-playing, but no computer can substitute for the humor, creativity, and role-playing of a good GM.

People who learned role-playing through solo or computer means, or who primarily play in these modes, miss the most satisfying aspects of role-playing.

The essential aspect of RPG's is the interaction among people. It is a social game, to be played with friends or people you hope will become friends. The complexities of interaction among players, and between players and GM, are as interesting as the action in the game itself. This is always the case regardless of what style of game you watch or play. Each group and each individual approaches the game differently, and the play reveals the personality of the participants.

Those who enjoy role-playing more than the pursuit of treasure and power need interaction with other players. I cannot role-play, except in the most primitive way, when I play alone. Even a single player, with a human GM has many more opportunities for role-playing.

One of the most attractive aspects of this interaction is cooperation among members of the adventuring party. After a dozen years of playing *Diplomacy* and hex war games, I became tired of the ceaseless competition – it was pointless. Role-playing games enable participants to succeed through cooperation rather than competition. In solo role-playing there is no cooperation, only competition between you and the designer – not game-like competition, but a form of charades or twenty questions. In other words, solo play seems more like puzzle-solving than game playing. Nor is it role-playing either. A player is a hero or a wizard but he has so few choices of action that he does nothing more than try to divine what the designer thinks should be the best move in a particular situation. (And I can't say I have been impressed by the logic behind the best moves in some solo dungeons.)

Moreover, solo play encourages escapism in FRP, as there is no one around to remind the player of reality – to interfere with his wildest dreams. While many people play games to temporarily release themselves from the mundane world, role-playing can be excessively escapist, and the solo player who becomes a closet gamer is closest to this undesirable extreme.

It seems to me that the die hard solo players are either afraid of other people, very short of time, or only halfway committed to the role-playing hobby. Otherwise why play solo? Why not find other players, or teach others to play? The solo player cannot reply with the claim that he is too lazy (or unimaginative) to create his own dungeon since ready-made modules are available for less than the price of computer programs, and little more than solo modules. Is he just too selfish to GM? Does he want to play every time rather than referee? Is he afraid to role-play for the non-player characters? Perhsps that is too harsh. Nonetheless, I don't understand how anyone, other than a few unfortunate souls trapped on a deserted island or Saudi Arabia, could play solo instead of multi-player role-playing games.

I do not say solo players should change their ways. If that is what they like they should do it. However, multi-player role-playing is more fun, more satisfying, and far more educational.

If you play solo because you don't know other players nearby, get off your duff and look for some, or better yet, teach friends and acquaintances to play. It may not be easy at first, but in the long run you will be glad you did.

ILLUSION MAGIC

By David F. Nalle

What you perceive is often more important than what actually exists. This is especially true in a fantasy story or game. The popular fantasy roleplaying character types of Illusionist or Thaumaturge manipulate the magic of illusion and misconception as the basis of their power. Although it is often scoffed at, it can be a strong and versatile class for player-characters. The system presented here defines illusion in such a way that makes it more playable and easier to qualify, so that different illusions will have different levels, costs, and requirements to throw, unlike other systems which treat illusion as a single spell, allowing the caster to do almost anything with it. This system of illusion creation is only intended for classes which only use Illusion.

Each mage may create any illusion, as long as the illusion level is not more than twice his experience level. To find the level of any given illusion, classify it by consulting the illusion tables below. There are four general aspects to any illusion. These are: Sensory Impact, Action, Volume, and Duration. These define the complexity and thus the level of the phantasm. The more parts of these classes that are employed, the more complex and believable the illusion.

The illusion tables give the different components of any illusion with its base level (BL). The actual level of the illusion is found by consulting the fifth table, which gives base levels and corresponding true levels.

TABLE I – SENSORY IMPACT

Sense Affected	Description	BL
Scent	This governs all smells. At the choice of the caster, any odor with which he is familiar can be generated.	1
Sound	This factor creates any noise of a type which the caster has heard before, or cares to imagine.	2
Feel	This creates a texture on an illusory or real surface, or, where there is no surface at all. Any who touch the texture will think that they feel whatever the caster has intended them to feel. It should be based on something within the caster's experience.	3
Sight	This is the essential component of most illusions. It creates two-dimensional black and white visible images of whatever the caster has seen or imagined. For three-dimensional illusions add +1 to the BL, for full color illusions add another +1. Thus if an illusion is only 2D, and without color, it is BL4, but if it has either color or depth it is BL5, and if it has both, it is BL6.	4
Taste	This is used less often than other aspects of illusion. It gives taste to an illusion, or false taste to a real object. (to disguise poison, for example). The taste is up to the caster. It is essential for illusory food.	5
Mental	This either lets illusions register as having intellect, or (at +1 to BL) the caster can set up a pattern of specific thoughts to confuse mind-readers. It may be cast on any object or illusion.	6

Note: Any combination of these effects is possible. The BL's of the component senses employed is equal to the BL's added together. Therefore an illusion with Smell, Taste, Feel and Sight in full color and three dimensions would have a sensory BL level of 15.

TABLE III – VOLUME

Cubic Yardage of Illusion	BL
0-1	1
2-6	2
7-16	3
17-32	4
33-56	5
57-88	6
89-130	7
131-181	8
182-243	9
244-316	10
317-499	12
500-733	14
734-1024	16
1025-1375	18
1376-1789	20
1790-2537	23
2538-2447	26
2448-4529	29
4530-5793	32
5794-7776	36
7777-10119	40
10120-12842	44
12843-16807	49
16808+	55

Note: The total volume of the illusion should be roughly estimated for use on this table. The volume of a typical house is about 3000-4000 cubic yards. The volume of a man is about 2 cubic yards. Yards and meters are roughly interchangeable.

TABLE IV – DURATION

Hours of Illusion	BL
0-1	1
2-8	2
9-27	3
28-64	4
65-125	5
126-216	6
217-343	7
344-512	8
513-729	9
730-1000	10
1001-3375	15
3376-8000	20
8001+	25

Note: the duration is the number of hours which the caster wants the illusion to continue to perform its function. At the end of that time, the illusion ceases to exist. To extend the duration of an illusion, the mage need merely recast the spell adjusted to the desired new duration.

TABLE V – TRUE LEVEL

The chart below gives Base Levels with the correct, corresponding True Levels. The final BL is equal to the others totalled.

Base Level Total	True Level
1-7	1
8-13	2
14-18	3
19-22	4
23-25	5
26-28	6
29-31	7
32-34	8
35-37	9
38-40	10
41-43	11
44-46	12
47-49	13
50-52	14
53-55	15

Note: To find the True Level of Illusions with a BL higher than 45 use the following formula:

$$TL = BL/3.5$$

The true Level is the actual casting level of the particular illusion for the mage using it. It should be treated as any spell of the same level for casting purposes.

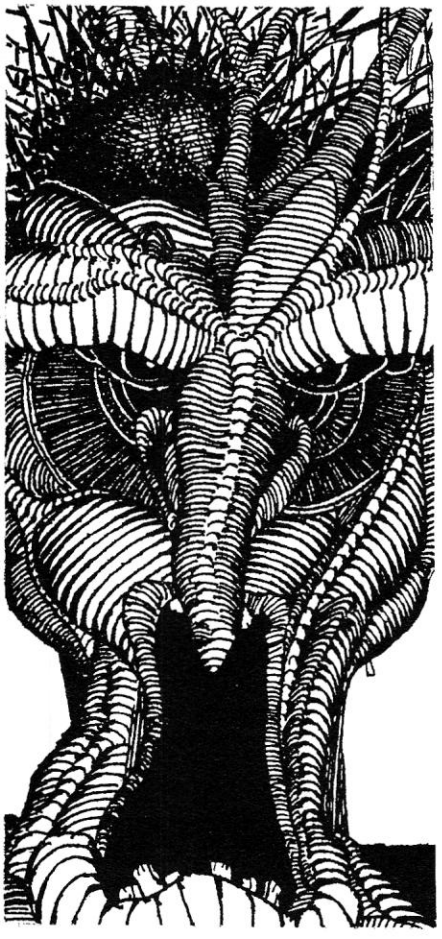


TABLE II – ACTION

Type of Action	Description	BL
Static	Static illusions do not move or change in any way. They just sit right where they were cast.	1
Random	This endows an illusion with movement in a random 2D or, for +1 to the BL, 3D pattern. The pattern has no logic to it. This is of limited applicability.	2
Imitation	This keys the illusion to a being or object. It will imitate the form and movement it is capable of. If an illusion cannot make noise, it will not imitate a wolf's howl, though it may imitate all other aspects for which it is programmed.	3
Re-enactment	This will repeat any actual incident in all respects for which it is programmed so long as it is cast in the place where the action happened, or was witnessed by the caster. It repeats it only once, unless a loop is also programmed in.	4
Programmed	The illusion will move and perform in any pattern desired by the caster. He must fully think out the actions before casting the illusion.	5
Loop	This added factor causes an illusion of limited actions and duration, like a Programmed Illusion, or a Re-enactment, to repeat itself until the spell is over.	6
Direct Control	These illusions are under the direct control of the caster, who must constantly direct and monitor their actions mentally. They can be controlled as long as they are observable, or through an Interface.	7
Interface	This allows the caster to see and feel as if he was the illusion, for indirect control.	5
Original	This causes the illusion to generate an original, open-ended series of actions based on what would be logical actions for its apparent form. For example, a bird flying would move its wings with the wind, and would avoid running into objects.	8
Reactive & Interactive	This highest type of moving illusion interacts with real figures, situations and incidents with which it comes into contact in a logical way consistent to its nature as defined by the caster. For example, a map which writes itself as it passes new terrain, or a perfect, illusory person who would never be distinguishable from a real one.	9
Manipulate	This allows the illusion to manipulate and handle matter as if the illusion had true substance. It also endows the illusion with the appearance of the physical properties of what it is based on, or whatever physical properties the caster has in mind for it. Examples are a functional flashlight beam, or a monster who actually does damage. It should be noted that damage inflicted by such a creation can be saved against, but if the save is missed, it is as real as any other damage, though the cause is actually stygmatic, and of psychological origin. The amount of damage	12

which the illusion is intended to inflict on its sentient target increases the BL by 5 per 1D6 of damage intended.

Manipulation of physical objects does not actually take place with the addition of this aspect of illusion. It does seem to take place. Those objects which are in the illusion are made invisible by that contact, and are replaced by identical illusory duplicates, if the illusion has manipulatory powers. It is the illusory duplicate which is seen by those observing the illusion. The object thus blanked out reappears when the illusion wears off. Manipulated figures do not count as additional figures in the illusion.

In the case of a living being included in the illusion, if he fails a save against the illusion, his ego is transferred into his illusory duplicate, so he has control over it within the illusion, and takes any effects that it does from the other components of the illusion, though he gets a save against any damage. His actual body stays invisible and in place. A person can think that he fell in an illusory pit, his friends will see him fall in, and he can take damage, yet he never actually fell or went anywhere. An illusory rock can also fall into the pit, but it will not take damage. If a living being enters an illusion, what happens to him in the eyes of the observers and in his belief is governed by the same rules that would apply to any object.

If a person appears to be slain by an illusion that really didn't do sufficient damage to kill, such as an illusionary avalanche that the Illusionist did not add a damage function to, only wanting to frighten another group or block their passage, the person caught in the illusion does not actually die, though his image will seem to. Instead if he failed his save, he is rendered comatose, and will recover after several days when he finally makes his saving throw later, at one save per day for this purpose. (If he made his save against being damaged in the illusion, he wouldn't believe that he was slain, and would think he somehow managed to avoid whatever illusionary threat had been presented.)

Moving Figures — The BL of an illusion is adjusted according to the number of moving objects or figures placed in that illusion. Objects manipulated by an illusion, but themselves stationary in the illusion do not count, as they partake of the motion of another component.

Number of figures in motion	
1	1
2-5	2
6-12	3
13-23	4
24-37	5
38-56	6
57-80	7
81-108	8
109-140	9
141+	10

Note: These effects can, of course, be combined with those of Table I. They may also be combined with each other, though, in the case of redundancy, such as combining Original with Programmed Action, the one with the higher BL, in this case, Original Action, will be the one which is manifested, though mergers are possible at the discretion of the Game Master.

EXAMPLES AND COMMENTS

This system allows the creation of almost any kind of illusion, including ones which approach real experience. It makes the illusion using mage into a serious character class. Within the definitions given, almost anything is possible if the mage is willing to cast a spell of high enough level.

The following are some examples of what can be done with this illusion system.

Example 1: An illusory map, which records and marks down on a sheet of parchment the area covered by the user.

Program Components	*BL*
I - Sight, 2D, B&W	4
II - Reactive&Interactive	9
III - 0-1	1
IV - 300 hrs	7
Total BL = 21	
TL = 4	

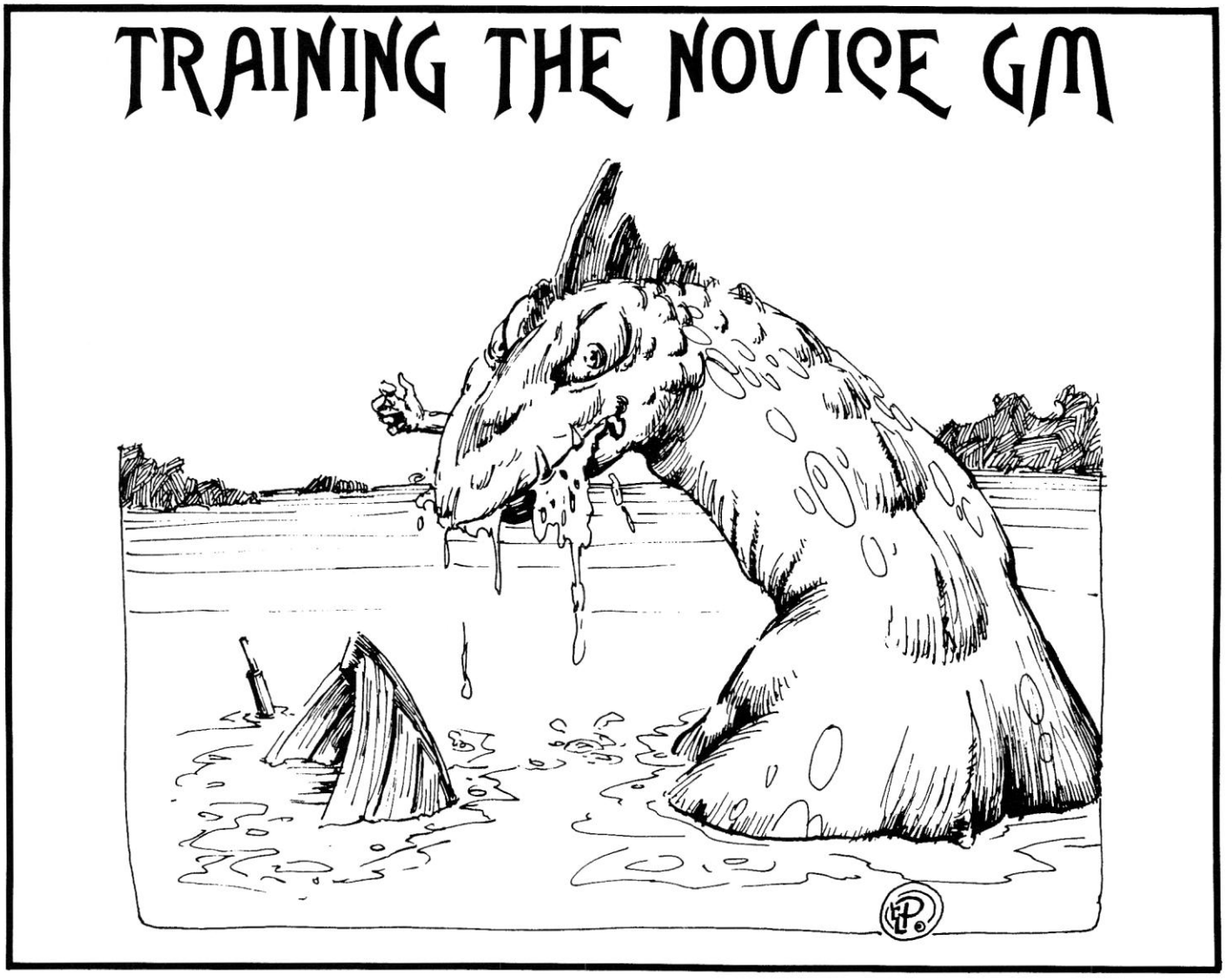
Example 2: A large boulder, with substance and appearance, but that's all.

Program Components	*BL*
I - Sight, 3D, Color	6
II - Manipulative	12
III - 7-16	3
IV - 300 hrs	7
Total BL = 28	
TL = 6	

Example 3: A living, functioning man, moving under the direction of the caster, and out of the caster's vision, interfaced. The illusory man registers in all senses, and appears to manipulate things during the illusion.

Program Components	*BL*
I - Sight, 3D, Color	6
I - Scent	1
I - Sound	2
I - Feel	3
I - Taste	5
I - Mental	6
II - Direct Control	7
II - Interface	5
II - Manipulative	12
II - 1 Moving Figure	1
III - 2-6	2
IV - 600 hours	9
Total BL = 58	
TL = 17	

TRAINING THE NOVICE GM



By Howard Mahler

Our inexperienced band saddled up and rode west out of the one horse town of Newton. After two hours ride what should they come upon but a dark cave mouth right by the side of the trail. The fighters charged in with swords drawn, followed by the rest of the party. Inside they found a White Dragon.

Fortunately it was asleep, the party gained surprise, and it was only a sub-adult. In the two rounds of free attacks the party managed to subdue the dragon (which only could take 15 Hit Points.)

Our unscathed victors returned to Newton with wealth beyond measure, as well as a captive dragon.

After their first game, the players were all really excited, and two of them are already thinking of how they might set up their own kingdom. Our novice Game Master is satisfied that he got through this first try of this strange new game. However, he is a little perplexed as to why the players were able to easily win against the nastiest monster he had, and to easily get the biggest treasure. He satisfied himself that next time he would be able to give the players more of a challenge by putting in a very old dragon.

Where did our novice GM go wrong?

I have seen similiar scenes many times, particularly at conventions. When it is a novice GM involved, there is every reason to hope that he or she will improve. However, if similar things still happen to someone who has been refereeing for some time, what you have is a GM who is too lazy or thoughtless to set up a consistent world.

I chose a dragon hunt merely as an example, but it is a very good one. I have found that how a GM handles dragons is a good indication of other more important things. Has the GM spent any time at all thinking about how things fit into the overall world? Has the GM ever thought things out from the monster's point of view?

Now let's look more closely at our novice GM's world and ask some questions:

Where did the Dragon get the treasure? How long has he had it? How long has he been gathering it? I would doubt that he could have had it for long, as it was so easily taken by a ragtag bunch of humans. Any other group of armed humans with the bravery (or stupidity) to rush into the cave would have a very good chance of succeeding. Even a dozen peasants with pitchforks would have had a chance if led by one fanatic. I would theorize that maybe this dragon got the treasure from his parents when he left, or was kicked out of home. How long has the dragon used the cave as a lair? Once again I would assume for not too long.

Is this dragon unusual or typical? If he were typical and all dragons were this wealthy and stupid, then dragons would be nearing extinction. Perhaps humans have just moved into

this region in the last few years, and are in the process of diminishing the dragon population explosion. In that case there would be some young dragons who were forced to take ridiculous sites for lairs, since all the good spots were already taken.

How would a dragon, who was at least as smart as a player character of intelligence 10, avoid the mistakes of our hapless victim?

TACTICS FOR THE NPC'S

First, he would camouflage his lair or choose one that is not easily visible from a traveled path.

As a flying creature his lair would be very difficult to get to except by flying. (Think of an eagle's nest, high up a cliff.)

He would fly patrols regularly covering a wide range (maybe 10 miles in radius or more) around his lair. Presumably these would be at extremely high altitude where he could see over an extremely wide range, but not be more than a dot in the sky to those on the ground. (I am assuming that dragons have exceptionally good vision, as do birds that prey from high altitudes.) This might not stop every small band from sneaking by him, but he would spot even single individuals who were traveling openly. Large bands of men or armies would not have a chance of going undetected (without the use of magic). Of course the dragon would also be hunting for food while he was patrolling.

It goes without saying that the exact location of his lair will be a closely-guarded secret. Only an idiot (or a novice GM) would ever let humans escape who have discovered the lair, but are now in the dragon's power. Adventurers who lose, but some of whom are allowed to escape, tend to come back with a more powerful group. Using the knowledge they gained on their first attempt, they are very likely to win. (There is no hope for a GM who allows players to use the knowledge gained on an expedition with no survivors.)

When a dragon senses that his efforts to hide his lair have failed, he will change its location. He would be wise to always have such a secondary location already prepared. In any case it is a good idea to change the location fairly regularly. Only the most powerful dragons with excellent locations, and too much treasure to move, such as Smaug in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, can afford to stay in the same place very long. Even Smaug stayed too long.)

If possible, the dragon will attempt to get allies in the neighborhood. For example, a tribe of goblins might be useful to signal the approach of strangers, in exchange for which the dragon will leave them alone. (No one else will dare live that close to the dragon, so that the goblins gain a degree of safety for themselves.) Two or more dragons might be willing to cooperate when humans (or other vermin) are approaching close to both of their territories. (Not to mention the fact that the dragons might be friends, relatives, or potential mates.)

Let us assume that the Dragon does spot an approaching band of humans at some distance from his lair. He should take full advantage of his ability to wait for a good time to attack. For example, why not wait until they are busy fighting something else, or climbing a cliff, or while most of them are sleeping at night.

An interesting way to harass them is to fill a large basket with 100 stones (of about one pound each) and then dump the stones while flying over the party. A stone from a height of 1/3 of a mile (out of range of spells and arrows) would do a considerable amount of damage. Idon't think a particular stone would have even a 1% chance of hitting a particular target from that height. However, with a large numbers of stones hitting in the general area occupied by the party, it would not be surprising if a few stones hit. Even stones that miss should have an effect on the morale of the party. (Maybe player-characters would be too stupid or greedy to be worried, but hired men-at-arms certainly would be worried by such an unanswered attack.)

One of the prime defenses against dragons, or other flying creatures, is the use of missile weapons. An interesting question is exactly how high can arrows (from, for example, a long bow) travel, and still penetrate to do damage. Assume a long bow has a horizontal effective range of 210 yards, as in the *D&D* rules. It can be shown that the maximum vertical range must be then less than ¼ of this, or 53 yards. Let's be generous and give them 50 yards. Then how many arrows can be gotten off before a dragon closes? The dragon's listed flying speed is 24", in the *D&D* rules. However, I would allow him to move twice as fast when in a power dive. (Then we come to the question of how long is a melee round. Assuming a melee round is six seconds long, 10 yards per melee round equals only 2.9 mph. Then 24" per melee round is 69mph. Not an unreasonable flying speed. In a power dive 140 mph would not be unreasonable.) Thus he would be able to dive from 400 yards, out of range of Fireball or Lightning Bolt, and be on the party in one melee round. Thus if the party was not ready, the dragon could be on them before they could react. Even with arrow ready, they could only get one shot off before the dragon was on them. The dragon could have any advantage for swooping from height – I give the dragon double damage on any successful attack on a diving attack.

However, against massed missile fire, this would still be a losing strategy for the dragon. For example, that White Dragon with 15 Hit Points would be killed by five average hits with arrows. Even 20 ordinary archers would be expected to hit the dragon once on the way in and once on the way out. Against massed missile fire, he would be better off trying to spread the group out in order to minimize their ability to cover each other with missile fire. The use of "stones from above," or his breath weapon makes tightly bunched groups inadvisable. Then the dragon might be able to attack those on the edge.

What about those nasty Magic Users? He would not be worried about anything less than a 5th level Magic User, under the *D&D* rules. Then Fireball, Lightning Bolt, etc., can be deadly.

Now we come to a question of how magic works in the particular world. In my world, a Magic User must take a melee round to prepare a spell. Well, there is no reason why the dragon can't fake diving on the party, in order to get the MUs to prepare spells. Unfortunately for the MU in my system he can only hold a prepared spell for 10 melee rounds. If he does not throw the spell, it still costs him 1/3 of the usual spell points. Thus he cannot just keep preparing spells without end. So if the dragon is clever and lucky, he can swoop down on the party before they hit him with any spells. Then his first

target will probably be that wiseguy in robes. Scratch one Magic User. Hopefully the party will have a spare Magic User to hit the dragon with a spell on his way out.

The proper use of the breath weapon is an art. Fortunately, the dragon has had lots of practice. The best use would depend on the breath's particular shape, (cone, line, etc.). Often it should be used to take out the big boys in a party. Other times it is useful to kill many low levels at once. (Either of these two have effects on morale.)

TACTICAL RETREAT

If all of his efforts fail, and the invaders reach his lair, the dragon should have some sort of advantage of position. For example, his breath weapon will probably cover an entrance to his lair that the invaders must come through. It is not necessary for him to expose himself to missile fire from adventurers standing in the entrance, if he chooses a twisting cavern. Perhaps he will roll boulders down on the invaders as they climb a cliff or trail to his lair. A little thought will produce other possibilities.

If he is smart he will have a back way out. True, he may have to leave behind a good part of his treasure, but he may be able to harass the party on their way back. In any case, he who runs away, lives to fight another day.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to point out some of the advantages a smart dragon would have. This would allow dragons to put up a better fight. However, they are still far from invulnerable. A well-run party of eight 6th level characters, including two Magic Users, should beat this particular dragon at least 99 out of 100 times. (Reread the first part of the article, and see how the strategies of the dragon would be countered by such a middle level party. Remember this dragon has only 15 hit points.) The point is that as you decrease the power of the party below this point, it becomes less and less likely that they will be able to defeat this rather minimal specimen of the race of dragons. It would be virtually impossible for the ragtag party on our novice GM's first expedition. This party should take on something more its own strength, such as a small band of kobolds.

The answer to the novice GM's problem is that it is not necessary to bring out the bigger dragons, bring out the smarter dragons. Your players will be forced to learn how to play their characters intelligently. Without such stimulus they will never develop their skills. I have seen too many supposedly experienced players ripped apart, when first placed in a situation where the monsters act with even a teaspoonful of brains. Usually these players had the misfortune to play for years in the same small group, where none of the GMs ever ran the monsters with any thought.

Naturally, what I've said concerning dragons also applies to many other types of monsters, particularly those of the humanoid variety. A little careful thought by the GM will allow him or her to crack a nut with a nutcracker, rather than requiring a sledge hammer to accomplish the same task. Give your monsters the same care in setting their defenses and attacks as your player-characters would use, and the resulting balanced game scenario will be a more enjoyable challenge for everyone.

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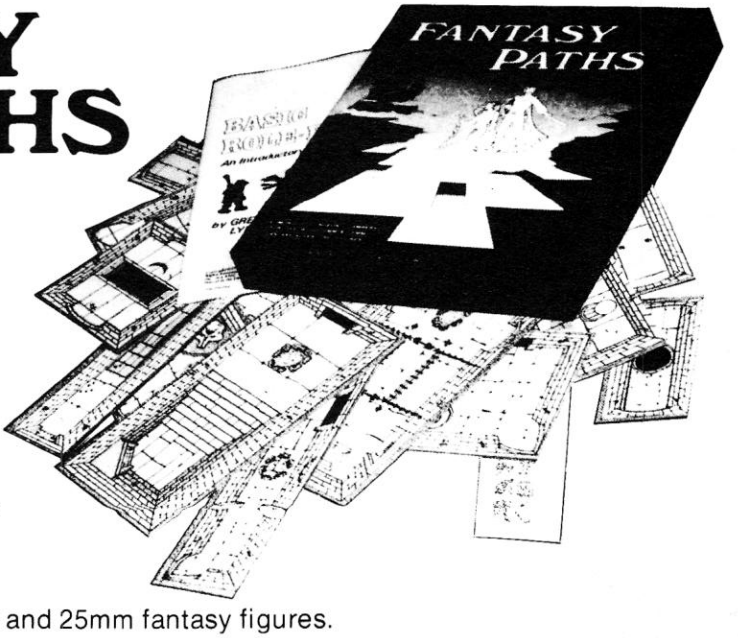

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METAL MARVELS

This month, John provides us with a good look at both fantasy and science fiction miniatures.

ASGARD MINIATURES

Dungeon Adventurers and Space Marines

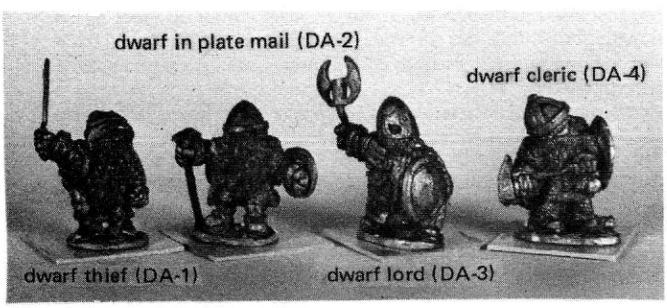
By John T. Sapienza, Jr.

Asgard Miniatures are not well known in the U.S., but they are well regarded at home in England. Their address, if you want to write for their catalog, is: 18 Commerce Square, High Pavement, Nottingham, United Kingdom. With any luck, they will be 'discovered' by some of the U.S. importers the way Citadel was last year, and thus will become available in the U.S. This issue DW reviews two of the Asgard lines.

DUNGEON ADVENTURERS

The first is their Dungeon Adventurers line, designed by Nick Bibby. These are intended for use in all fantasy role-playing games, and cover most of the races and character types found in those games. This line is in 30mm scale, and most of the figures cost 32pence each, with the exception of the half-links and the gnome, which are 18p each. All are sold individually.

The adventurers begin with a set of four dwarves, which may soon be renumbered as the beginning of an entire line of dwarf figures. They are splendidly massive, much broader than the other races in the Asgard line. Compared with other companies' dwarves they are very large, perhaps uncomfortably so on first impression. But when compared with other Asgard figures, the dwarves are in proper proportion, since these average about 22mm from head to foot, while the humans in the line average 28-30mm head to foot. This is only a bit larger than the typical lead figure height of 27-28mm, and so these dwarves will go with other lines, but bear in mind that they are larger. Now that I'm accustomed to their size, these figures are very attractive to me.



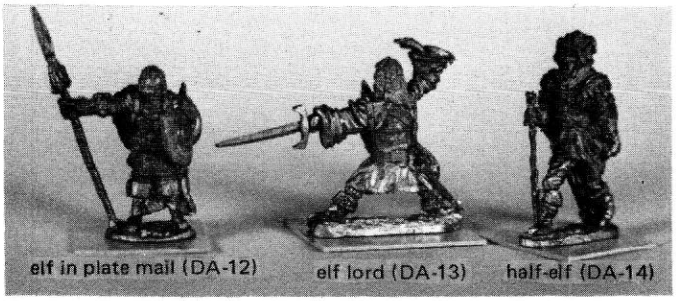
The *dwarf thief* (DA-1) wears a hood that hides his head right down to the eyes and his broad prominent nose, under which his heavy beard springs, from mustache down to his knees. His head, like the other dwarves, is larger than a humans' as is his torso, and his arms are in proportional thickness and therefore appear short by comparison. His legs are short by human standards, for they seem only half the length of human legs – which is why these thick-set, powerful-looking dwarves are shorter than humans. The thief wears quilted padding for armor, over which is his hooded cape. He has a very large backpack, to which are fastened a coil of rope, a waterpouch, and a small flask or pouch. He stands with his left hand resting on his scabbarded dagger's hilt, with his sword raised in his right hand. The sword is a bit overthin; my review samle is about to break off. A leather pouch is fastened to his belt, and around his right wrist is clasped an ornate bracer. The figure is about 22mm from head to foot, 32mm overall.

The *dwarf in plate mail* (DA-2) wears a round metal helmet with flaps to protect the ears, a cape over his armor, trousers, and shoes. Possibly he is better described as "in plate *and* mail," since he wears a steel hauberk over his chainmail, his long beard coming down below his belt. A scabbarded dagger and a pouch hang from his belt, and over his back are a huge backpack, a waterskin, a flask or pouch, and a coiled rope. In his left hand he holds a round buckler shield (small shields are rather unusual), and in his right hand he holds a long-hafted light hammer, with its handle resting on the ground. If you agree with my feeling that it is a bit odd to give a figure what seems to be a two-handed weapon in one hand and a shield in the other, you can always clip off the handle, and you'll have a dwarf holding what could easily pass as a throwing hammer. He wears an ornamental bracer on his right wrist. The figure is about 22mm from head to foot, 25mm overall.

The *dwarf lord* (DA-3) is my favorite of the group. He wears hauberk and chainmail, plus a full helm with hinged faceplate which is ornamented, a heavy cloak, and boots. His beard is woven into four braids. From his belt hang a scabbarded dagger and a pouch, while a hammer's head shows beneath his oval shield and is probably hanging from his belt, too, The standard adventurer's pack, waterskin, coil of rope, and flask or pouch hang from his back. He stands ready for battle, with shield in front to parry while he holds his double bitted battleaxe up in his right hand, ready to smite the foe. (The axe could use a thicker handle; my review sample is about to brake off.) A lovely job. The figure is about 23mm from head to foot, 31mm overall.

The *dwarf cleric* (DA-4) could serve as that, or as a fighter, since dwarves are traditionally regarded as favoring the hammer as a weapon. This figure wears a full suit of chainmail and a metal helmet, shoes, and cloak. He has not only a long beard but long hair as well. Over his back are backpack, rope, flask, and waterskin (standard equipment that appears in different arrangements on each figure, for variety). He holds his heavy hammer in both hands at waist level while peering over the top of his oval wooden shield, which is slung over his left arm. This is an unusual feature, since the use of a 2H weapon and a shield is a special skill seldom learned. If this disturbs you, you can always imagine he is merely using both hands casually, and normally fights with the

hammer in his right hand and his shield in his left. Or, you can assume that the shield is merely stored there and provides no protection while he uses that 2H hammer as his normal weapon, falling back on a secondary 1H weapon with shield if the hammer is broken in battle. The figure is about 22mm from head to foot, 26mm overall.

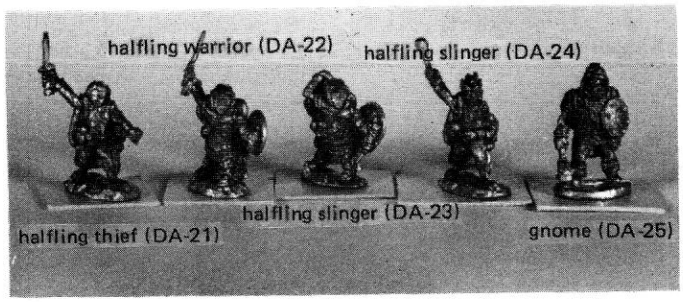


The next group in the Asgard line is the elves. The *elf magic user* (DA-11) wears a hooded cloak over rich tunic, vest, and boots. Slung over his back is a large backpack, waterskin, coiled rope, and a bow. Fastened to his belt are a scabbarded sword, a pouch, and a quiver of arrows. He holds a triangular-bladed dagger in his left hand while gesturing forward with his right hand, as if casting a spell. The figure is about 26mm head to foot, 28mm overall.

The *elf in plate mail* (DA-12) is bearded, and wears high boots and chainmail, over which is a hauberk of a design that might suggest that the elf is female, and a cloak. Over the elf's back are slung a large backpack, coil of rope, a waterskin, a bow and a quiver of arrows. A squared-off pouch is hanging from the elf's belt, but curiously enough, no dagger or sword. The elf holds a kite shiled in his or her left hand, while holding a spear at rest in the right. At the elbow of the right hand is a heavy bracer. The figure is about 27mm tall, 38mm overall.

The *elf lord* (DA-13) stands in a dueling position, with his broadsword held out in his right hand and his left hand up in back for balance. This is a bit odd, since he has a fine shield slung over his back, unused, together with backpack, rope, waterskin, bow, and quiver of arrows. His long hair partially covers his shoulders and the top of his cloak, under which he wears a long-sleeved tunic, chainmail, and boots. If painted properly, the area from shoulders to belt could be made to look like a hauberk, it has the right smoothness and contours for it. His sword's scabbard hangs from his belt. An effective figure, but one that may be a bit difficult to transport safely, due to its unusual width – you'll need a special padded box for this and the other similarly posed figures in the line. The figure is about 27mm from head to foot, 32mm tall and 46mm wide overall.

The *half-elf* (DA-14) seems an unusual conception of the idea, at least to me. I've always assumed that a crossbreed would be somewhere between the average height of his two parent races, but this figure is taller than either the Asgard humans or elves, running about 32mm from head to foot, 36mm overall. The figure is walking along with walking stick in his right hand, holding his flowing cloak out of the way in his left. The cloak's hood hides the figure's head, emphasizing the severe look on his face. The hood has a fancy ornamented top that covers the figure's shoulders and chest. Under this, he wears a blouse, trousers, and boots, with a pouch and heavy sword hanging from his belt. Over his back is a waterskin, flask, coil of rope, and large sack (in place of the usual backpack). He is presumably a magic user, but might also be a thief.



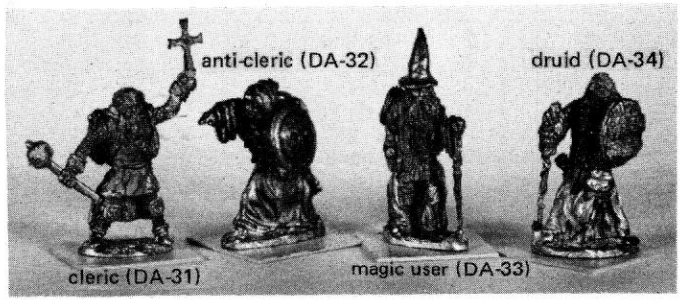
The third race in the Asgard line is the halflings, plus one gnome. Compared with the other figures in the line, these seem tiny, averaging 17mm from head to foot, which is appropriate for the 'little folk.' The *halfling thief* (DA-21) wears blouse, trousers, and bare feet (of course), over which is his hooded cloak, hood pushed back to leave him bare headed. He has a large wallet or pouch at his belt, and a halfling-sized backpack, waterskin, coil of rope, and flask over his back. He stands with arms spread, holding a shortsword up in his right hand. The figure is about 17mm from head to foot, 27mm overall.

The *halfling warrior* (DA-22) wears chainmail over his trousers and over that a hooded cloak with the hood over his head. Slung on his back are backpack, waterskin, rope, and flask. He holds a halfling-sized shield in his left hand, and holds his shortsword up in his right hand. The figure is about 17mm from head to foot, 27mm overall.

The *halfling slinger* (DA-23) is probably mistakenly labeled in the catalog, and should be called the *halfling archer* instead. He looks very much like the halfling warrior in armor, hood, and equipment, but he has a scabbarded dagger at his belt, and in addition to his shield slung over his left arm, he holds a shortbow in his left hand. He is reaching with his right hand, apparently for an arrow. The figure is about 17mm from head to foot, 19mm overall.

The *halfling slinger* (DA-24) is just that, and is swinging his sling with a stone visible inside over his head, ready to shoot, while he holds the next stone in his left hand at waist height. He wears blouse and trousers (or leather armor, if painted appropriately), plus the usual hooded cloak over his back, this time pushed back and with a jaunty feathered cap on his head. He has a large wallet or pouch at his belt, and backpack, waterskin, coiled rope, and flask on his back. This could easily serve as a thief figure, too. The figure is about 17mm from head to foot, 20mm overall.

The sole *gnome* (DA-25) figure so far in the line provides an interesting contrast to the dwarves, to which the gnomes are related. Standing about 20mm from head to foot and 22mm overall, he is only a little shorter than the dwarves. But he is actually far smaller in bulk, having a body build more like the halflings or a short human in proportion than a dwarf. This gnome wears his cloak's hood over his head, under which is visible a metal cap. His long beard hangs down over his scale armor, below which he wears trousers and boots. Hanging from his belt is a scabbarded shortsword and a pouch, and over his back are slung backpack, coiled rope, waterskin, and flask. He holds a small shield (even for a gnome) in his left hand, and in his right hand he holds the handle of the spiked club whose head he has resting on the ground. An attractive figure – I wonder whether this is selling well enough to justify a line of gnomes?

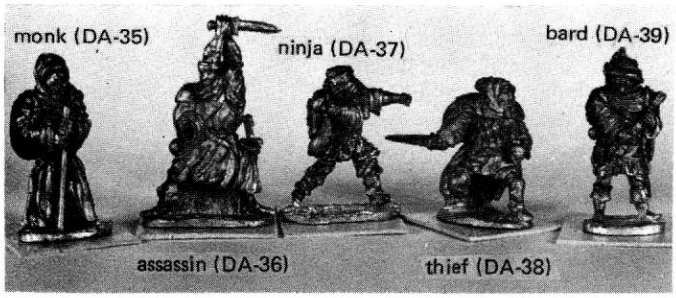


Next, we come to the humans, the first of which is the *cleric* (DA-31). This is a balding gentleman with a full beard and mustache, wearing no helmet but with chainmail covered by a hauberk and tunic, and with a cape down his back. His armor is enhanced by bracers at the wrists and around knee protectors, and he wears low boots. Over his back he carries the regular Asgard enormous adventurer's backpack, waterskin, coil of rope, a small pouch, and a shield. The cleric stands with his legs spread, his large spiked mace in his right hand, braced with the tip of its handle against his right knee. He holds aloft an elaborate cross in his left hand, as if repelling the undead. The figure is about 28mm from head to foot, 41mm tall overall and 32mm wide. A very credible personality figure.

The *anti-cleric* (DA-32) is just as interesting. He has a beard and mustache, but his head is covered by the hood to his flowing, mage-like robes. He wears a deaths-head emblem around his neck and on his round shield, which he holds in his left hand as he gestures forward with his right hand, probably throwing a spell. He has an interesting belt, with small things I couldn't identify hanging from it or decorating it. Over his back is a backpack, waterskin, rope, and pouch, and at his waist hangs another pouch and a heavy mace. The figure is about 28mm from head to foot, due in part to his slouched posture.

The *magic user* (DA-33) is the traditional mage of British literature. A tall gentleman in a pointed hat and long flowing cape, with a beard that reaches his waist. He wears a tunic and high boots under his cape, along with backpack, waterskin, pouch, and coil of rope on his back and a dagger and pouch at his waist. He is walking calmly along, leaning on his walking stick and looking somewhat tired. He holds a pipe absent-mindedly in his right hand. A very nice job. The figure is 29mm from head to foot, 39mm overall.

The *druid* (DA-34) is another fine character figure. He stands majestically with bare head, revealing his long hair and long beard (beards are very evident in this line). His body is entirely covered by long robes plus a long cape. On his back is a large backpack, waterskin, rope, and pouch, while at his waist is another pouch and a large scimitar. In his left hand he holds a round wooden shield and in his right hand is what appears to be a magic staff. The figure is about 30mm from head to foot.

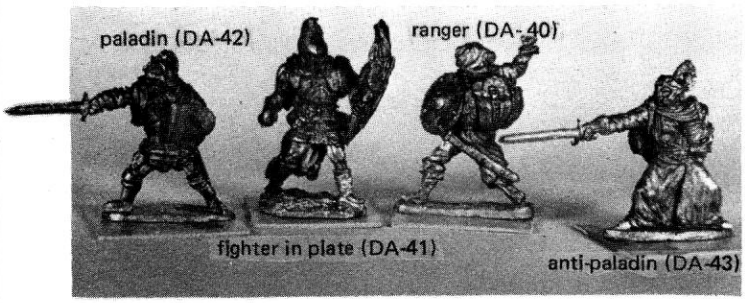


The *monk* (DA-35) has a mustache and goatee, with his head covered by the hood of his cloak, under which he wears full-length robes. On his back are backpack, waterskin, rope, and pouch, and at his waist is a sheathed dagger. He stands calmly with both hands on his walking stick (which from its length and the nature of the figure is probably a bo stick). The figure is about 39mm from head to foot, 32mm tall overall.

The *assassin* (DA36) stands in a very dramatic pose, holding a dagger in both hands ready to stab downward. I assume that he (or she; the face is hidden and the robes are loose enough so that this figure could be either) is attacking from surprise, since otherwise the scimitar held at the assassin's waist would have been more appropriate. The figure wears a heavy tunic under which are visible the sleeves of a shirt and the legs of trousers, and shoes. Over the back are a backpack and coil of rope, while a pouch, waterskin, scabbard for the dagger, and the deaths-head scimitar are at the assassin's waist. The figure is about 28mm from head to foot, 38mm tall overall.

The *ninja* (DA-37) would serve as a good monk figure, as well. This figure is dressed in tunic, trousers and shoes, with his or her head hidden in cloth that covers the face completely other than a slit for the eyes. The figure stands with clenched left hand extended as if in a punch, while the right hand is held up near the face with fingers extended, as if readying a chop to the opponent. The ninja wears a sheathed sword over his/her back, along with a backpack, rope, a waterskin, and two pouches. The figure stands about 26mm from head to foot, 28mm tall overall.

The *thief* (DA-38) is a smooth-shaven man standing slightly crouched with legs spread as if ready to flee or attack. He holds a dagger in his left hand and his sword in his right, extending back in a somewhat awkward posture. He wears what appears to be leather scale armor over a tunic and trousers with shoes, over which he wears a hooded cape, with the hood over his head. Over his back he has a pack, rope, waterskin, and pouch, and at his waist is another pouch and the scabbard for his sword. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot, 27mm tall by 33mm front to back.



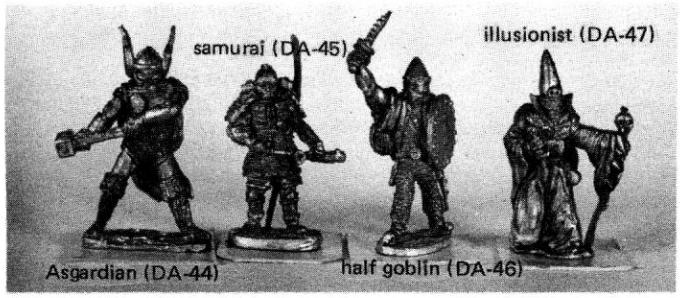
The *bard* (DA-39) wears a tunic, trousers, high boots, a cape, and hat. He is playing a lute while standing upright (the posture is a little odd for fingering the lute, but maybe he's really just holding it). Over his back are backpack, coil of rope, waterbag, and pouch, while at his waist are a squared container of some sort, a short sword, and a horn. He has shoulder-length hair and mustache, but no beard. The figure is about 28mm from head to foot, 32mm overall.

The *ranger* (DA-40) might also serve as a tall elf figure, as the figure is slender and smooth-shaven. He wears a tunic, trousers, tall boots, and a cape with hood up over his head. Over his back are backpack, waterskin, rope, and pouch, and the scabbard for his sword is at his waist. He stands as if parrying a blow with his round metal shield in his left hand, and preparing an overhead swing with his sword in his right hand. (The sword does not show in the photo because it was broken on my review sample; the hazards of shipping.) The figure is about 28mm from head to foot, 33mm tall overall, and about 37mm front to back.

The *fighter in plate* (DA-41) is a really splendid example of full plate, complete with an onimous-looking metal helm. He stands with a long, narrow shield in his left hand, together with a flaming torch, with his sword in his right hand (here, again, the sword broke in transit and thus does not appear in the photo). Over his back are backpack, rope, waterskin, and at his waist are a pouch, sheathed dagger, and the sheath for his sword. A cape swirls down his back. The figure is about 28mm head to foot, 34mm tall overall.

The *paladin* (DA-42) is another good figure in plate armor and shield, his helmet completely covering his face. He wears a cross around his neck, a cape down his back, plus a backpack, waterskin, coil of rope, and a pouch. He holds his shield in his left hand and is in the act of thrusting forward with his sword in his right hand. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot, 28mm tall overall and 42mm front to back.

The *anti-paladin* (DA-43) is more lightly armored but more interesting. He is completely covered by robes, except for what appears to be a hauberk with a deaths-head motif on it, above his thick belt with a buckle of the same sign. His elaborate helmet is more open than the paladin's – an open helm instead of a full helm, roughly the same protection as a Roman helmet. He wears a backpack, waterskin, rope, and pouch on his back, a sword-scabbard at his waist, he is standing in much the same thrusting position as the paladin figure. He holds a demon-mask shield in his left hand and his sword in his right hand. This figure might make a good Melnibonean.

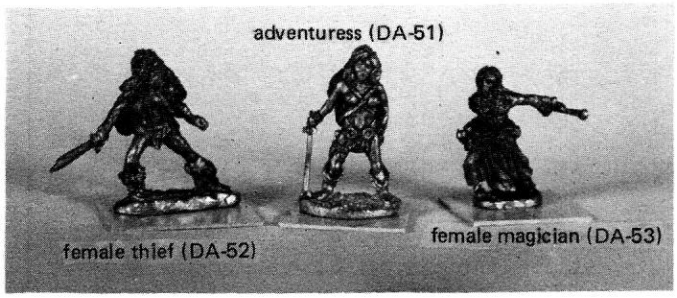


The *Asgardian* (DA-44) is the company symbol, a Thor Comics figure, transformed to a statue in lead. This is a giant, even for a 30mm line, standing about 33mm from head to foot, 40mm tall overall. He wears what appears to be a chainmail outfit but bare on the legs and arms. He has high boots, bracers on his arms, a cape over his back, and an open helm decorated with large wings. Over his back are backpack, waterskin, and pouch (but no rope), and at his waist is a heavy belt with an 'A' buckle. He stands with legs spread, holding his double-handed hammer over his right side at waist level.

The *samurai* (DA-45) may seem a little out of place in a fantasy line, but here it is. Considering the three samurai lines recently reviewed, maybe this is only the beggining of a series? We'll see. Unlike most Asgard figures, this one comes with an accessory weapon, a japanese longbow, which I glued onto his back as best I could; there is no obvious best location for the bow. He has a bushy mustache but no beard. He is completely covered with japanese composite armor, including his helmet. On his back is a small backpack and a quiver of arrows (and his bow), and at his waist are: a wakizashi and a katana. The samurai is in the process of drawing the latter from its scabbard. The figure is about 29mm from head to foot, 39mm tall overall counting the bow.

The *half-goblin* (DA-46) is an unusually tall humanoid, dressed in a full suit of chainmail from the neck to foot, and an open helm. On his back he wears a backpack, pouch, waterskin, shortbow, quiver of arrows, and a coil of rope. He holds a round large shield on his left arm and raises a short, jagged sword up with his heavily muscled right arm as he scowls with jutting teeth. Just what to watch for in dark alleys. The figure is about 30mm from head to foot, 42mm tall overall.

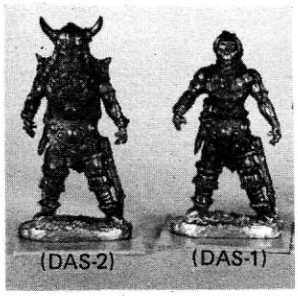
The *illusionist* (DA-47) could also serve as an evil magic user figure. There is a deaths-head symbol on his hat, and he holds a dagger in his right hand, while in his left hand he holds a staff with a skull on top. He has a mustache and a goatee, wears the traditional peaked mage's hat, full robes, and a cape. On his back, he wears a backpack, rope, waterskin, and a book. At his belt is a pouch. The figure is about 28mm from head to foot, 37mm overall.



The *adventuress* (DA-51) has got to be one of the most ridiculous ideas I have yet to see incorporated into a lead figure. She is naked aside from a loincloth, boots, and her backpack and miscellaneous equipment therewith. She has a dagger strapped to her bare right leg, and holds her sword in her right hand with its point on the ground. Come on guys – no adventuress is going into danger without the best equipment and armor she can obtain. If this is supposed to be a female fighter, she ought to have at least chainmail and shield. If she is supposed to be a thief, she surely is not going to walk around in such a way as to cause everyone to stare at her – that character class specializes in fading into the scenery. Phooey.

The *female thief* suffers from the same problem; she is bare armed, bare legged, and (almost) barebreasted. This one looks to be inspired by a Frazetta painting of a female in fur boots and tunic, holding a short-sword. On her back have been added the standard Asgard adventurer's equipment of backpack, waterskin, rope, and pouch. The figure is pretty, but not very practical – but it will do for a thief, I guess. The figure is about 27mm from head to foot.

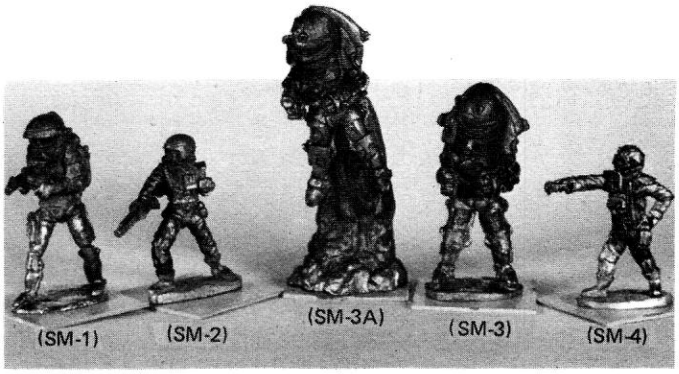
The *female magician* (DA-53) wears a low-cut dress and cape. At her waist are two pouches and a water canteen, and a scabbarded dagger which she clutches with her right hand. She is running forward with her long hair spread across her back, a wand in her left hand held back as she runs, leaving you wondering whether her enemies are in front or behind her. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot.



The next two figures in this series are the Dungeon Adventurer Specials. DAS-1 is the *barbarian adventurer*, who looks very much like a Frazetta painting of a barbarian hero. DAS-2 is the *barbarian in chainmail*, which is in the same style – in fact, the two figures are very much the same from the waist down. Both stand with legs spread, wearing high boots and a fur wrapped around the waist with a large metal belt securing it and holding the scabbarded dagger and the scabbard for the sword. The sword itself, together with an axe, bow, quiver, and shield, comes as an accessory with each figure, and also as the *weapons pack* (DAS-3) for people who need spares. Cost is 15p. From the waist up, the DAS-1 is barechested and barearmed, his bare head with shoulder-length hair, and a savage cold glare. The DAS-2 wears chainmail armor supplemented with metal disks and spiked plates on the shoulders to match the horns on the helmet. The figure has a full beard and four pigtails, two in front and two in back, plus more hair hanging loose. Both cost 35p because of their larger than usual size, about 34mm from head to foot.

SPACE MARINES

The second line of Asgard figures is designed for use with science fiction role-playing games. This is the Space Marines line, also by Nick Bibby, which is in 25mm scale. These cost 25p apiece, except for SM-3A and SM-9 which cost 50p apiece.



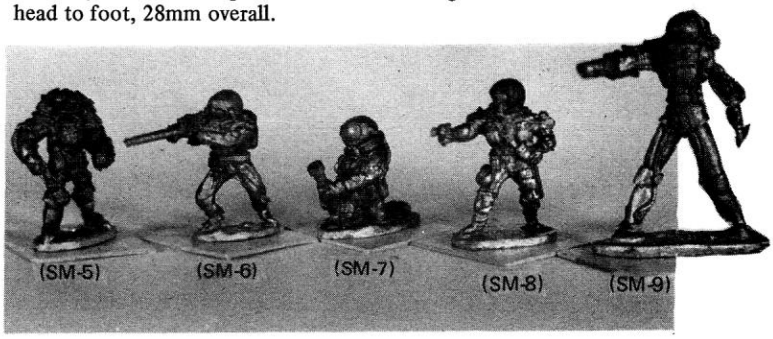
The *space marine in full armour* (SM-1) is a space-suited figure done in a style somewhat reminiscent of the suits in *2001: A Space Oddyssey*, with very large helmets having deeply recessed faceplates, and the usual sort of air supply on the back. The figure is walking forward holding a weapon that looks a lot like a submachinegun in his left hand (although the designer undoubtedly considers it a blaster). The figure is about 28mm from head to foot, 33mm tall overall.

The *space marine in light armour* (SM-2) is shorter and less bulky because of the difference in the suits. He stands with his right knee bent as he leans to his right and adjusts a device on his chest with his left hand. He holds a blaster rifle in his right hand, a weapon with a shoulder stock to which is connected a power cord from his suit, but not in firing position. The figure is about 25mm head to foot, 28mm tall overall.

The *space marine in full battle armor* (SM-3) is so big that if you put it and the SM-1 figure side by side, you might think they were the same idea in different scales, until you looked closer at this figure. Then you would realize that the backpack is also a rocket motor, and the suit's weapons are built into the arms. A very impressive figure, it stands about 32mm from head to foot, 38mm overall.

The *space marine in full battle armour flying* (SM-3A) is essentially the same figure as SM-3, with the base removed and the legs in a slightly different position – and with a new base that represents the backblast from the rocket pack in operation. I found that it took a lot of glue to get it to stay on the elevated stand, but the results were well worth the effort. Very impressive. The figure on the stand is 52mm tall.

The *psionic marine with psionic blaster* (SM-4) is wearing what looks more like a frogman's suit than a space suit – or a fighter pilot's flight suit, come to think of it. It's a skintight suit with goggles and various technical devices strapped to it, front and back. The backpack is connected by a cord to a psionic blaster he holds ready for use in his outstretched right hand. His left hand is resting on the handle of another, holstered weapon at his waist. The figure is about 26mm from head to foot, 28mm overall.



The *shock trooper with force axe, in battle armour* (SM-5) has a power armor suit , in which the shoulder armor is so large that the helmet seems dwarfed. It produces a quazi samurai effect, somehow, for me. In his right hand he holds a force axe connected by power cord to the suit. His other hand holds no weapon, but it has built into its sleeve what appears to be a blaster, also connected to the suit, so all he has to do is aim that arm to shoot. The figure is about 23mm from head to foot, 26mm overall.

The *space trooper advancing with A.P. rifle* (SM-6) wears a space suit that does not look as armored as the space marines' suits. He is sighting a power rifle of some sort, powered from a pack on his back. The sight on the rifle allows use through the faceplate on the suit with what looks like an adapter. A nice design. The figure is about 23mm from head to foot, 26mm overall.

The *space trooper firing mortar* (SM-7) is kneeling on the ground and holding a mortar, apparently aiming it. He is wearing a suit much the same as SM-6, a sort of *Destination Moon* design. The figure is only 20mm tall, due to its position.

The *space trooper captain* (SM-8) is differently suited than the troopers. Instead of having a space suit helmet with faceplate, he has an open helmet with a set of goggles and a breathing device over his face. His suit is covered with little pockets and pouches, and with weapons. He is holding a hand blaster in his right hand while his left hand rests on what may be a sheathed shortsword, or it may be a powered baton of some sort. A dagger is scabbarded to his right leg, and strapped to his back is a double-handed power weapon of some kind. In short, this should make a good general purpose SFRP adventurer figure.

The *large battle droid* (SM-9) looks like an oversized space marines' battle suit, standing 40mm from top to bottom, not counting base. But there is no breathing or power pack on its back, and its weapons are completely built in. In its right arm, which it is aiming to fire, is a blaster the size of a mortar. In its left arm, it has what appears to be a force axe in place of the hand.

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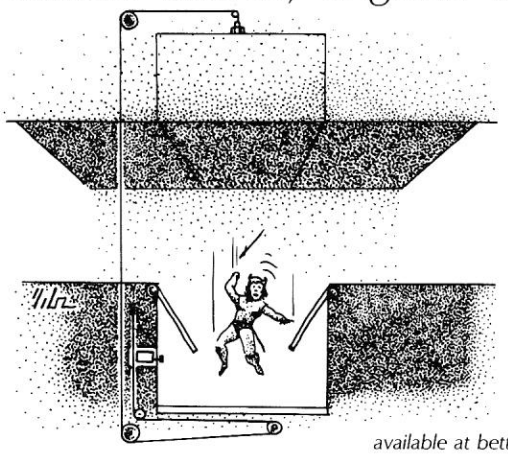

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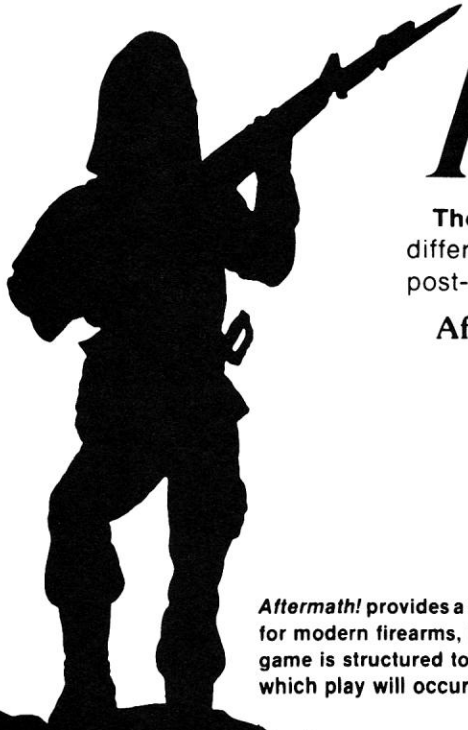

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$6.00

This adventure is number A2 in a four-part series which together comprise the 'A' series of Dungeon Modules. These adventures were first written for an *AD&D* competition game which was run at a major convention last year. In this volume, the amount of competition-related material is minimal, and the adventure has been expanded from the convention version with the inclusion of more background material, wandering monster tables, and side areas which were not appropriate to a competition scenario.

The adventure's plot is a continuation of the theme of the previous adventure, *Slave Pits of the Undercity*, previously reviewed in *DW* 12. *The Secret of the Slavers Stockade* actually contains two adventures, which were sequences three and four in the original *AD&D* competition. It should be noted that these adventures were run in parallel during the competition, and that as written, they both lead the party to *The Assault on the Aerie of the Slave Lords* (Dungeon Module A3), as do the two parts of *Slave Pits*. The adventure is written for the *AD&D* rules; most of the situations are straightforward enough to allow a transposition to most other commercial game systems. A GM who wants to run both halves of this adventure as one huge scenario will have to do a little careful editing to make things fit.

There are two distinct adventures in this product, both involving similar characters and similar ends. The idea is to enter an installation of the notorious Slavers and obtain information about their ultimate headquarters. Both adventures are set in a wilderness fort occupied by the Slavers.

The first scenario involves a raid on the aboveground portion of the stockade. For competition runs, the party of adventurers got into the fort for free via an escape rope hanging over the wall which the guards did not bother to take down. Once inside, the adventurers merely have to inspect the interior of the place to find the plans showing the way to the slaver headquarters — they will not have to encounter the whole garrison if they are stealthy enough.

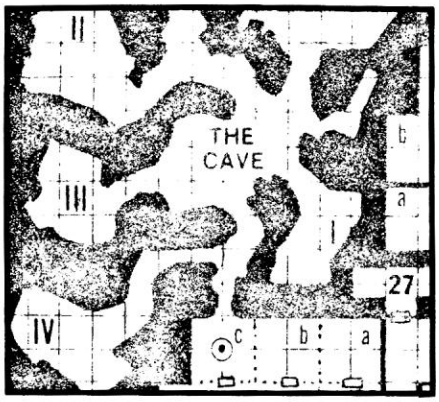
The second scenario takes place in the dungeon underneath the fort. In the competition, this segment was independent of the first part of this module — the players were told that the fort itself was burnt down, and that entry was obviously gained through the trapdoor down to the underground level. Again, the idea was to fight or sneak through the complex searching for papers fixing the location of the center of the Slavers' enterprise.

The layout of the stockade and the tunnels below give the appearance of functional design. The stockade would make a good wilderness fort, and the underground works have places for everything that seems to be needed.

The details of the fort and dungeon show a problem upon extensive scrutiny — the place is so much of a labyrinth that the efficiency of the plan as a center for processing large numbers of captives seems doubtful. The long twisty corridors would make moving prisoners very difficult, and the way things are set up, such moves would be frequent, as various facilities are well separated. The floorplan does maximize entertain-

26c. Ear-biters' Barracks:

A dried ass' ear with a chunk torn o
There are shouting and curses cor
goblins in this room (AC 6; MV 6"
1-6) are crowded around the cen
two-foot long lizard tied to a tab
several darts protrude from its bac
off. These horrible creatures are be
for the lizard to die. One goblin is t
cage and eyeing a slave who is bou
one of the beds. There are 67 cp, 17
front of the goblins.



ment value for the exploring adventurers, but it spoils the realism of the adventure.

Another problem is in the editing — in order to make sense of the scenario material, I found that I needed to know how the material was used in the original competition. I wasn't able to determine this until I read module A3. This was a major oversight on somebody's part. In the same vein, I would have less work to do to run this module if a roster of the monsters was provided; there are several places where an alarm would draw all defenders within earshot, and the GM must have an overall list to determine who is available — a listing in the text would have been well worth the quarter-page it would have taken.

Overall, though, this module is reasonably well done. The presentation is clearer than many published scenarios, even more so than some recent releases by the same publisher. The detailed development of the leader NPCs and the general care taken to characterize the reactions of the run-of-the-dungeon monsters is useful. The text is well-written, and corrected to standard English, so it is relatively easy to read. Overall, this is a good, workman-like adventure, worth the purchase price.

Anders Swenson

THE SECRET OF BONE HILL

Leonard Lakofka
TSR Hobbies, Inc.
$6.00

The Secret of Bone Hill is a dungeon module detailing adventures in the hinterland of a small coastal village. The action consists of overland travel and encounters as well as the usual underground dungeon exploration. The adventure is intended to accomodate low-level characters (levels 2-4). It is written for the *AD&D* system, but GMs who use other hit-die based systems should have no trouble using this material.

The product consists of a color-printed folder containing a 28-page booklet. The folder has brightly-colored paintings reproduced on the outside and some maps pertinent to the adventure on the inside. TSR formerly used cover art illustrating the territory of the adventure maps, but has dropped this practice in favor of pretty pictures irrelevant to the text. The maps on the inside cover are not the main campaign maps but details of locations mapped in the text pamphlet.

The text begins with a random wilderness encounter chart and a random rumor chart. Next are descriptions of various locations in the wilderness surrounding the village. The Dweomer Forest contains friendly animals and a very strange community of clerics. A band of robber orcs lives on Bald Hill. A complex of hills to the south is the campground for some NPCs who may be useful to the player party, and another group of hills and woods is where a tribe of gnolls and their allies, a pack of wolves and worgs live. Each of these encounter areas is described according to a format which is intended to ensure completeness and accessibility of the game information.

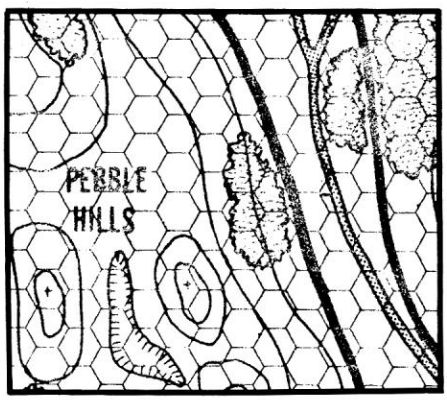
Bone Hill is the last wilderness area described, and it is a nasty place, especially for the beginning players and characters. On top of Bone Hill is a ruined castle which was taken over by a group of bugbears (males, females and young) who are allied with a crowd of assorted undead monsters. Spell support for both of the groups is supplied by Telvar the Magician, who is 6th level and Chaotic/Evil.

Bone Hill Castle is mapped on the inside cover of the book. It has the usual upper works and a layer or two of basement with a proper dungeon of caverns below that. There are a number of variant undead types to be found in Bone Hill, and they are adequately described as they occur in the text. This is obviously the center of the campaign in this module.

Last to be described is the center of human activity in the area, the hamlet of Restenford. The town is mapped building by building, and each living soul is enumerated. The town contains 315 mostly human men, women, and children housed in 39 buildings, 11 huts, 13 cottages and a small castle. All the buildings are at least minimally described, and the most important buildings and people of the town are given longer treatments. The castle is described in detail, as if it were a dungeon to be explored, and each castle resident is noted by name with an appropriate description. There is a table showing the probable inhabitants of the castle rooms both day and night.

The booklet ends with the formal descriptions of two non-standard monsters, the Spectator, a modified Beholder, and the Stone Guardian, which seems to be a low-level Golem. The last item in the text is a list of ten sample *AD&D* characters suitable for use in this scenario.

The central thrust of the adventure is the assault on Bone Hill, and the other material in the scenario is to be used to aid the new adventurers in preparation for the assault.



Ranger, male half-elf, 3rd level, hp 2
D16, C 15, Ch 11, **Chain mail + 1, shie**

Cleric, human male, 3rd level, hp 16,
C 14, Ch 13, chain mail and shield, m
level spells, two vials of holy water.

Fighter, male dwarf, 3rd level, hp 23,
C 15, Ch 7, **chain mail + 1** and sh
detection with 5 charges.

Druid, female human, 3rd level, hp
D14, C 17, Ch 17, leather armor
invisibility, 5 1st level spells, 4 2nd l

There are problems with the material as a scenario — a lot of the encounters seem to be random in nature, not closely related at all to any of the other groups of NPCs and monsters on the map. Given that the Baron of Restenford has a handy military force, why are these nests of monsters within a day's march of his castle? How can the farmers gather their crops if the random outdoor encounter table is as dangerous as it is? And so forth.

The real problem, as is the case over and over again with FRP adventures, and, the adventures written and edited by TSR in particular, is one of scale. If the elements of this scenario pack were spread over a map twice or five times as big, the questions I ask would be answered, and the whole adventure would make a bit more sense. My question, given the situation as it stands, is what deals and pacts have been made to permit the villagers, the clerics, the gnolls and wolves, and the inhabitants of Bone Hill to live in such harmony? What will each party do when the adventurers start randomly slaughtering members of the various groups? If I were an adventurer, I'd worry about that set-up, and be very careful about making waves . . .

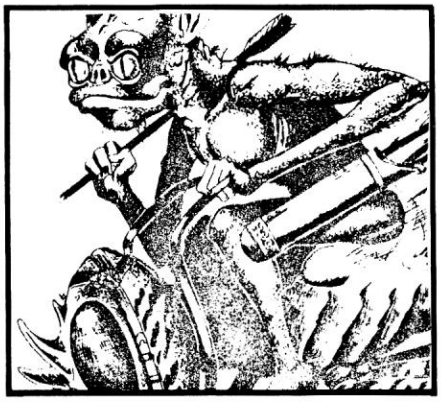
Dungeon Module L1, *The Secret of Bone Hill* seems to be a nice, simple collection of monsters for the low-level party of characters. It is to be followed by a sequel, module L2, which describes adventures in the castle itself. Perhaps my questions will be answered when it appears. Meanwhile, if your campaign needs a simple outdoor run, or if you want something on which to base your campaign, *The Secret of Bone Hill* may be what you want.

Anders Swenson

DWELLERS OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY

David Cook
TSR Hobbies Inc.
$6.00

This is a Dungeon Module about a lost city which has become a lair for a number of monsters. The characters find and negotiate the entrances to the Forbidden City, and then explore it, either from the sheer spirit of adventure, or in order to carry out some task. The whole package is a modified outdoor encounter rather than the classic underground crawl.



The booklet is in the usual TSR format of a detachable cover folded around a booklet containing the adventure text. The cover has lurid paintings of humans fighting green monsters on the outside and a semi-perspective map of the nameless Forbidden City on the inside. The text pamphlet is 28 pages long including cover. It contains a background section, GM notes and notes for possible tournament play, the adventure, several auxiliary maps, more notes on using the adventure material in one's own campaign, and descriptions of some of the non-standard monsters. Also included is a roster of possible characters for use in the adventure, should the players themselves not have suitable monster-fodder.

The lost city is known to mankind only through the depredations of its inhabitants, who have been raiding merchant caravans and some of the nearby human tribes. The city contains three factions: the mongrelmen, descendants from the slaves of the original city-builders; the bullywugs, a weird race of intelligent giant frogs; and an unholy alliance of yuan ti, a race of snake-men, tasoli, an arboreal humanoid race, some bugbears, and a pair of renegade human magic-users. These three groups have attained a *modus vivendi* and sometimes cooperate on special projects. There are also an oriental dragon, some giant wasps, carnivorous apes and other diversions.

Forbidden City is smaller than you might think from looking at the very detailed map: about 1850 by 3150 feet, or 8 by 10 blocks of buildings. There is so much going on in this place that it deserves to be bigger. Like most FRP settings, it is too small.

There are several ways to get into the place, including three tunnels and two places to climb down the cliffs from the surrounding mountains. The DM might find it a good idea to sketch out the details of the ground for five or so miles around the city to allow the players to select the entrance they prefer. Broad avenues separate the blocks, grouping them into quarters. The buildings are a typical odd assortment; many have fallen to ruin, and in a corner of the city everything has sunk into a swamp.

Once the players decide which entrance to use, the characters will have to survive a fighting encounter with at least one of the groups of inhabitants of the city. The module suggests that after the characters get inside, they set up camp and explore the town. In order to survive most of the portals to the Forbidden City, the characters will have to dispatch enough of the opposing group to fend off further harassment and pursuit from them.

If the party makes an extended stay in the town, they may meet with a number of random encounters. Some of these encounters are with wandering monsters, and the GM can, if he wishes, add the lairs of these monsters to the map. The major creatures of the city all have specially detailed lairs which are diagrammed on larger scale maps in the center pages of the booklet.

It is possible that a party of the recommended strength (6-8 characters of 35-40 combined experience levels) could trash the entire collection of monsters in this adventure if the survivors from the first encounters didn't take the trouble to gang up on the adventurers while they rested to get their magic spells back. Whether they do so is largely a matter of generosity on the part of the GM, since the monster leaders are all characterized as intelligent and crafty.

There are some non-standard monsters in this scenatrio which do appear in the new *AD&D* supplement, the *Fiend Folio*. Though information is given in the adventure to run the monsters in play, in fact, most of the information is given twice – once in the body of the text where the monsters appear, and again at the end of the book where a slightly more formal presentation is given. A formal monster description is not given for the one monster race which does not appear in the *Fiend Folio*: the bullywugs. The monsters seem well-planned, although I think that their roles could have been filled by races from the *Monster Manual* with a bit more planning.

The maps are nicely done and the grand view of the Forbidden City on the inside of the cover is inspiring. Most of the detail sketches are well done, although I had some trouble relating two of the city-area detail views to the overall city map. The interior drawings are well done; they do not seem to dominate the text.

With the exceptions noted, I liked this adventure because the lost city is an excellent concept which has not been used previously in a published adventure, and because many of the details have been worked out well enough to be quite usable. I feel that overall, the editing of the text could have been tighter, and I was surprised to find some of the monster descriptions repeated in the book. People who are smart enough to play FRP games are smart enough to be able to look things up in the back of the book. I feel that space used for redundant monster descriptions would have been better spent on an overall roster of the city inhabitants, since one is desirable to play the place realistically.

Overall, the module is a good buy – there is a lot of interesting text crammed into the pages, and most of it is useful right off. The *Forbidden City* can be played as written, and if you want to jazz it up, so much the better.

Anders Swenson

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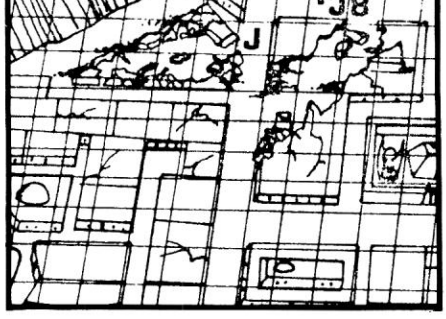
STAR PATROL

Michael Kurtick and Rockland Russo
Gamescience
$15.00

This game (a revised edition of an earlier work) is a "space opera" oriented SF role-playing game. In conceptual scope it covers everything – character, world, and star system generation, spaceship design and construction, space combat, ground combat, aliens and scenario creation. Unfortunately, in execution of all these it is sadly uneven, with an overall general level of mediocrity. This extends even to the physical production, including the quality of the paper it is printed on.

The rules are poorly organized and shot through with typographical errors. It becomes very confusing to have rules discuss elements of play that have not yet been defined. It is also annoying to have a weapon or piece of equipment be only cursorily described with a reference to some other published work to read "for further information." This is a result of what is both intriguing and bothersome about the game; It tries to incorporate elements from almost all of SF literature and make them consistent.

Weapons and equipment include light sabers from *Star Wars*, tricorders from *Star Trek*, slaver disintegraters from the "Known Space" stories by Niven, and Asimov's Neuronic Whip, as well as such past and present



51-60	Scaled	Armor 1D8
61-65	Pebbled	Armor 2D4
66-70	Bony Plates	Armor 2D8
71-80	Chitin	All insectoids have C
81-85	Spiny	
86-90	Feathered	
91-00	Shell	Armor 3D4

Note: All mulluscoids are bare with a possibility of a shell of 25%.

OPTIONAL APPEARANCE TABLE B

DICE	COLORATION
01-17	Pale
18-35	Light
36-55	Medium

weapons as Dutch wheellock muskets, M-1 Garands and M-72 LAWs.

Space travel rules are written to accomodate almost all kinds of faster-than-light travel ever published, with an enjoiner to the GM (or "Mission Master") to pick and use whatever he may prefer.

The game does not have the same coherent structure that marks *Traveller*, though a short history of the League of Star Systems, with star maps, is included to provide a background.

Included in the boxed game are a 68-page rulesbook, containing all the charts and tables plus some scenario information; a sheet of slick faced cardstock with 24 cut-out character figures (mostly human) to use in lieu of 25mm miniatures and four unexplained vehicles in scale; a 22x34 sheet of paper printed with a numbered 19mm hex grid (curiously enough, printed on both sides) and another 22x34 sheet with drawings and deck plans of a "Pioneer" class starship and sketchy scenario information (for boarding a derelict). Included is a set of polyhedra dice (D4, D6, D8, D10, and D20 are all used).

Characters in *SP* have six physical characteristics generated by rolling 3D6: Strength. Dexterity, Luck, Constitution, Personality, and Mentality. The player can choose to have a character be one of seven professions: Soldier, Engineer, Scientist, Astronaut, Trader, Rouge/Thief, or Spy/Diplomat (though for assigning skills, the last three are grouped in an "Others" classification).

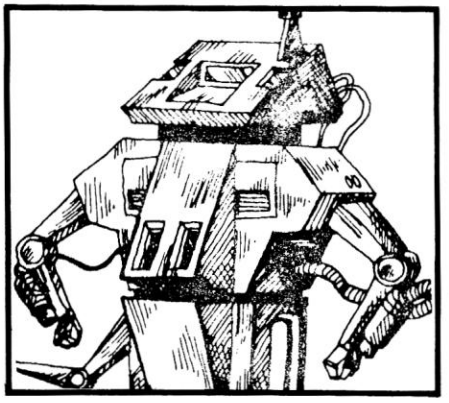
There are 25 specific skills in the game. Each profession has ten listed under it in the order of their importance. A character always gets the first skill in his profession and can choose one other from the list. He then receives 2D4 more skills (or increases in what he already has) chosen by die roll from the list. Skill levels can be improved through training and experience, but there is no provision for learning new ones once the character is generated (there is a rules section called "Learning," but it seems concerned only with figuring out unknown artifacts). Psionics are not available in general; it is one of many possible special abilities a character may have (79% chance of no special abilities) including various heightened or new senses or "cyborg replacement" (you too can be bionic).

A major fault in the rules is the amount of work left up to the Mission Master. In many cases it is explicitly stated that he will have to make up some ruling on the spot, and in many others while it is not so stated it is clear that *ad hoc* rules will be required to get anything done.

The box cover blurb claims that there are "4 Ready to Play on Planet Scenarios," but this is at best an exaggeration, as none are really ready to play. One, "Flamarii," is prefaced with "This world has been created for the novice Mission Master." Poor novice — he gets less than three pages of information, including a map of the planet and various encounter tables to handle the basic premise of five shipwrecked characters with only two weeks rations who must "survive and find their way home." The kicker is that none of the three intelligent races on the planet has space travel, nor can the castaways just call for help. It seems their spaceship was the first Faster Than Light ship ever put into space by man. What are they to do, build a new one?

Taken altogether, *SP* is flawed by incompleteness and an attempt to include everything the designers have read and enjoyed in SF. It is not a game for inexperienced players or those who require well-defined rules. Rules tinkerers could grow to love it, and given the attempt to embrace everything under the stars in it, it could be a good sourcebook for other games. Those people who want a good sit-down-and-play set of rules would be better off looking elsewhere.

Steve List



MERCHANTS AND MERCHANDISE

Donald Rapp, with Chuck and Cheryl Kallenbach
Paranoia Press
$3.00

Traveller players who desire to enter their newly rolled character into the Merchant service may have been deterred by the seeming lack of opportunities for that particular vocation. With the advent of expanded generation tables for the Army and Marines in *Traveller* Book 4, *Mercenary*, and for the Navy in *High Guard*, the Merchants (and Scouts for that matter) seemed a bit neglected. Paranoia Press adressed the Scout service in their release, *Scouts and Assassins*, and in one of their new releases, *Merchants and Merchandise*, have turned their attention to that almost forgotten trade of plying the starlanes for interstellar commerce.

M&M is a 22-page rule supplement devoted to trade among the stars. The first eleven pages are about expanding the Merchant service. The second half of the book is composed of 18 items of merchandise.

Service opportunities for Merchant characters are substantially expanded. The new generation system is similar to that used in Books 4 and 5. Each four year term is broken into a number of one or two year (and in some cases four year) assignments. Each assignment has its own rolls for survival, promotion, decorations, and skills. These assignments include such services as Training, Intersector Shipping, or Trade Expansion.

The opportunities open to an individual in the Merchants service depend on the division he is assigned to upon entering the Merchant Marine: Support, Engineering, and Deck. The latter category is the most prestigious and the hardest to get into, while Support is the easiest. High intelligence and Education will aid in getting into a higher division. The Deck division specializes in starship navigation and management, while Engineering handles drives and ship maintenance and Support has the responsibility of the comfort and safety of the crew and passengers. Divisions determine what skill table a character uses and what specialist schools he might qualify for.

M&M has a few new skills pertinent to the merchant service. *Legal* is a law skill that aids in reading and writing of contracts as well as legal proceedings such as trials. *Trade and Speculation* serves as a DM for resale and purchase of cargo. *Cargo Handling* represents expertise in estimating the value of cargos and aids in finding items for shipping.

Which brings us to the subject of the Merchant's bread and butter, merchandise. The 18 items listed in *M&M* are a varied lot, ranging from air/rafts and medikits to robots and starships. There are some very interesting items — such as the E-Circuit Module, an extremely expensive device that can "retain the molecular structure of an object indefinitely and restore the object to its configuration at the time the module was attached." There

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Delta Research, Miskahmiqui/Metchi'Alagwa
Technological Level: 12
Tonnage: 150 tons (standard). 2,209 cubic meters.
Acceleration: 2G constant.
Length: 43.06 meters
Width: 9.5 meters
Height: 5.4 meters (fin adds 3.7 meters)
Crew: Minimum—1 (Pilot), Maximum—1 (Pilot, Navigator, Gunner, Xenologist, Medical Officer, 13 additional specialists
Cargo Space: 5 tons.

is also a tech 16 matter transporter and four types of robots. There are also two new weapons, complete with range and armor matrices: the *Hypo* gun, which fires fluid-filled needles (anesthetizing darts or poison), and the Taser which shocks the target via wire-trailing darts. The items are listed in expanded equipment descriptions, similar to those in Book 3, but are considerably longer and more detailed. Each is accompanied by a very nicely rendered illustration.

Merchants and Merchandise is a thoughtfully prepared guide to a critical aspect of any interstellar society. It's also a good example of why Paranoia Press is the best non-GDW producer of playaids for *Traveller*.

Tony Watson

MELANDA: LAND OF MYSTERY

John M. Corradin and Lee C. McCormick
Wilmark Dynasty

Melanda: Land of Mystery is a sixty-page fantasy role-playing gamemaster's manual. Its authors describe it as "the next step in the progression of fantasy games" with the aim of combining simplicity with realism. The players need only have read a double-sided sheet inserted in the rules.

Melanda is clearly the work of amateurs. An amateur, it must be remembered, is someone whose work is more an act of love than an act of cold professionalism. *Melanda* exhibits both the ingenuity and the blindness of love.

Melanda is set in the world of Melanda which is populated by six races. The Baladel are classical dwarves. The Lyradel are wood elves. The Gisadel are dark elves — dark because they live in jungles. The Wandel are seashore elves — the rules call them amphibians but they lack gills. The Omenwedur are men and the Uridos are halflings. A player may choose his race, sex, and social class. A mixed-race character is possible.

Character creation is the most ingenious and innovative part of the rules. There are six characteristics: physical power, physical condition, manual dexterity, agility, learning & recall, and mental prowess. These range in value from two to twenty. These characteristics are neither rolled up, as in *D&D*, nor are they constructed, as in *The Fantasy Trip*. Nor will the players ever know the numerical values of these characteristics!

Having chosen his character's race and social class, the player consults the skills list on the players' guide sheet and tells the gamemaster which 12-14 skills the character learned as a youth and which six skills he learned as an adult. Training in each skill affects a particular characteristic. The GM secretly records the characteristics which consist of racial norms plus the improvements from training. The player is then told whether each characteristic is inadequate, poor, average (6-8), good, exceptional, remarkable or superior.

The combat system is the best part of the game mechanics. Imagine a player-character with good dexterity and good agility. The GM consults a matrix and tells him that his strike base is 14 and his defense adjuster is -2. If the character had training in Crude Weaponry (-1), Swordmanship (-1) and Longsword (-1), he would hit with his trusty longsword on a roll of 11 or more on D20. If the character and his doppelganger fought naked with longswords, they would hit each other on a 13 or better because of the defense adjuster. Wearing armor makes you easier to hit but training eases this problem.

The beauty and simplicity of the combat system breaks down in the damage system. There are five weapon classes (I-V). A player who hits calls out the number of points above his minimum to hit that he rolled (0-20). The GM consults a Damage by Weapons Class table and subtracts the listed number of points from the target's PEPs (hit points). (As a quick fix, have players call out the sum of their weapon class and the amount by which the minimum to hit was exceeded. Thus, if our imaginary character rolled a 20 against his doppelganger, the creature would take III plus 7 points.) If you use the system in the rules, copy the damage table onto the players' character sheets.

The critical hit system has problems. Armor is given an even-numbered value from 0 (naked/clothing) to 10 (plate). If the damage to a target exceeds its armor value, a critical hit is scored and D100 is rolled by weapon class on a hit location table. Note that a person in street clothing always suffers a critical hit. Unfortunately, the table is badly thought out. A dagger will instantly kill a naked man two percent of the time. A great axe is fatal four percent of the time. Of course, the axe is more likely to maim than a dagger. A chest hit (61-91) by any weapon will only kill if the heart (75) is hit — the next worse result is "Stunned for 1-3 rounds." This part of the rules needs reworking.

Over half of the manual is devoted to monsters. They are described in loving detail and over half of them are either completely new or interesting variants.

HEIGHT	
Wandel	38"+ PC in inches
Baladel	38"+ PC in inches
Lyradel	60"+ PC in inches#
Gisadel	64"+ PC in inches
Uridos	30"+ PC in inches
Omenwedur	56"+ PC in inches#

- Subtract 2 inches for the female of the species

Eye color	Pure	Mixed

The authors describe the magic system as basic but complete enough so that your only limit is your imagination. I translate this as saying you must spend a lot of time figuring out how it works.

The introduction claims the manual is complete and contains everything you need to run a campaign. I disagree. Only the combat section deals clearly with experience and development. treasure and artifacts are not discussed. There are no guidelines for urban, wilderness, or underground encounters and adventures.

Melanda is an interesting design that suffers terribly from a lack of development. The people at Wilmark were too close to their work to see the problems it would pose for the average gamer. However, they should not be downhearted. *RuneQuest* is in its second edition and *Tunnels & Trolls* is in its fifth (!) incarnation. Someday there may be an expanded second edition *Melanda* that will live up to its full promise. Until then, fantasy role-players seeking different worlds are advised to try *The Fantasy Trip, RuneQuest,* or *Tunnels & Trolls*.

C.D.Martin

QUICK PLUGS

CHIVALRY & SORCERY SOURCEBOOK 2 — Designed by Edward E. Simbalist, Wes Ives, and Phil McGregor, this supplement is a collection of articles on doors, locks, weaponsmithing, NPC spells, rune powers, alchemical materials, news conveyance, etc. This 52-page book is available for $6.50 from Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc., PO Box 182, Roslyn, NY 11576.

YNISARE — This is the second book in the Ysgarth Adventure Series. Designed by David F. Nalle, this is an island hopping adventure with 13 places to explore. This 12-page book is available for $1.50 from Ragnarok Enterprises, 1402 21st ST NW, Washington, DC 20036.

BLUE FROG TAVERN — This is the 15th solo for *T&T*. Designed by James Wilson, this 28-page book is a sword for hire scenario with a quest for a magic amulet. Available from Flying Buffalo, Inc., PO Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252.

TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD — For use with *Melee* and *Wizard*, this MicroQuest 6 is designed by Howard Thompson. It comes with a 44-page programmed adventure, 8½"x14" map, and 47 counters, all in a box. There is a puzzle associated with the game which the first successful solver can receive $10,000 in prize money. Available for $3.95 from Metagaming, PO Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761.

PANDEMONIUM 51 — Formerly *APA-DUD*, copy count is 75 to a mostly New York audience. For more information of services contact Robert Sacks, 4861 Broadway (5-V), New York, NY 10034.

MAROONED ON GHOSTRING — Designed by Walter & Dorothy Bledsaw, this product is approved for use with *Traveller*. Basically a planet description, the book is 32-pages and comes with a 34"x22" map of the planet. There are descriptions of various countries, encounters, and places to visit. Price is $5.98. **TRIAL BY FIRE** — Designed to be an introductory adventure, it is approved for use with *AD&D*. Designed by Mike Wilson, this 32-page book is basically a dungeon adventure with 37 places to explore. Additionally, there are notes on history, legends, wandering monsters, and a cast of characters. Price is $4. **ZIENTECH** — Approved for use with *AD&D*, this 32-page book is designed by Mark Harmon. There are extensive wandering monster tables supplementing the 70-room descriptions and seven maps. Designed for six to ten characters, fifth to ninth level, it sells for $3.50. **HOUSE ON HANGMAN'S HILL** — A haunted house scenario for *AD&D* designed by Jon Mattson, this 32-page book contains 38-room descriptions. Also included is a pair of wandering monster tables. It is priced at $3.95. **THE TOWER OF INDOMITABLE CIRCUMSTANCE** — A description of a semi-abandoned temple, this scenario is intended for use with any role-playing system. Designed by Corey Cole, there are 80 places to explore. This is a 32-page adventure for one player and one GM and sells for $4.98. **MASTERS OF MIND** — This is a 96-page psionic rules supplement for adaptation to existing role-playing systems. Designed by Charles Wilson, rules involve determining character psionic ability, description of powers, acquiring skills, effectiveness, gods, combat, etc. **AMYCUS PROBE** — First in a series of connected adventures for *Traveller*, this 32-page book is designed by Dave Sering. Designed for use in tournament play, there are maps of a planet, installations, and many deck plans of ships. It sells for $5.98. **THE ILLHIEDRIN BOOK** — By Daniel Hauffe, this 32-page book is designed for use with *AD&D*. For low level characters, it is a quest for a book through many towers, temples, and undergrounds. Price is $3.95. All of the above available from Judges Guild, Inc., RR 8 Box 9, 1221 N Sunnyside Rd, Decatur, Il 62522.

STAR ROVERS — This is a SF RPG designed by Nevile Stocken, Charles Hoffman, Carole Rode Hoffman, David Hargrave, Dennis Huey, and Steven Lortz. The 140-page book contains rule on fire fights, martial arts, zero-gravity combat, illness & disease, fatigue, employment, prospecting, explosives, populating star systems, Law violations, morale factors, aliens, etc. The rest of the box contents include a time-line chart, starship deck plan, cantina map, four ship plans, two play aids and five six-sided dice. Available for $20 from Archive Miniatures & Game Systems, 1015 Howard Ave, San Mateo, CA 94401, California residents add 6% sales tax.

PRINCE OF THIEVES — Designed by Kerry Lloyd and Larry Richardson, this 32-page book comes loose leaf and can be incorporated into the *Thieves' Guild* series of books. Basically, it contains three scenarios suitable for use in tournaments. It comes with 17 pre-rolled characters for this purpose. Available from Gamelords, Ltd., 18616 Grosbeak Terr, Gaithersburg, MD 20879.

FANTASY WARGAMING — This 222-page book is designed by Bruce Galloway. It provides extensive background for fantsy gaming as well as playing rules. It has strong European flavors. Very useful as a source-book. Available from Patrick Stephens Limited, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8EL, England.

BEYOND THE STELLAR EMPIRE — This is a SF PBM game designed by Robert Cook and R.S. Hasen. The rules come in three books. The 24-page Captain's Manual contains rules for ships, the 8-page Governor's Manual contains rules for colonies, and the 8-page Mercenary's Manual contains rules for ground combat. Turns are $3.50 each. To enter send $11 (includes the rules, set-up, and first two rounds) to Adventures by Mail, PO Box 424-W, Cohoes, NY 12047.

ENCHANTED TREASURES — A collection of 36 new magical items by Dianne and Gary Reilly, there are staves, books, clothing, gems and jewelry, weapons, etc. The 20-page book sells for $2.95. **DUNGEON TRAP HANDBOOK** — Designed by Gary E. Reilly, it is a 16-page collection of tables to generate random traps. Price is also $2.95. Available from Reilly Associates, PO Box 8144, Rochester, NY 14617, add 25 cents per order for postage.

DRAGONSLAYER — This is a fantasy boardgame based on the Paramount movie. The box comes with a 17"x22" map, 100 counters, 2 pages of rules, and play aids. For two to four players, the game involves a quest to kill a dragon with use of magic and Luck. Designed by Brad Hessel and Redmond Simonsen, it takes two to three hours to play to conclusion. **SPIES** — Designed by John Prados and Lenny Glynn, this is a multi-player game of international espionage. The boxed game comes with 250 counters, a 22"x34" map, rules, and play aids. For two to five players, play runs two to three hours. Set in the period 1933-39, the object is to gather opponents' secrets while protecting your country's. Both games are available from SPI, 257 Park Ave S, New York, NY 10010.

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by GIGI D'ARN

Dear Tadashi,

Congratulations go to KEVIN HENDRYX, the new Product Development Manager for Metagaming, and formerly of TSR Hobbies, a victim of the Great Purge. Purgees are starting to show up all across gaming.

On related news: MICHAEL GREY has become a bigwig in TSR's product development division. He is formerly of Milton-Bradley. Are rumors that he has no prior experience with role-playing games true? Is TSR developing Dungeons for the whole family?

GDW is getting ready for the holidays with the following crop of *Traveller* releases: *Expedition to Zhodane*, Adventure 6; *Invasion:Earth*, a boardgame of the Imperial invasion of earth in the far future; *Striker* – rules for 15mm miniatures; *The Chamax Plague/Horde*, Double Adventure 5. And on it goes, and goes.

Poor Judges Guild, they may have lost their *AD&D* license, for designers are now encouraged to submit projects usable with any FRP system. Frankly, my dear, they shouldn't give a damn. My theory about why the JG *AD&D* stuff is so bad is because JG has to send submissions to TSR first to get their approval. When JG gets it back, they aren't allowed to change anything. Contracts are ofttimes written this way. (I did enjoy the hilarious review of their products in issue 14.)

Rumor from Texas has it that DUKE SIEFRIED may quit Heritage before January. This colorful character's Traveling Road Show may be nearing the end of the trail.

Eon Products announces the release of two new games: *Hoax* is a multi-player bluffing game where gamers attempt to unmask the identities of others while concealing their own; *Runes* is a language game about discovering secret words. Does this mean that the next *Cosmic Encounters* alien will conceal the cards of all the others?

Is Chaosium working on a medfly RPG? Players play the role of medflies flying from one non-sprayed area to another looking non-sterile mates and juicy fruits. It may go places. Sacramento?

More than one rumor indicates that Archive Miniatures may be for sale. The asking price has been described as the "moon."

There are reports that Task Force may be the first game company to produce miniatures on their own. Good luck, gang! Don't let those immigration officials catch you.

Heard Martian Metals got an offer from some Arabs to buy them out. I wonder why? Maybe they think it's a piece of Mars and they were homesick for sand.

I don't know where these reports come from but there is a report that Metagaming is being sued by a paraplegic who can't get to the location of the *Unicorn Gold* contest that he's sure he has figured out. He can't be from California. In California, the State would do the job for him. (And in Florida the State would take the prize for him as well.)

I think it was very silly for SPI to release their *Dragonslayer* game weeks after the closing of the initial theater run. All that publicity lost, and isn't that what they paid for? But they still have a policy of no returns on their games, I think – maybe this one is to keep *Dallas* company out on the store shelves.

Quote from DON REENTS of Berkeley Game Company, producers of Battlemats, those fine vinyl surfaces for gaming, "I think hexes are great! You get SIX sides for the price of four!"

I won't be at WinterCon in Detroit! I have horrid memories of the place from my college days. I wonder who'll bother to show up from the old gang who used to have those pastoral water fights at Ann Arbor? They probably all froze to death.

Here's a press release to all members of the Game Designers' Guild: Reserve Saturday night at ORIGINS for the annual dinner and beer bash. Members get in free! (Such a deal! You get not only to be famous but fed as well. Details to follow.)

Rumors that Random House will buy TSR Hobbies are, alas, contradicted.

Heritage will be coming out with a set of rules called *Swordbearer*, usable with the *World of Dungeon Dwellers* miniatures and the new *Conan* line.

The great magazine coup is *Adventure Gaming* wresting "Fineous Fingers" from the *Dragon*. J.D.WEBSTER, the author, is a close friend of TIM KASK, the editor; ergo, the decision to transplant. Hmm, Transplant . . . Is this supposed to give "heart" to the magazine?

Love,

Gigi

Wyrms Footnotes

RuneQuest players! Up on the latest legends? Hear about the best advice on the RuneQuest rules? Read about the Men-and-a-half, who find the courage to stand against a full charge by rhino riders? Do you know the limits on Divination and Divine Intervention? All this and much more is available every other month in **WYRMS FOOTNOTES**, the RuneQuest magazine. Here you'll find fascinating articles on the cultures of the fantasy world of Glorantha as well as interesting or influential personalities. Here the latest releases from Chaosium are introduced, and those sticky Runequestions answered. Subs are $12 per year (six issues), and each issue is a guaranteed minimum of 32 pages.

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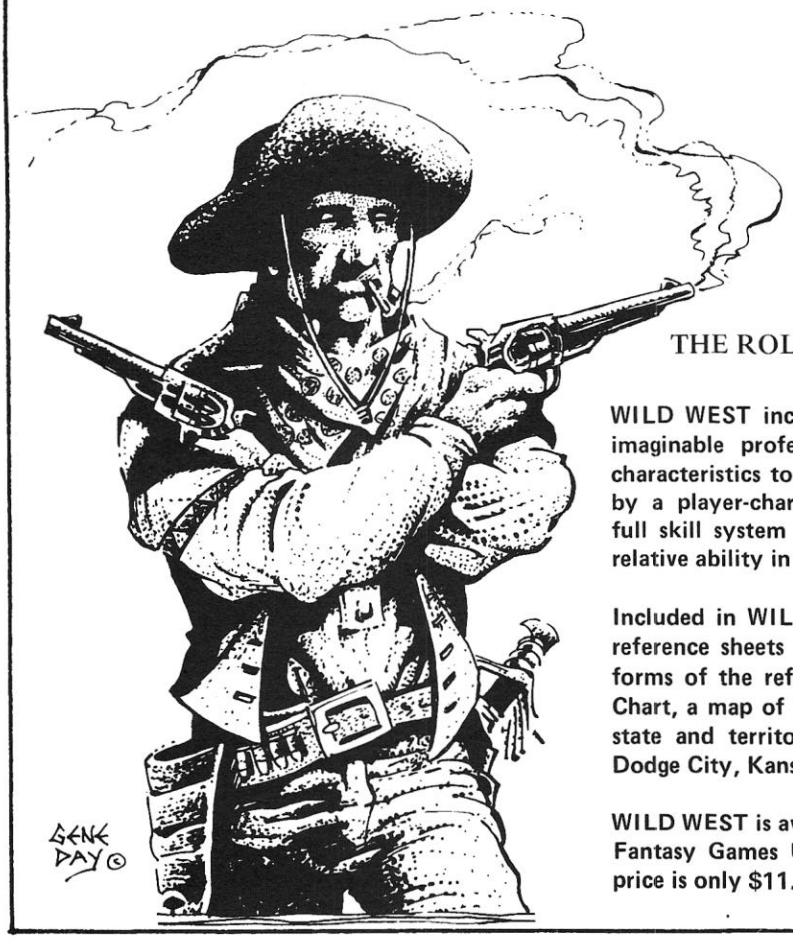

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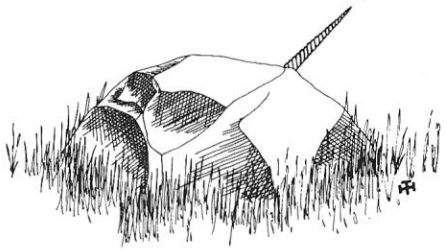

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