

ISSUE 32 ♦ JAN/FEB 1984

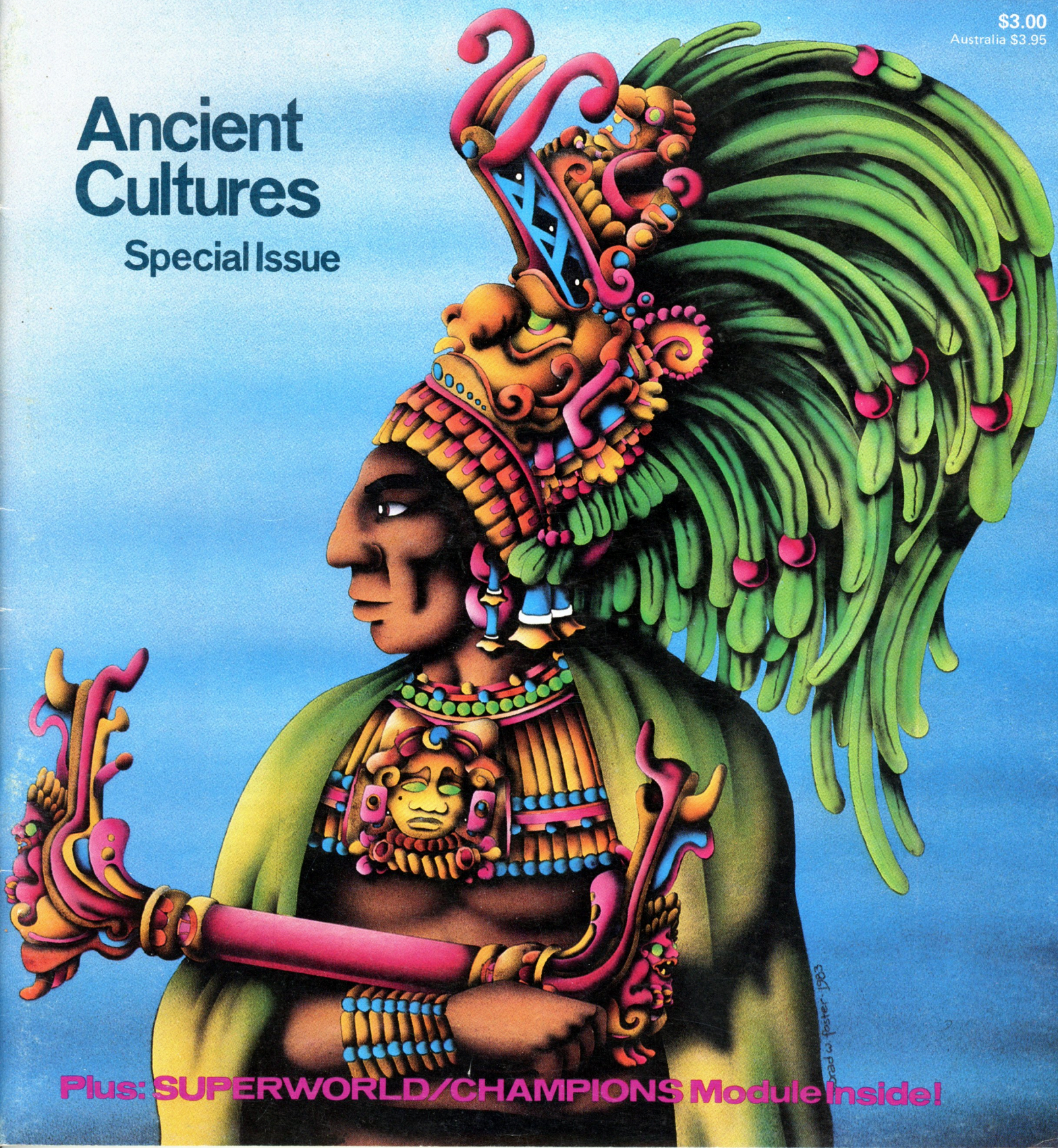
# Different Worlds

**DW** THE MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTURE ROLE-PLAYERS

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## Ancient Cultures Special Issue



**Plus: SUPERWORLD/CHAMPIONS Module Inside!**



# Different Views

Letters and comments should be sent to  
Different Views, PO Box 6302, Albany CA  
94706.

## Praise

Complements on your find magazine. It is the best of its kind—the artwork is exceptional, and the articles are professionally written as well as useful.

I became hooked on *Different Worlds* about six months ago when I purchased an issue to see what it was all about. I have since purchased all available issues and enjoyed every one of them—especially "My Life & Role-Playing" and the game variant articles. I hope to see more of these, as well as more adventures, in the future.

I think you are doing this fantastic hobby of ours a great service.

Scott Gray  
Laurinburg NC

*Thanks for the praise but only three letter this issues? Get your letters and comments in on your favorite magazine before the post office raises the rates.*

## Comments on last issue

Mr. Wellman's comments on the timeliness of game reviews is well-taken (see "Different Views" last issue). As the reviewer of *Star Frontiers*, I was hoping the review would see print sooner. Yet I also understand the difficulties of a small staff trying to put out a magazine every other month. Timely reviews are to be commended, but they are not always possible. Anyhow, would you really trust a game review that came out only one or two months after the game hits the stores?

I was impressed with Mr. Kirkconnell's "Sunstone Multiverse." Rather than a rehash of familiar Indo-European mythologies, his multiverse creates a coherent basis for a dualistic (Dark/Light, Good/Evil, Order/Chaos) world-view. By creating three types of magic, Mr. Kirkconnell has built into his cosmology a touch of complexity that helps scenario design. A practitioner of druidic magic could find himself helpless against some

creatures of Darkness and be forced to see out an illusionist who may not be so inclined to freely tap the power of Light.

Lastly, a minor criticism: the visually jarring electric green paper of the *Stormbringer* scenario. Why didn't you use a soothing light gray or off-white, rather than a color best suited to indoor-outdoor carpets?

The cover was impressive—much more action shown here than in some of the rather stiff still-life covers of the past.

Ian R. Beste  
Berkeley CA 94704

*Regarding timely reviews, we also have problems of space. There are only so much space to print in a magazine. We have expanded the space allotted to reviews in future issues.*

*Regarding the choice of paper color for the Stormbringer scenario, we wanted a candy-color to accent the bizarre world of Elric. The ink color was supposed to be a dark green but the printer had*

*misplaced his spec sheet.*

## Down with revisions

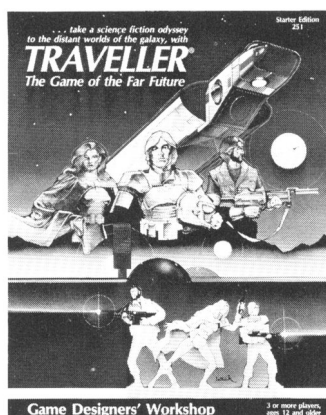
I've had it up to here with them! They're plaguing the role-playing hobby! You know what I'm talking about—second editions! I see *Champions* come out, I get it, Voom! Boxed! The same thing happened with *Villains & Vigilantes*! *High Fantasy*! *Space Patrol*! *DragonQuest*! *Superworld*! *Questworld*! And now *RuneQuest*! I thought I'd been smart, waiting for the hard-cover edition. But, no! You now come out with *RQ3*! Oh sure, for you game designers it's fine, you probably get a free copy of all your games, but what of us mortals with limited funds, much of which are piled into obsolete role-playing games! Why don't you announce whether or not you're going to revise it before you get us suckers to buy it? Hmmpf!

Ed Heil  
Holland MI

Sieg Heil!

—Editor

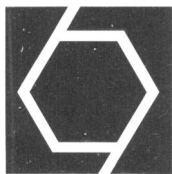
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# TheGamer

Editor's  
Views

## MY FAVORITE GAME STORE

Let me describe to you my favorite game store. It is my friend Don Reents's shop in downtown Berkeley, Calif., called the Berkeley Game Store.

It is a modest place located just off the main drag between a Nike shoe outlet (where I buy my tennis shoes) and a Scandinavian furniture store (where Chaosium buys its fancy book shelves).

Don's store carries jig-saw puzzles, playing cards, tarot decks, chess supplies, go games, backgammon sets, Scrabble in several different languages, Monopoly, sports games, video game cartridges, dart equipment, mah-jongg sets, poker chips, dominoes, and lots of books and magazines dealing with games, gambling, and crossword puzzles. That is the front half of the store, the more 'respectable' part.

The rear half of the store starts with thousands of dice and miniatures displayed on the left side and racks of game magazines on the right side. Then come the role-playing games and their innumerable supplements. The very rear of the store is covered with hundreds of wargames.

Regular customers usually drop in once a week to pick up game supplies and peruse the latest game products—something new pops in the store just about every day.

Some die-hard gamers drop in almost every day. They come just to hang around, to be the first to check out the new game the delivery man just dropped off, or to read the latest issue of their favorite magazine. It is a friendly scene with eager salesclerks willing and able to chat about anything to do with gaming. The gamers themselves occasionally help customers with their game purchases by giving unbiased opinions on the game in question.

There should be store like the Berkeley Game Store in every neighborhood that has sufficient volume of kids and young adults to support it. If you have one in your neighborhood, consider yourself lucky. I do.

Happy gaming,

*Tadashi*  
*Ehara*

Next issue:

## SPECIAL POST-HOLOCAUST ISSUE

Featuring *The Morrow Project!*

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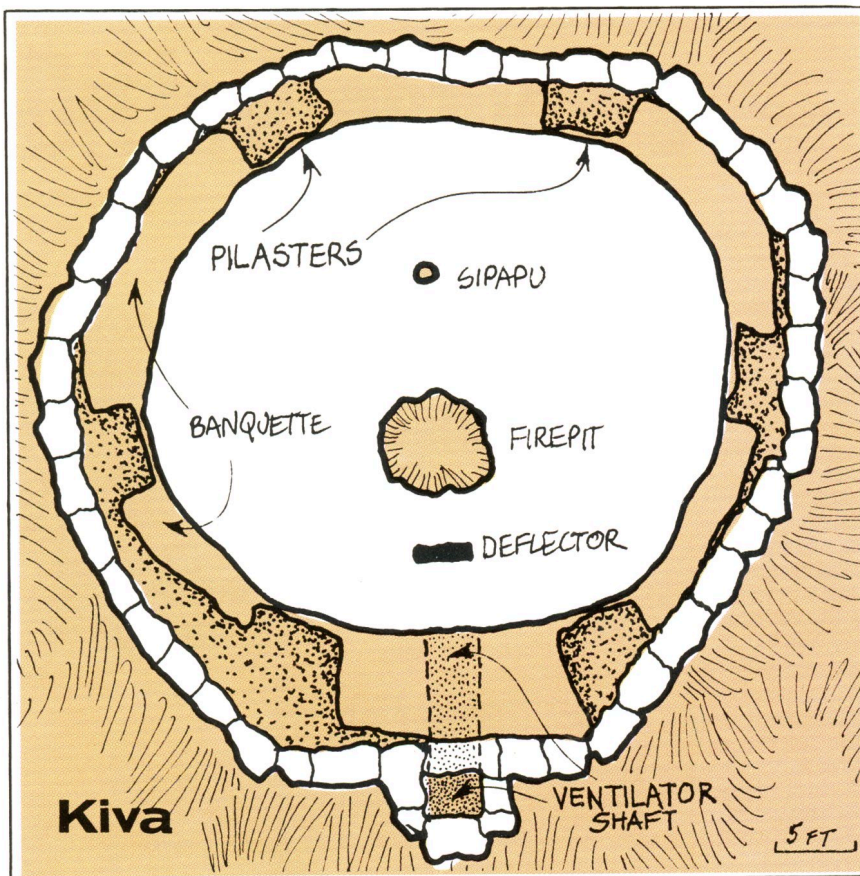
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## Ancient Cultures

### Special Feature



Illustrated by Yurek Chodak

"Kiva" is a Hopi (Pueblo) word meaning ceremonial room. Kivas have a rectangular opening in the roof which serves as a smoke hole and as an entrance. People enter by means of a ladder. When a fire is built in the fire pit, hot air and smoke rise through the roof hole and fresh air is drawn in through the ventilator shaft. The deflector keeps the draft of air coming into the kiva from hitting the fire directly. The small hole in the floor between the fire pit and wall is the sipapu, symbolic entrance into the spirit world.

# The Cliff Dwellers

## Indians of the Classic Pueblo Period

By Ken Rolston

Along a dry wash, the war party picked its way through the sagebrush and scrub pine. To the left and right the dry stony floor of the canyon sloped up gently until it reached the steep walls, rising 500 feet in sheer sandstone cliffs, interrupted by narrow terraces dotted with sparse vegetation and gnarled pinyon pine. Near the top of the surrounding rock walls, on narrow ledges domed by arched depressions in the sandstone, overhung by a final smooth fifty-foot layer of monolithic sandstone, small stone buildings were nestled at irregular intervals into the cliffs high above the canyon floor. On the top of the mesa, distant stone watchtowers commanded a view of the arid lowlands.

Finally, as the party marched around one last bend in the valley, the stone city became visible, a gleaming white in the noon sun. The sight of the war party on the valley floor caused no frantic activity in the city above; human figures moved to and fro without urgency; only children gathered at the edge of the terrace to watch the warrior band file up the canyon to the foot of the cliff. Dwarfed by hundreds of feet of ancient stone, shrouded by the shadows of the cliffs, the war party silently prepared their weapons and began to pick their way up the rubble-covered slopes. Above, the people of the city gathered to watch with interest. . .

The ruins of the cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado are popular and familiar tourist attractions. It was with a philosophical resignation that I added this stop to the itinerary for our recent Colorado vacation. I am only sorry now that I did not schedule more time to investigate this fascinating archaeological site. For one thing, guidebook photographs do not prepare you for the immense scale: the cliffs tower over the narrow box canyons, and the ruins seem minute in contrast to the walls of smooth rock. For another, the photos give no clue to the number of cliff dwellings—the pictures give the impression that there are perhaps one or two big sites. On the contrary, there are thousands of ruins throughout the park; along a single section of mesa top, many small and large ruins may be seen across a canyon. Additionally, there are numerous excavations on the wide, flat mesa tops—small pithouses, towers, pueblos, a magnificent Sun Temple, even small villages.

It is not surprising that most fantasy role-playing gaming is set in medieval Europe. When Americans search for a sense of antiquity, they must look to the castles and dungeons of the Old World. As I walked through the ancient stonework of the Mesa Verde ruins, however, I had a strong sense of the ancient and mysterious, of

DIFFERENT WORLDS



the magical and magnificent. This article will describe ways to utilize this native American setting in fantasy role-playing games, suggesting how to introduce the physical and mystical aspects of the Anasazi culture to your own fantasy campaigns.

*From high above the war party, a short dark-skinned man looked down with the rest. The dark-skinned man checked carefully to make sure that his bow and arrow and ax were close at hand, then he turned to study once again the strangers scrambling up the slopes toward the city. They were tall and green, with great long fangs; their scaled skin glittered like the flakes of a chunk of mica. . .*

or

*They were covered all over with a smooth stiff garment that reflected sun like a pool of clear water and which rattled like chunks of shattered pottery as they climbed. In their hands they bore long knives that shone with the same sun gleam, and seemed terribly thin and frail for weapons. . .*

or

*They wore soft brown garments that looked like a marvelously textured blanket weave. They carried no weapons, only small oddly-shaped rocks in their hands. One of them raised one of the rocks toward the cliffs and there was a loud noise. A chunk of sandstone above shattered, showering the dark-skinned observers with fragments of stone. There was a great silence among them then, until one whispered, "Oh, a great magic. . ."*

The war party that is climbing the cliff walls might be *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* orcs, or *RuneQuest* barbarians, or a desperate party of *Traveller* characters stranded on a mysterious planet, or Time Bandits in search of a powerful magical artifact. Given a distinctive cultures as a background, an interesting fantasy role-playing adventure can be devised using almost any of the various fantasy role-playing rule systems.

An important feature of any campaign is its sense of place. In order to establish the right atmosphere to stir the imagination, there must be detail and coherence to the setting. One commonly used source of credible campaign backgrounds is the borrowing from history. Many gamers use actual floor plans from historic castles, or base their politics and cultures on past societies. Though we generally do not connect this continent's ancient past with monumental architecture (ignoring, for a moment, the Mayan and Aztec cultures of Central America), the Anasazi culture, an American Indian civilization of the Southwest, has produced in their striking cliff dwell-

ings the equal of Europe's brooding castles. Apart from their magnificent architecture, the Anasazi culture was remarkably sophisticated—full of magics, spirits, and mysteries to stir the narrative imagination.

To begin with, let us look at the cliff dwellings themselves. Built during what is called the Great Pueblo Period, sandstone slabs were used for durable masonry to construct buildings several stories in height. The masonry was generally covered with plaster, and sometimes decorated with geometric designs. In the Mesa Verde region, many of these pueblos were built in natural caves or depressions caused by the natural erosion of the sandstone cliffs. The layer of rock that forms these conveniently arched recesses lies about a hundred feet below the top of the mesa and hundreds of feet above the canyon floor below. The only access to these cliff cities was along infrequent natural breaks in the cliffs, by shallow depressions and handholds carved in the smooth rock cliff above the caves, or via a rugged climb from the canyon floor below. It is hard to imagine a more easily defended natural site for a community.

The number and size of the dwellings on each site varies with the capacity of the natural depression. Some ruins are tucked into crevices only a few feet wide; these small constructions may have been storage rooms to keep food safe from children and other pests. At the other end of the scale, Cliff Palace, the largest of the cliff dwellings, was situated in a cave 325 feet long, 90 feet deep, and over 60 feet at its highest point. There were over 200 rooms, and perhaps 200-250 people lived there. The uneven floor of the cave has been made more useful with the construction of numerous terraces at several levels, and the pueblos themselves are built on the many levels of these terraces. The Cliff Palace floor plan will suggest the scale of the dwelling.

The culture that inhabited Mesa Verde was based on agriculture, with farms situated on the top of the mesas. The Anasazi developed efficient water management systems in the arid climate, and large scale undertakings such as the construction of pueblos and the reservoirs and check dams of the water management system suggest effective cooperation on communal projects. The culture also produced distinctive styles of textile, basket, and pottery design. However, much of the ancient Anasazi culture remains a mystery to us today. Most of the cliff dwellings were constructed and occupied from about 1200 A.D. to 1300 A.D. These cliff dwellings, and the entire Mesa Verde region, was abandoned around 1300 A.D. The cause for this

sudden mass exodus are not clear, though drought, external and internal conflicts, and religious inspiration have been variously suggested as reasons. It is supposed that the Mesa Verde peoples moved south and were absorbed into the other Pueblo Indian cultures, though the evidence for this is indirect and inconclusive. The cliff structures themselves remained abandoned for six centuries until their rediscovery in the late 1800's by the white man.

Such mysterious disappearances suggest interesting possibilities for fantasy role-playing narratives. What can cause an entire culture to vanish, leaving its mysterious ruins to be discovered centuries later? Where are those people now? Kidnapped by aliens? Wiped out by etherial adventurers from another realm? Or did they simply migrate to some magical dimension?

*The director of the Psionics Institute leaned across the desk to drop a packet of papers and datapaks.*

*"All the stuff you'll need to know is in there." He leaned back and steepled his fingers thoughtfully. "These people appear to have developed Psionic abilities incredibly quickly; they don't even show on the last survey's maps. Nonetheless, they represent a destabilizing force on that planet, and they must be taken care of immediately."*

*"But, Chief, surely we're not going to exterminate a culture that has such potential, just as they are about to flower?"*

*"Who said anything like 'exterminate'? You're going to relocate them."*

*"What? Where? How am I going to...?"*

*"Relax, Xysspaj." He tapped the documents on the desk. "It's all in the briefing pack."*

Another appealing feature of this culture for fantasy role-playing gaming is the aura of magic and spirits suggested by the artifacts the culture has left us. In the excellent museum at Mesa Verde I came across a cabinet containing the magical tool kit of a medicine man. A partial list of the materials tickles the imagination; what were these things for? What powers did the medicine man conjure with them?

In a small basket and a cylindrical wooden box:

- a stone disk
- quartz crystals in a leather wrapper
- shell beads
- yucca fibers
- stone drills
- powdered stone and a roll of skin in a leather pouch
- a human thumb decorated with beads and parrot feathers
- black metallic powder in a leather pouch







lead ore  
 10 bits of obsidian  
 porcupine teeth  
 garnets  
 weasel skin  
 galena (lead) crystals  
 a serpentine pipe with a hawk claw  
 on a string  
 turquoise  
 a bit of human scalp  
 a piece of abalone shell  
 woven cords of human hair

*The Yelmatio mercenary watched helplessly as the garishly decorated barbarian opened a little box and stood over the fallen form of his comrade. He struggled uselessly, tightly gripped by the small savages who had captured him and slain his friend. The man with the box, who was treated with obvious deference by the other savages, took out a small object adorned with beads and colorful feathers. He reached down, pulled open the dead man's jaws, and placed the object inside his mouth. Then everyone was very quiet for a long time. After what seemed like an hour, the dead man's eyes fluttered, and his chest moved. It was then that the Yelmatio realized that the man with the box was a tribal magician, and, from the looks of it, a rather powerful one at that.*

Another intriguing aspect of the Mesa Verde culture is the Anasazi's ceremonial room or *kiva* (KEE-vah). The circular features in the floor plan of the Cliff Palace are kivas. Originally these were roofed over with timbers, and the courtyards created by the roofs of the kivas may have been the scene of much of the daily community activity. The kivas were entered by descending a ladder through a hole in the roof. Around the circumference of the interior of the kivas were benches used as storage shelves. There was a firepit in the center of the circular room, and hot air and smoke rose through the entrance hole, drawing in fresh air from outside through a ventilator shaft. These rooms are supposed to have been used by members of a social clan for ceremonial purposes on special occasions; the rest of the time they may have been used as clubhouses or workspaces. One characteristic feature of kivas that I found most interesting, however, was a small hole in the floor near the fire pit called a *sipapu* (SEE-pah-poo), which was supposed to have been symbolic of the entrance from the spirit world to this world. Where, I wonder, was the spirit world? Who lived there? Did they ever come to visit here?

*The timber of the ceiling glow fitfully in the light of the flickering fire. The objects set around the edge of the ceremonial fire cast giant shadows on the*

*walls. The eye-stinging, acrid smoke mingles with the sweeter aroma of the clan pipe. Men lean with their backs against the wall, a circle of motionless figures draped in turkey-feather quilts, chalk-white faces textured with thickly-applied pigments, reflecting orange in the firelight. Over the sipapu a mist has hung for many hours, opaque to the eye but insubstantial and glowing faintly with its own light. The fire burns lower. In time it is only embers, then dull charcoal. The mist over the sipapu begins to fade; within can be seen three figures—tall, pale-skinned, with brightly-colored hair.*

*The clan chief speaks, breaking the hours-old silence. "To the spirit world we have called; to the flesh world you have answered. The spirit world is full of great warriors; the flesh world has none. We have need; you have come. Welcome, spirits."*

*One of the tall pale-faced figures looks about him with wide-eyes and jaws agape. The second sits down firmly on the stone and cradles his head in his hands. The other says something in spirit speech. If the clan had understood this language, they might have puzzled at his words—"I got a bad feeling about this, kid..."*

Whether the three figures come from a galaxy long ago and far away, or from *RuneQuest's* Glorantha or from a *Champion's* superworld, the call for warriors from the spirit world makes particular sense for the Mesa Verde cliff dwellers. Their culture was apparently a very peaceful one, existing for centuries without war. However, many of the theories that attempt to account for the disappearance of the Mesa Verde Indians involve some notion of a threat from hostile outsiders or from internecine strife caused by a growing population and a scarcity or arable land. In a peaceful culture like the Anasazi, a character from any of the popular role-playing systems can become a first-class Conan, laboring to save the culture from more aggressive outsiders.

There are a number of possibilities for using the Mesa Verde cliff dwellers as the setting for an fantasy role-playing campaign. One may take the physical site alone, and populate it with a culture compatible with the local campaign. The ruins, with their unusual and distinctive architectural style and their striking locations, perched in the walls of stone high above narrow valleys, pose an interesting problem in defense or assault for the wargame-minded player, or an exotic atmosphere for a role-playing gamer in search of a truly alien culture.

Alternatively, a gamemaster may try to incorporate as many features of the original Anasazi culture as possi-

ble, while still making it clear that there is no attempt to recreate the culture with historical accuracy. For example, the gamemaster may take features like the sipapu and the medicine man's box and adapt these concepts to his own campaign universe. Here the scenario designer will attempt to blend historical and anachronistic elements to create a hybrid society that suits the particular purposes of his campaign.

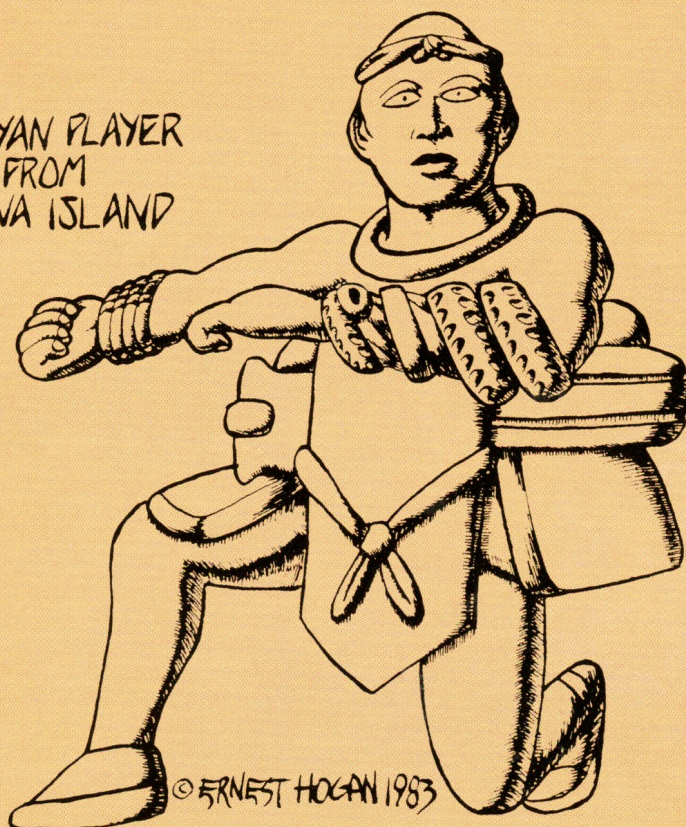
Finally, the fantasy role-playing gamer may attempt to faithfully render the Anasazi culture with historical accuracy. Any system which permits inter-dimensional or time travel could place characters among the historical Mesa Verde peoples. This might require a good deal of research for the gamemaster, and much of what is "known" about Anasazi culture is speculative and incomplete, but anyone who visits the Mesa Verde ruins and museum for a day will find more than enough detail to satisfy the most ambitious scenario designer.

For those interested in more information on the Mesa Verde Anasazi and the cliff dwellings, I recommend the November 1982 *National Geographic* magazine article, "The Anasazi: Riddles in the Ruins." Other excellent and inexpensive references are available from the Mesa Verde Museum Association, which publishes interpretive guides to the most distinctive archaeological sites at Mesa Verde. The four booklets, *Far View*, *Spruce Tree House*, *Mesa Top Ruins*, and *Cliff Palace*, are only 25 cents each, and are simply written, up-to-date, and well-illustrated with photos, drawings, diagrams, and floorplans of the ruins. The floorplans and other illustrations accompanying this article are based on the photos and drawings from these booklets, and are used with the kind permission of the Mesa Verde Museum Association. Their address is The Mesa Verde Museum Association, Mesa Verde National Park CO 81330.

One final note. Some Pueblo Indians consider the Mesa Verde region to be their ancestral home, and consider themselves to be descended from the cultural and religious roots of the Mesa Verde peoples. Please treat their culture with respect. No photograph or description of Mesa Verde can begin to express the wonder that a visitor feels in the presence of these ancient ruins; anyone who visits Mesa Verde must come away with a sense of an ingenious and sophisticated people worthy of our admiration. It would be hideously inappropriate to use an ancient and dignified culture as a setting for game featuring the blood-thirsty, primitive savages portrayed in the stereotypic and inaccurate media image of the American Indian.



MAYAN PLAYER  
FROM  
JAINA ISLAND



## Ancient Cultures

### Special Feature

# Lost Ball Games of Meso-America

## Deadly Sport of the Indians

By Ernest Hogan

*Headless men bleeding Medusa-sprays of rattlesnakes, carved in stone walls, pitted by centuries of steaming Yucatan sun and humidity that keeps you drenched in a heavy flow of sweat. They still stand despite the violent erosion of clashing cultures, conquest, defeat, and assimilation. They were losers. They are stubborn, mute reminders of a past that has been assassinated. They were team captains, players of the ball game, juego de pelota in Spanish, tlachtli in Nahuatl—the tongue of the Aztecs—and pok-a-tok in Mayan. It was the first great sport of this continent, predecessor to both soccer and basketball, played from Arizona to the Caribbean to Nicaragua.*

It is also a mystery of a lost past, a past considered too dangerous to be remembered. That was condemned to self-righteous flames because Diego De Landa, Bishop of Yucatan, in 1549 felt that all pre-Columbian books “contained nothing in which there was not to be seen superstition and lies of the devil, we burned them all.” The whole truth is only known by ghosts and long scattered ashes.

If you learned the Mayan language (which according to William S. Burroughs is easy to learn unlike the more difficult Nahuatl), reassemble the ashes and ghosts and ask the question: “Pok-a-tok, baaxi?” (“The ball game, what is it?”) The answer would prob-

ably be “*Ci-u-than!*”, which means “We don’t understand you!” (and laughter) that was the answer the Spanish conquerors got when they asked for the name of Mexico’s southern peninsula. They too misunderstood, and mispronounced, and called the country Yucatan. The land of We-Don’t-Understand. A land of mystery.

But the conquistador fires did not destroy completely. Two millennia of existence does not die easily. Some clues did survive. The planet cannot be completely lobotomized—the Earth remembers . . . in *Popol Vuh*, the one surviving mythological book of the Mayas, young Humblatz and Hunchouen played the game with such vigor that the noise disturbed the Lords of Xibala, the Lords of Death, who grumbled, “What is that racket up there? Who is shaking the earth? Is there someone who has respect for the Lords of Death? Then they can come here! We will show them what it is really like to play ball!” and challenged the boys to a diabolical version of the game . . . in the city of Tepan-titla, a mural shows the game being played in Tlalocan, the paradise of the Rain God . . . it is depicted in the colorful Mixtec codices . . . ball courts still stand, are uncovered in deserts, on mountains, in jungles, and on islands . . . ancient pottery figures of players tell part of the tale . . . and in Mexico, a Mayan ball player in full regalia graces the twenty-peso coin.

There are some eye-witness accounts of later versions of *tlachtli* as played by the Aztecs, by the conquistadors back in the 16th century. Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec Empire had two ball courts, dedicated to the sun and the moon. They were in the form of a capital “I” with a central section 200 feet or more long and



about 300 feet wide, enclosed by walls about 15 feet high of masonry faced with stucco, at the mid-point of each wall, facing each other were two stone rings, called *tlachemalacatls*, ten feet above the smooth plaster floor, across which was drawn a line from ring to ring. Inside, noblemen and skilled professionals hired by the ruler and his courtiers wearing thick belts and hand and knee pads of leather stuffed with cotton for protection—but according to Warwick Bray in *Everyday Life of the Aztecs*: “In spite of these precautions, players sometimes die of exhaustion or were so badly bruised about the hips that they had to be bled by doctors.”—struggled to drive a rubber ball back and forth across the center line using only their hips, elbows, and knees, scoring points when the ball entered the cross-piece of the opponents’ court. The game was over when a player drove the ball through one of the rings, and all hell broke loose. . .

Hitting the ball through a ring was extremely difficult, so much that doing so not only won the game, but the player who accomplished this was granted the honor of confiscating the clothes, jewelry and other belongings of the spectators, who had usually made heavy bets on the game, often that were linked with a form of divination, as the game had religious significance, the ball and its movements rep-

resenting heavenly bodies—it is said that Montezuma lost such a prophetic wager, foreshadowing the coming of Cortes. And you thought strikes and high ticket prices made things rough on today’s sports fans! As can be expected, the spectators were not too cooperative about this tradition—as soon as the ball went through the ring, everybody—especially if they came in their finest feathered robes and head-dresses, with jewelry hanging from their necks, earlobes, nasal septums, and upper lips—made a mad dash for the exits. The scoring player’s teammates even though dead tired and horribly bruised would help him by grabbing as many fleeing members of the crowd as possible and strip them of their booty. Riots were probably unavoidable.

This and other more bizarre post-game activities that the Toltecs brought to the conquered Mayan city of Chichen Itza centuries earlier outraged the Spaniards.

But where could such a game come from? Muriel Porter Weaver in her *The Aztecs, Maya, and Their Predecessors: Archaeology of Mesoamerica*: “The ball game may well have its ancient origin in the lowland Veracruz area not only because it is the homeland of the rubber trees but also because archaeology shows that the game was extraordinarily important to these

people.”

Indeed. For Veracruz is the land of the *hevea brasiliensis* rubber tree, and was famous as the best source of rubber during the time of the Conquest. It is also the land of the Olmecs, whose name means “rubber people,” cannibals who also ate the flesh of the toad *bufo marinus* for its hallucinatory effects, carvers of elegant jade statues, and founders of the cult of the were-jaguar.

About 2000 years ago, it was probably they who first made solid balls of natural latex weighing a little over three pounds, and invented a game to play with them. Mounds in central San Lorenzo are probably their earliest courts. Their court in La Venta consists of two elongated parallel mounds about 90 by 70 yards wide, 20 feet high, about 45 yards apart with an exact north-south alignment. A Gulf Coast pottery figure shows an Olmec ball player wearing a jaguar mask—looking like a were-jaguar—a round helmet, broad breast-plate, padded belt, and in his hands what may be the *clogs* later used by the Toltec-Maya in Chichen Itza. Also there are the famous Olmec colossal heads with their strangely negroid features and head-gear that Erich von Daniken would have us all believe makes them ancient astronauts, but are more likely helmets made of the shell of the sea turtle, people.”

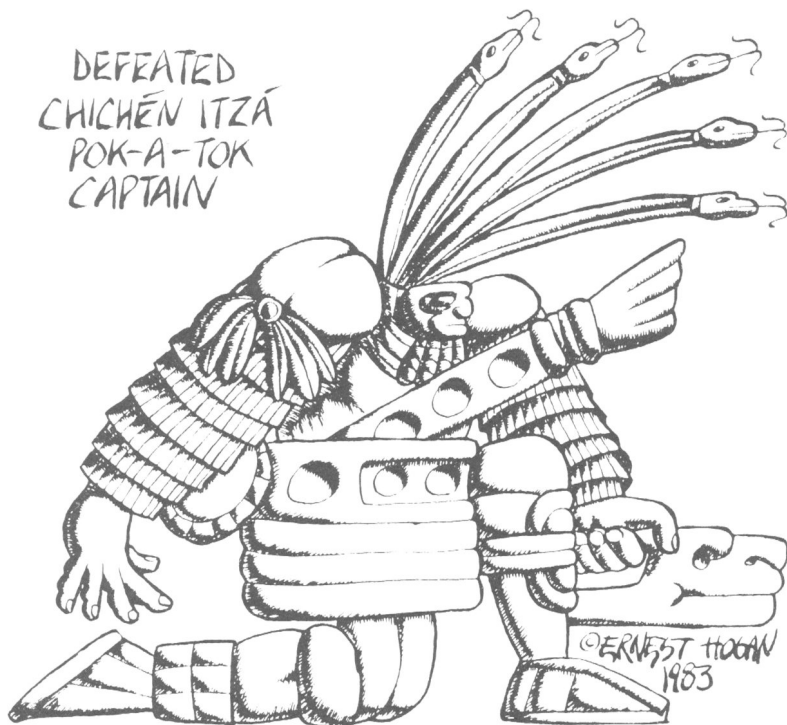


CHINKULTIK  
POK-A-TOK PLAYER





# DEFEATED CHICHÉN ITZÁ POK-A-TOK CAPTAIN



worn in the ball game.

This aspect of Olmec culture spread throughout North America. Stone equipment carved in Veracruz were traded all over central Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador. In Monte Alban, the Zapotecs built a court with no niches, markers, or rings, and built a court with the Mixtecs (who showed another ringless court in one of their codices) in Yagul. The Aztecs took the game as far as the deserts of Arizona. And the Toltecs were no doubt influenced by some of the bloodthirsty traditions as shown on a Totanac ball court carving in El Tajin, Veracruz, that shows the classic pre-Columbian obsidian-blade heart-removal sacrifice.

Which brings us to the strange and terrible story of the Toltecs, the Maya, the city of Chichén Itza, and the ball game. . .

Muriel Porter Weaver: "Legends of the Toltecs tell us that they were a most extraordinary people, taller than any people known today, and that they excelled in sports and in all arts and sciences. Their proud descendants attribute to them all major achievements. It is said that they could grow cotton in colors and raise gigantic ears of corn. Above all, hunger and misery were unknown, everything was plentiful, and all were rich and happy."

Of course, in reality, the Toltecs did not live up to their legendary, utopian image. True, they were the first major civilization in Mexico, but they were more proto-Aztec conquerors than a peaceful, advanced super-race. The ruins of the Toltec city of Tula—long dead at the time of the Conquest—that once boasted several ball courts, inspired awe in the Aztecs, just as later

pre-Columbian ruins inspired the imaginations of us, the living.

It is not known why Tula, and the other Toltec cities in the north of Mexico fell. Perhaps it was climatic changes that made them go south, or they were dispossessed by a vengeful god, or plagued by social unrest, or maybe the result of a ball game decreed that they leave, and head down to the greener jungle-covered Yucatan, to conquer the Mayas.

In ancient times, the Mayas were fanatical about the game in a variety of forms. Ball courts, or *palangana* in their language, abounded: in Hon-

duras, the city of Copan has a spectacular court with sculptured markers set in the playing floor, parrot-heads instead of rings, plus vaulted temples on each side where players made offerings to the gods before and after the game. In Chutixtiox, Guatemala, in Quiche territory at Chalchitan, there is an enclosed (shade!) ball court with jaguar heads instead of rings. In Uxmal an entire ball court is decorated to look like a plumed serpent. In Palenque the court has no rings or markers at all. In Tikal, where most effort was spent on pyramids and temples, there are two small courts, open-ended, as typical of the lowland Maya. J. Eric S. Thompson in *The Rise and Fall of Mayan Civilization*: "The density of ball courts in the highlands of Guatemala is phenomenal . . . about the equivalent of giving Brooklyn ten first-class ball parks."

Surprisingly, there are no courts in the oldest known Mayan capital, Mayapan, founded by Kukulcan (the Mayan equivalent of Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent) in 987 A.D. Weaver writes: "the city of Mayapan . . . became the capital of Yucatan in 1283. Following a brief revival of the Kukulcan cult, a period of great debauchery set in. Legends are filled with tales of sorcery, adultery, homosexuality, and much erotic conduct apparently associated with the plumeria flower (*frangipani*)." Those folks apparently were busy with other things. Nevertheless, the city fell and was destroyed by the people of Chichén Itza in about 1450.

"... it appears that rules of the game varied from one city to another," (Henri Stierlin, *Living Archi-*

# JAGUAR MASKED OLMEC BALL PLAYER





ecture: Mayan), note how some courts have rings, and other do not. The game was usually played in "I" shaped courts, with gently sloping sides and tiered rows of benches, and special observation points for priests and royalty. If there were rings, they were usually about 30 feet from the ground.

Even the size of the ball varied. Sometimes it was small, about six inches in diameter, solid, though it bounded like an inflated ball. Other times a larger ball was used, also solid, nearly a foot in diameter, weighing about five pounds.

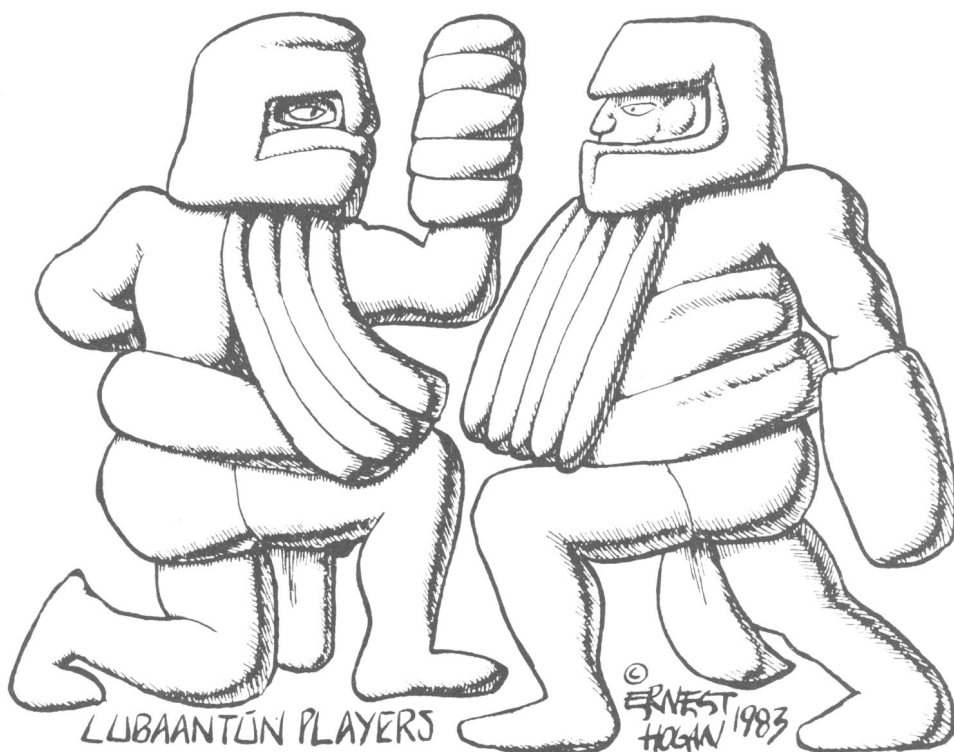
The Mayas played two against two, and with as shown on a stone disk (probably a game marker) from Chinkultik, in Chiapas near the Guatemalan border, wore heavy protective gear: a thick padded belt covering from torso to hips to the armpits, a knee guard on the right knee, that was allowed to touch the ground, and a protective covering over the right forearm.

Also used in the game, though it is not clear exactly how, are the *yokes*, *palmas*, and *hachas* usually made in Veracruz. The yokes were U-shaped stones often elaborately carved on the outer surfaces, weighing from 40 to 60 pounds and were stone imitations of the protective belts. The palmas or palamate stones were from 6 to 30 inches high, could not stand up by themselves, usually were fan-shaped, notched at the top, with a concave surface at the base as if it was to be supported by a curved edge—the backs were smooth and left plain while the fronts were decorated with carvings of birds, iguanas, human faces and inanimate objects. The palmas may have rested on the yokes. Also unable to stand alone and somehow associated with the yoke were the hachas, thin stone heads that often had a deep notch or cut at the back or an undecorated projection; they were carved to represent human, bird, and animal forms.

This was all, of course, before the coming of the Toltecs.

Sometime after 900 A.D., after the mysterious fall of the Toltec capital of Tula, they made their way south, 800 miles from their fallen city, to the Yucatan, to conquer and transform the city of Chichen Itza.

The city can now be seen as a combination of Toltec and Mayan architecture. Buildings show a flowing Mayan elegance married to a complex angular style of Tula and the Toltecs. Kukulcan/Quetzalcoatl often with jaws gaping to reveal human faces abound, carved jaguars dance on walls, sharing the city with the geometricized, semi-abstract, goggle-eyed, with long, curving nosed face of Chac, the Mayan rain god.



Chichen Itza also had the largest and most magnificent ball court in all Mesoamerica—the largest of the city's seven courts! It is 545 feet long and 225 feet wide. Towering 35 feet over the playing field were the rings, decorated with open-fanged serpents. From the field the covered, shaded platforms that the priests and royalty, with their artificially deformed skulls, tattooed faces, jade and turquoise inlaid teeth, earrings, nose and lip plugs, gaily feathered headdresses, and fine clothing watched the game with severe intensity because they had all bet heavily on the game. An empty temple could also be seen, waiting patiently. And on the walls of the playing field, there are, among renderings of fully decked-out and equipped players, are surrealistic images: decapitated men with rattlesnakes showering out of their severed necks instead of blood.

It was there, in that court, with a cruel tropical sun mercilessly beating down that a Yucateco guide with a Mayan cast to his features, told me of how *pok-a-tok* was played in Chichen Itza under the Toltecs. The ball was smaller than that used by the Mayas, between the size of a tennis ball and a football. There were seven men on each team, including a captain. As usual, it was not permitted to touch the ball with the hands, players had to butt the ball with the elbows or hips. Heavy, padded protective gear was worn. And equipment was used like the *yoke* or deflector, a wooden device from which the ball was deflected; the *axe*, a kind of bat made of tough material similar to the yoke, and the *clog* or handle, sometimes decorated with a

jaguar head, held in the hand and probably used to provide extra support on the ground. The game ended when a player, who was rewarded in the manner of the Aztecs, put the ball through the ring, which was extremely difficult, my guide indicated how high the ring was, how small its hole, and that "the Mayas were very small people" (I am six feet tall, and modern Mayas I had seen barely reached my shoulder blades), and that it was not unusual for the game to go on for several days—I noted my sweat drenched clothes, dry mouth, and state of near-exhaustion due to some over-zealous pyramid climbing and gulped. If they were lucky, and playing during the rainy season, maybe Chac would be merciful and time his daily hour of rainfall during the hours of play.

Also, since the Toltecs had introduced the Mexican tradition of human sacrifice and that the players were often prisoners of war—rather than noblemen as with the Aztecs—the captain of the losing team was taken to that highly placed and infinitely patient temple, where like the bas-relief men that decorated the court—that throughout the game were never far from his sight, etching dread and the will to play to win into his soul—his head was cut off. It was blood, not rattlesnakes that flowed from his neck. Snakes were important in the religions of the Toltecs and the Mayas (skull deformations and facial tattoos were to make humans look snake-like), plumed serpents and rattlesnakes were symbols of life, and the blood of the sacrifice was thought to nourish the earth, make the crops grow, satisfy the gods



and restore the cycle of life.

His skull was then taken to the Tzompantli, or Skull-Rack Platform. There, like the bas-reliefs carved all over the Tzompantli, it was skewered on a wooden stake, and put on display with many others.

The guide made his story seem like the Mayas were doomed under the barbaric Toltecs, but according to Weaver, "By the year A.D. 1224 (Katun 6 Ahau), Chichen Itza was abandoned by the Toltecs for reasons unknown to us, they vanish from our record..." Thompson wrote that "The Maya... had the ability to absorb their foreign conquerors and to modify to their own taste new concepts forced on them." It is generally accepted that the Toltecs were absorbed into Mayan culture, afterwards, the inhabitants of Chichen Itza were simply known as the Itza, which means "people." And even today, the descendants of the Maya make Mayan the second language of the Yucatan, as for the forgotten tongue of the Toltecs, and why the game was no longer played in the Yucatan at the time of the Conquest, we only ask "Baaxi?"

The answers are lost, in the fires of Bishop De Landa and the conquistadors, known only to the ashes and ghosts of decapitated *pok-a-tok* captains that sculpt the clouds over Merida—the capital of the Yucatan—into plumed serpents, Chac the rain god, ball players and warriors, while conversation in Mayan echoes through the streets as an unseen rock band sings *Sympathy for the Devil* in Spanish—sounding more sinister, alien—as the city, like a ruin, merges with the jungle, ashes, ghosts...

Baaxi? Is that Mayan laughter I hear? ... baaxi?

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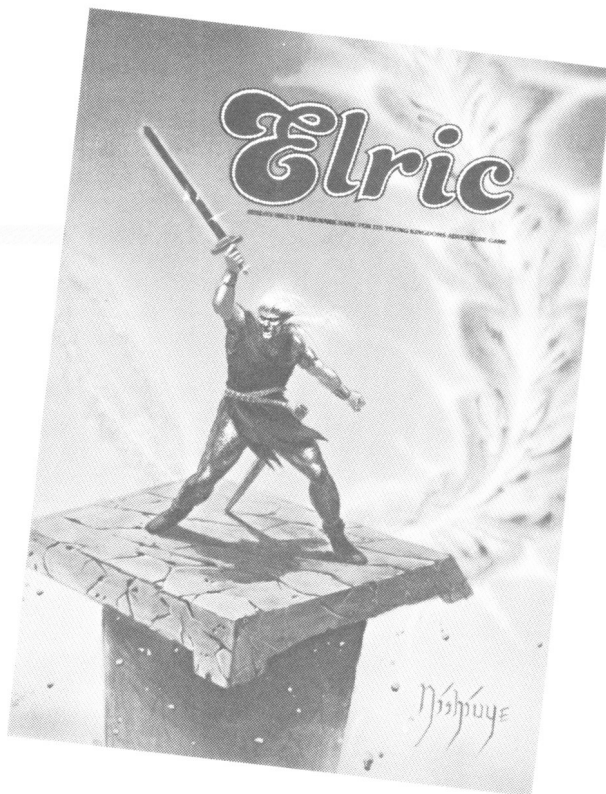


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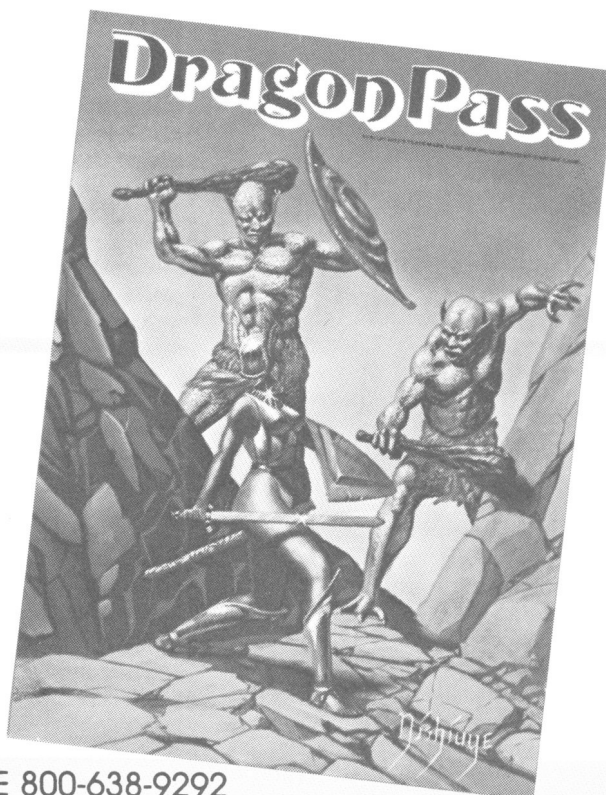
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# The Kabbalah and

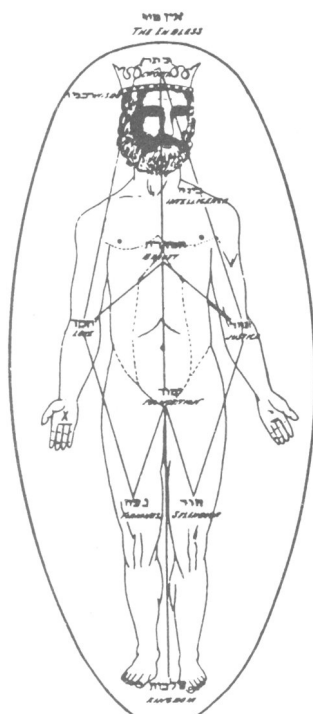
# Fantasy Role-Playing Games

## Mystical Books of Judaism

Ancient  
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Special Feature

By Simcha Kuritzky

*A major difficulty with most fantasy role-playing games is that their magic systems, which play a very large role in all campaigns, were designed solely for their playability and with little regard for over-all consistency or their place in the fantasy role-playing universe. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how a major field of philosophical thought, the Kabbalah (also spelled Cabala and Qabbalah), can form the basis of a magic system in a fantasy role-playing game, whether by modifying an already existing magic system, or by replacing it altogether.*



First, it is necessary to define the term *Kabbalah*. The *Kabbalah* is not a particular work, but rather is used to describe the various mystical books written by Jews from the beginning of the Diaspora until the Age of Reason (first through seventeenth centuries CE). The word *Kabbalah* literally means *transmission*, as in the transmission of secret knowledge. While the individual Kabbalists held different views, often influenced by other cultures (especially the ancient Greeks and Zoroastrians), certain ideas became almost universally accepted, and these form the core of Jewish mysticism. The theories presented in this article were chosen according to two criteria: their consistency with the other theories and Judaism, and how playable they were in a fantasy role-playing magic system. As such, this article should not be taken as the last word on the *Kabbalah*. Readers who are interested in learning more should visit the nearest center of Jewish study or at least read what the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, available at many secular libraries, has to say on the subject.

It should be noted that while this magic system is based upon a Jewish philosophy, the characters who use it need not be Jewish, or even aware of the concept of monotheism. God is the creator of the entire universe, and hears the prayers of the faithful, regardless of their religion. Judaism regards the basis of the other religions as the mistaken ascribing of deific powers to a created object (e.g., the heavenly bodies, idols, or men), which in and of itself is not a sin. Gamemasters who are interested in retaining the panthe-

ons of the ancient world can do so by simply interpreting the deities as angels who are mistaken for gods. The role of angels will be explained later.

The most basic tenet of the *Kabbalah*, and Judaism, can be summarized as: *There exists one God*. The term 'exists' includes past, present, and future; God always has existed and always will. The term 'one' implies a perfect unity, and thus the dualism of Zoroastrianism, the trinity of Christianity, and the pantheons found in a variety of religions are not consistent with the *Kabbalah*. 'God' refers to the omnipotent super-intelligence, creator of all things. God is the source of all life and existence, and thus is also the source of all magic.

In order to understand how magic works, it is necessary to understand how the universe was created. Throughout history, there has always been and always will be the spiritual universe, known as *en sof* (literally, without end, i.e., the infinite). This universe has but one occupant, God, and is often called "the nothingness" because its nature is so incomprehensible. The spiritual universe is united and perfect, made so by God's omnipresence. In order to create a physical world, He 'contracted' Himself (*tzimtzum*) away from a point and then emitted ten emanations (see diagram one). Through these emanations was the physical universe created, and through them also is the physical universe maintained.

The first emanation is *keyser* (crown), which is an extension of the *en sof* and sometimes referred to as *da'at*, a mixture of wisdom and understanding. From this flows the next two



emanations, *khokhmah* (wisdom) and *binah* (understanding). These three emanations are the "brains" of the universe, and from them emerge the seven creative spheres. These spheres are known as *khesed* (kindness), *din* (law), *tiferet* (beauty and sometimes mercy), *netzakh* (victory), *hod* (glory), *yesud* (foundation), and *malkhes* (kingdom). The last and first emanations, crown and kingdom, are sometimes referred to as passive, for they are linked to the spiritual universe (symbolized by God's male presence) and the physical universe (symbolized by *shekhinah*, God's female presence), respectively.

It is important to note that these spheres are not equal in power nor completely separate; they co-mingle, reflect each other's energy, and have varying amounts of influence at any particular moment or place. They continuously maintain and influence the physical universe, and it is through

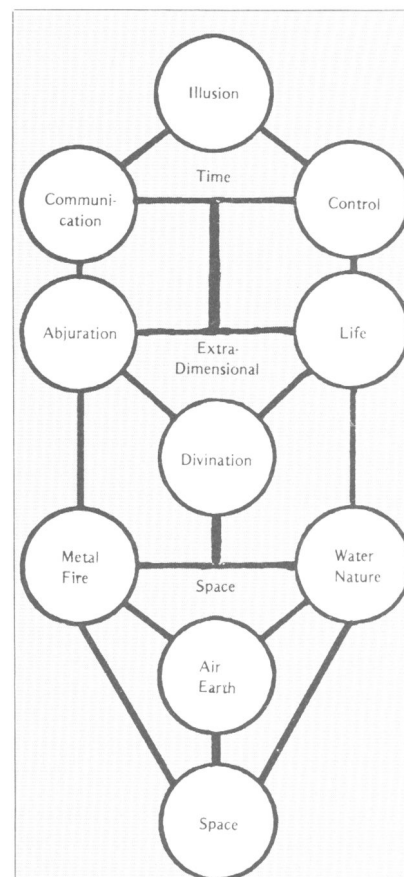
their inter-relationships that one can predict or even control future events. Of course God, the ultimate source of the emanations, exerceizes the greatest control over them. However, men, through the use of magic, can affect them to a small degree, which is often enough to dramatically influence their lives. The higher level the magic, the greater the change in the emanations, and the higher the likelihood of deific intervention (usually cancellation of the spell) if it is not in accordance to His will.

The ten spheres can be grouped in a number of ways. One way utilizes three triads: intellectual (crown, wisdom, and understanding), moral (kindness, law, and beauty), and natural (victory, glory, and foundation). Kingdom represents the world from which the magic is cast. Another grouping involves three axes: right (wisdom, kindness, and victory) which represents mercy; center (crown, beauty, foundation, and kingdom) which represents mediation; and left (understanding, law, and glory) which represents judgment.

From these ten spheres and their groupings we can define our magic system, as shown in diagram two. The ten spheres themselves each represent a particular lore or field of study, as do the triads. The spell caster attempts to learn about the entire universe through a particular field (sometimes through more than one field). This specialization enhances playability, for it is logical that a spell caster will limit him or herself to certain fields of endeavor, and the fact that the spells are all related makes it easier to remember what spells a high-level character knows.

The three triads each represent a major school of thought, an aspect of magic and a characteristic. The three characteristics useful to spell casters are will power, wisdom, and intelligence. Will power quantifies a character's resistance to magic; intelligence, the ability to solve problems; and wisdom, an over-all understanding of how things work. Obviously they are inter-related and a character with a high score in one of these characteristics and a very low score in another is probably insane or an idiot savant and the player should be given the option of abandoning it.

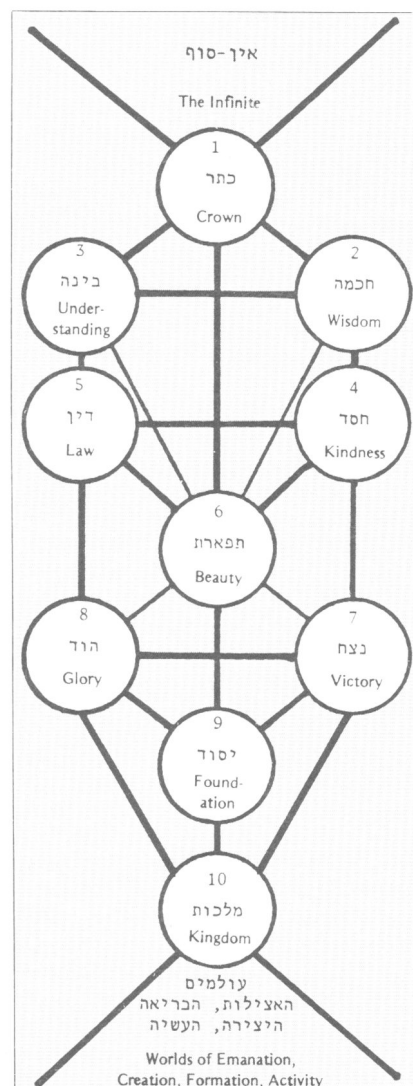
Will power is the prime requisite for Psionists, who specialize in the intellectual triad. Their lores are illusion or minor creation (originating from crown), control (wisdom), and communication (understanding). First through third level magic only accesses the one sphere; fourth through sixth level magic, the entire triad and thus time lore; seventh through ninth level, all but kingdom; and tenth through twelfth, the entire tree of emanations.



**Diagram 2**  
**THE LORES**  
**OF THE KABBALISTIC**  
**MAGIC SYSTEM**

Wisdom is the characteristic associated with Clerics, who use the moral triad. Their lores are healing (kindness), divination (beauty), and abjuration (law). First through third level magic accesses the one sphere; fourth through sixth, the entire triad and thus extra-dimensional lore; seventh through ninth, the intellectual and moral triads; and tenth through twelfth, the entire tree.

Intelligence is used by the elemental magic users. There is no consistency in the various mystical works as to what comprises an element, but for purposes of interfacing with other fantasy role-playing magic systems this system uses earth, air, water, fire, metal, and nature (wood). While the powers of the spells in the different elemental lores overlap considerably, they do have some unique features. Fire and metal lores are better at offensive magic, and they come from the emanation glory. At levels four through six they access law and kingdom, and seven through nine access understanding. Air and earth lore magic comes from foundation, and at levels four through six they access beauty and kingdom, and seven through nine access crown. Air lore is especially good at transportation, and Earth lore can be used to create plants, animals, and



**Diagram 1**  
**THE SPHERES**  
**OF EMANATIONS**  
**IN THE KABBALAH**

Diagram 3

## EXAMPLES OF ELEMENTAL LORE SPELLS

|            | FIRE                      | EARTH                          | AIR                         | WATER                       | METAL                            | NATURE                        |
|------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| OFFENSIVE  | fire ball<br>flame arrow  | magic missile<br>throw boulder | chlorine ball               | ice storm<br>hail           | lightning bolt<br>lightning ball | insect plague<br>blight       |
| DEFENSIVE  | wall of fire<br>fire trap | earthen wall<br>stone wall     | whirlwind                   | wall of ice                 | shield<br>iron wall              | thicket                       |
| TRANSPORT  | appear in flames          | tunnel<br>pass thru rock       | fly<br>teleport             | swim<br>walk on water       | pass thru metal                  | plant door                    |
| WEATHER    | volcano<br>fire storm     | meteor storm<br>earthquake     | wind gust<br>cyclone        | calm ocean<br>precipitation | call lightning                   | control weather               |
| MUTATION   | camp fire<br>torch        | rock to mud<br>create golem    | create air                  | create water                | brass to gold<br>iron to silver  | create food                   |
| LIGHT      | light ball<br>glow        | obscurement<br>darkness        | faerie fire<br>invisibility | mirror<br>blur              | light flash<br>continuous light  | see infra-red<br>camouflage   |
| PROTECTION | from cold                 | from gasses                    | from missiles               | from fire<br>from poison    | from weather                     | from lightning                |
| SPECIFIC   | detect heat               | create life form               | breathe any                 | purify food<br>cure disease | detect traps<br>detect metal     | heal wounds<br>animal friends |

golems. To create a golem, seventh level magic is used, and the result is a very strong but stupid automaton. They tend to follow only one word commands and often the only way to deactivate them is to destroy them. Both water and nature lores originate from victory, access kingdom and kindness at fourth through sixth, and wisdom at seventh through ninth. Since kindness is the sphere from which healing magic comes, nature lore can be used for healing, and water aids in flushing out poisons and disease. A table giving examples of elemental magic spells is given in diagram 3. The sphere kingdom controls space lore, as does the entire natural triad. As with all other types of magic, levels tenth through twelfth access the entire tree.

Now that we have looked at what types of magic there are, let us discuss what a spell actually is and does. Since most fantasy role-playing games, this one included, force characters to specialize as spell casters or non-spell casters, the use of magic must be difficult and require extensive training. The *Kabbalah* has much to say about magic, most of it concerning special names or phrases. However, the simple incanting or writing of magical words alone is not complex enough to justify the difficulty of spell use. The key can be found with one of the actual practices of the Jewish mystics, meditation. Mystics of all faiths try to alter their state of consciousness, either to achieve ecstasy, whip themselves into a frenzy, contact their deity, or be possessed by demons. This field of endeavor can be very demanding, and it is conceivable that many years, possibly decades, of

training are required to be able to reach the proper mental state, intone or transcribe the appropriate formulae, and either maintain this state until the words are written out or quickly return to this world and resume action.

The effect of the magical act is to both bring the spheres of emanation closer to the physical universe at that point in space and time, and to emphasize the proper spheres so that the desired effect occurs. Bringing the spheres closer to this world has an unusual side effect: if done in the same way enough times the spheres tend to stay locked in position for a long time. Thus, for example, if a wizard owned a tower in which he teleported from any part of the tower to another every week, over the years it would become easier and easier to cast a teleport (i.e., use a lower level spell) until finally the wizard, after casting the proper enchantments on the tower itself, could teleport at will within it. It is also possible that some dramatic event, such as a tenth level spell, or the appearance of an angel, could make the place of occurrence enchanted.

In addition to areas, eras can also be enchanted. It should be noted that while Judaism as a whole considers time to be linear, some cycles are possible. One Kabbalist wrote that each one of God's "days" is 1000 years; a week, 7000 years; and a jubilee, 50000 years. Each of the weeks is controlled by a different creative sphere (i.e., the last seven) much as an astrologer believes that the different planets control certain days. Thus it is possible to create a game world with ages and epochs, where even the rules and effects of magic change over time.

One theme often found in fantasy role-playing, but not in Judaism, is Good versus Evil or Law versus Chaos. These stem from Zoroastrianism, in which two gods and their minions fought over control of the world and Man. Judaism is completely monotheistic, so it is not even conceivable that good spell casters receive their magic from good gods and evil spell casters receive theirs from evil gods. So where does conflict come from? It comes from God's desire to give Man free will, including the power to choose good or bad. The exercise of this choice for both alternatives makes the physical universe imperfect. God reacts to this imperfection in primarily two ways: by punishing the offenders (using law), or by forgiving them (using kindness). Evil and greedy characters can profit by having God punish the relatively good via the casting of offensive spells, such as fire ball or insect plague. An archetype for this principle can be found in the origin of the Diaspora. While the Romans were the agents of the exile, they profited from it, the Jews blame their own infidelity to God for their troubles.

In order to be consistent, the principle of kindness versus law is modified by the level of the spell. Low level spells (first through third) can be used by and for/against anyone, except of course for abjuration lore spells. Spells of levels four through six cannot be used against the pure (i.e., children or the saintly), and can only be used for evil purposes successfully with the greatest care. It should be noted that evil here is defined as perversions of good, such as the creation of undead, torture, and human sacrifice. Acts



such as unnecessary or unwarranted bloodshed, charm person, or cause disease are nasty, but they are neutral and not evil. Spells of levels seven through nine cannot be used against characters who are generally good in nature, or used for purposes of nastiness (dark gray). It is the very rare spell caster who can use spells of levels ten through twelve, as these are as powerful as the angels use, almost as powerful as the emanations themselves. Evil characters will be destroyed by the first seventh level spell they cast. Neutral individuals cannot fathom

spells of tenth level and higher, and while some good characters can cast these spells, most are relieved of their corporeal bodies by a "kiss of death" and become angels. Because of this system, many characters may choose to convert as they raise levels. While the *Talmud* has much to say about converting to good, it does not discuss conversion to neutrality. From interpolation it would appear that a "re-birth," which includes the giving up of all possessions (especially charmies and undead) gained through evil and the destruction of all evil magic items and

works, would suffice. Conversion to good, of course, involves this plus repentance, demonstrated by a quest of the righting of all wrongs previously perpetrated.

The hierarchy seen by Kabbalists in the universe has already been referenced several times. This hierarchy has four stages which can also be integrated into a fantasy role-playing magic system. Beyond the top of this hierarchy, at the zeroth level, is God, who by definition is the only one able to cast 13th level spells, and lives in the *en sof*. Below this stage are the

## GLOSSARY

| TRANSLITERATION |                 | LITERAL TRANSLATION                | DEFINITION                                       | HEBREW<br>(right to left) |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Phonetic        | Pronunciation   |                                    |                                                  |                           |
| ADMH            | adomah          | earth, red                         | elemental earth                                  | אדמה                      |
| AWPhNIM         | ofanim          | wheels                             | angels in the form of wheels                     | אופנים                    |
| AIN SUPh        | en sof          | infinity                           | spiritual universe                               | אין סוף                   |
| ASh             | esh             | fire                               | elemental fire                                   | אש                        |
| AShPh           | ashuf           | magician                           | spell caster                                     | אשף                       |
| BINH            | binah           | understanding (wisdom)             | third emanation                                  | בינה                      |
| GBUR            | gevurah         | power                              | alt. fifth emanation                             | גבורה                     |
| GDULH           | gedulah         | greatness                          | alt. fourth emanation                            | גדולה                     |
| GLGUL           | gilgul          | revolving                          | transmigration of souls                          | גלגול                     |
| GN ODN          | Gan Eyden       | Garden of Eden                     | resting place for souls                          | גן עדן                    |
| DIBUQ           | dibbuk          | attachment                         | evil soul, ghost                                 | דיבוק                     |
| DIN             | din             | law                                | fifth emanation                                  | דין                       |
| DOTh            | da'at           | mixture of intelligence and wisdom | alt. first emanation                             | דעת                       |
| HUD             | hod             | glory                              | eighth emanation                                 | הוד                       |
| HYH             | hayeh           | to exist                           | root of tetragrammaton                           | היה                       |
| ChKhMH          | khokhmah        | wisdom (intelligence)              | second emanation                                 | חכמה                      |
| ChSD            | khesed          | kindness (love)                    | fourth emanation                                 | חסד                       |
| TVO             | teva            | nature                             | elemental nature                                 | טבע                       |
| YSUD            | yesud           | foundation                         | ninth emanation                                  | יסוד                      |
| KShPh           | keshef          | sorcery                            | spell                                            | כשף                       |
| KThR            | keyser          | crown                              | first emanation                                  | כתר                       |
| MZIQIM          | mazikim         | injurer                            | demon or evil spirit                             | מזיקים                    |
| MYM             | mayim           | water                              | elemental water                                  | מים                       |
| MLKhUTH         | malkhes         | kingdom                            | tenth emanation                                  | מלכות                     |
| MTsVH           | mitzvah         | commandment                        | 1/613 of a soul's mission                        | מצוה                      |
| MRKBH           | merkavah        | chariot                            | God's throne                                     | מרכבה                     |
| MThKhTh         | metokhes        | metal                              | elemental metal                                  | מתכת                      |
| NPhSh           | nefesh          | breath                             | base (animal) soul                               | נפש                       |
| NTsCH           | netzakh         | victory (endurance)                | seventh emanation                                | נצח                       |
| NShMH           | neshomah        | life, breath, spirit               | purist soul                                      | נשמה                      |
| SPhIRUTH        | sephiroth       | spheres                            | spheres of emanations                            | ספירות                    |
| OBUR            | ibur            | pregnancy                          | good soul                                        | עבור                      |
| OLM HATsILUTH   | olam ha'atzilut | world of emanations                | archetypal emanations world                      | עולם האצילות              |
| OLM HBRIAH      | olam haberiah   | world of creation                  | Divine Throne world                              | עולם הבריאה               |
| OLM HYTsIRH     | olam hayetzirah | world of formation                 | angels and souls world                           | עולם היצירה               |
| OLM HOCYH       | olam ha'asayah  | world of action                    | physical world                                   | עולם העשיה                |
| PChD            | pakhad          | fear                               | alt. fifth emanation                             | פחד                       |
| TsMTsUM         | tzimtzum        | contraction                        | first act of Creation                            | צמצום                     |
| QBLH            | kabbalah        | act of transmitting                | Jewish mysticism                                 | קבלה                      |
| RUCh            | ru'akh          | air                                | elemental air, middle soul, or disembodied demon | רוח                       |
| RChMIM          | rokhmim         | mercy                              | alt. sixth emanation                             | רחמים                     |
| RPhA            | rafa            | to heal                            | healing lore                                     | רפא                       |
| ShD             | sheyd           | violence                           | demon                                            | שד                        |
| ShKhINH         | shekhinah       | God's female presence              | alt. tenth emanation                             | שכינה                     |
| ShMYM           | shamayim        | combination of fire and water      | heaven, sky                                      | שמים                      |
| ThPhARTH        | tiferet         | beauty                             | sixth emanation                                  | תפארת                     |

four created worlds, which also represent a form of magic. At the top is *Olam Ha'atzilut* (World of Emanations) which consists of the archtypal ten emanations. It should be noted that these emanations exist in each of the worlds, but with accent on different spheres. The emanative world represents incantational magic, which involves only the spoken word. Next is *Olam Haberiah* (World of Creation), which contains the Divine Throne (also called the Divine Chariot) and represents rune magic or the written word. Third is *Olam Hayetzirah* (World of Formation), wherein reside the angels and men's souls, and represents enchanting magic, which consists of taking special items and investing them with magical powers. Last is *Olam Ha'asiyah* (World of Activity), the name of the physical universe, which represents alchemical magic, a field of magic which breaks down physical items into their enchanted elements, and sometimes builds them into a different physical item.

Beings and magic spell levels also fit into the four-fold hierarchy. The first stage of created beings are the *m'lakhim* (angels), who are the messengers and servants of God. They have no free will, and while they are often viewed by Man as good (such as Rafael, the angel of healing) or evil (as in

Satan, the angel who reminds God of all of Man's faults), they merely do what God tells them. As mentioned before, the angels cast spells as high as levels ten through twelve. Under the angels is Man, who has the good inclinations the angels have, and the evil inclinations animals have. Men can cast spells in the seventh through ninth level range, but rarely higher. Men are basically the only creatures with souls. The soul's mission is to fulfill all 613 *mitzvos* or commandments in the *Bible*, after which it remains in God's presence. If it does not complete its mission, it returns to the World of Formation and then transmigrates to another body (performs *gilgul*) and is given yet another chance. If the soul is very close to completion, it may reincarnate within an animal's body, or perform *ibur*, whereby it takes possession of the body of another human being who is in a position to fulfill the commandment the soul needs. On the other hand, a soul which has proved itself worthless is exiled and floats around in an abyss until the Messianic Age. Sometimes, however, they manage to take possession of another's body, in which case they are called *dibbuk*, and have to be exorcized.

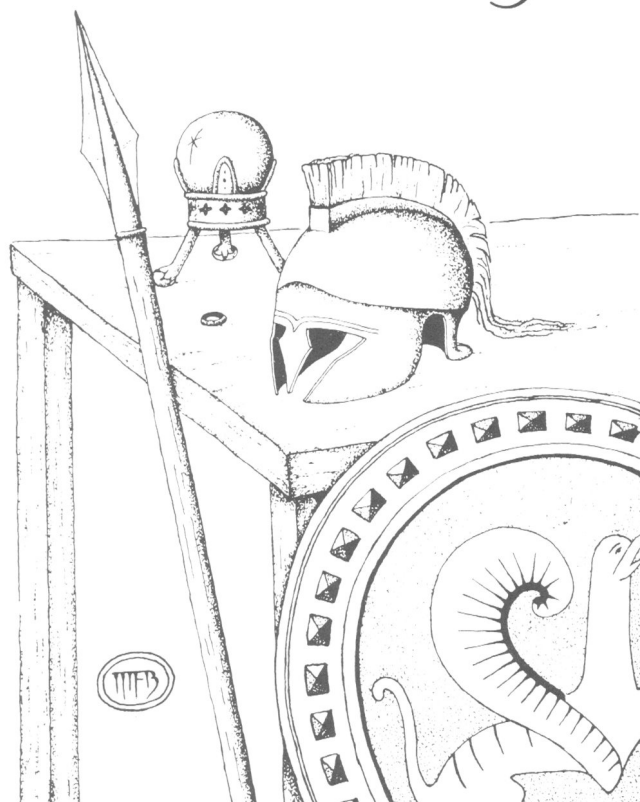
Next lowest in the creature hierarchy are the *khayes* (animals), who are not sentient. In a world where magic

exists, however, it makes sense that certain creatures would evolve highly specialized spells which they would cast, such as illusion or fire ball. The highest level of spell an animal could cast would be sixth level.

The lowest creatures are the *sheydim* (demons). They are also called *mazikim* (destructive ones), and are the sinister equivalent of Man. Whereas Man is basically good with tendencies towards evil, the demons are evil with tendencies towards good. Unlike the demons of certain mythos, the *sheydim* have souls, are generally corporeal, and can only cast spells of level one through three. There are exceptions, however; the most famous of which is Ashmodai (Asmodeus in Latin), who converted to Judaism and is believed to have perfect foresight. Demons tend to inhabit ruins and sparsely populated areas, and while they are often immune to physical attacks, low level enchantments can drive them away.

This summary of Kabbalistic principles represents the framework of a fantasy role-playing magic system. There are a myriad of ways this framework can be filled in, which leaves room for a gamemaster's personal preferences. But no matter how it is filled in, even if it is merged with another system, it should yield an understandable, consistent magic system. □

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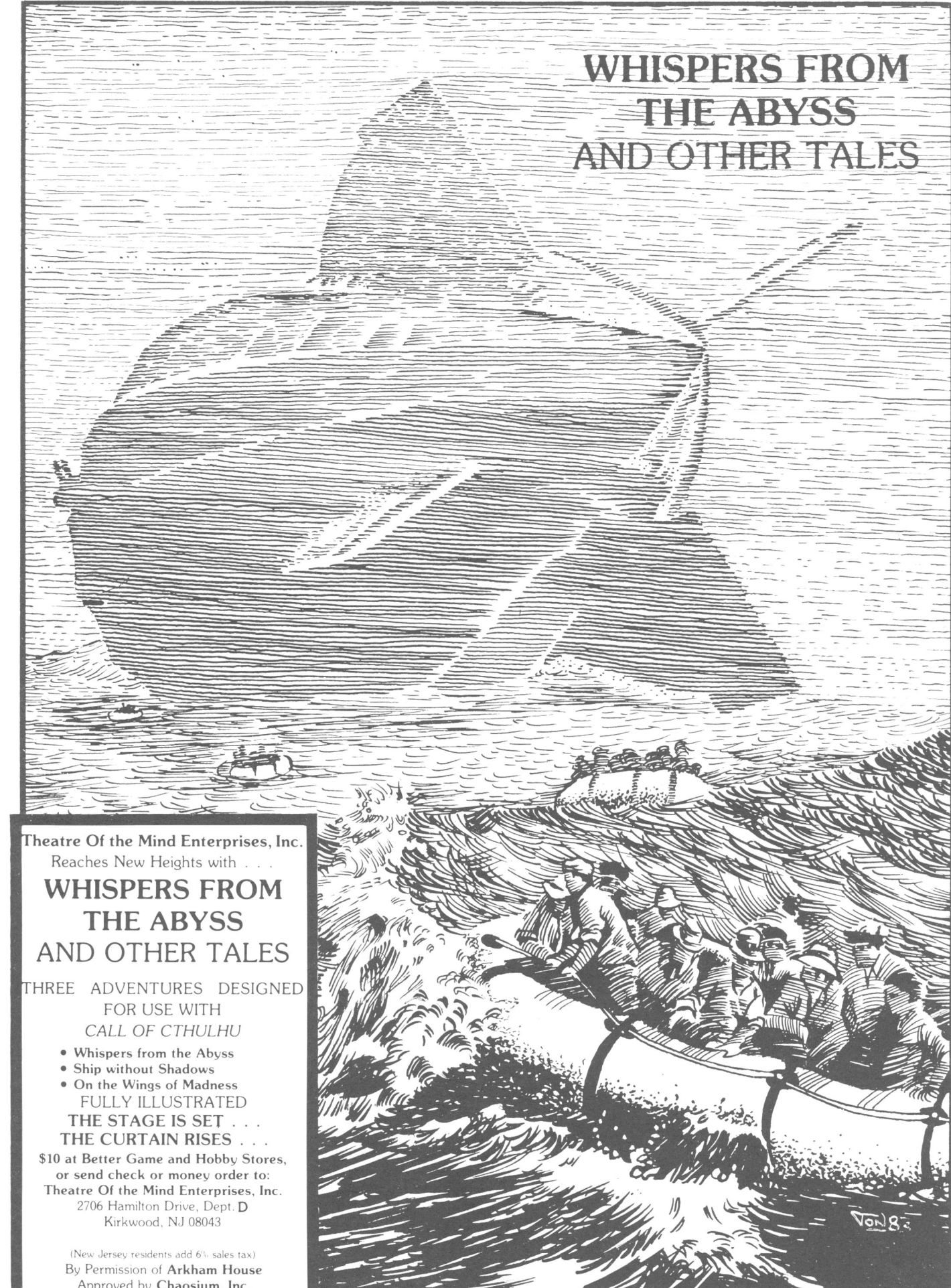
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# RQ3 Preview

# RuneQuest<sup>®</sup>

## Fantasy Roleplaying Adventure

By Greg Stafford

The Avalon Hill edition of Chaosium's *RuneQuest*, commonly called *RQ3*, is coming along at a satisfactory pace. We are confident that it will appear on time—early March '84. We are further confident that it will be the blockbuster we predict.

Everyone wants to know what we are doing different. Some of the organizational changes were listed earlier in *DW 30*.

This article will explain the details of some changes which we are making. They fall into several types—they

are: refinements to old rules, clarifications of previous concepts, and the addition of new materials.

### REFINEMENTS

#### Examples from the Melee Rules

Many of the rules which we are introducing are refinements of previous concepts. For instance, everyone likes the way characters parry, with either shield or weapon. But we were dissatisfied with some of the finer applications of the rule, especially how they were broken or blocked damage. After considerable research and playtesting we arrived at the following rule:

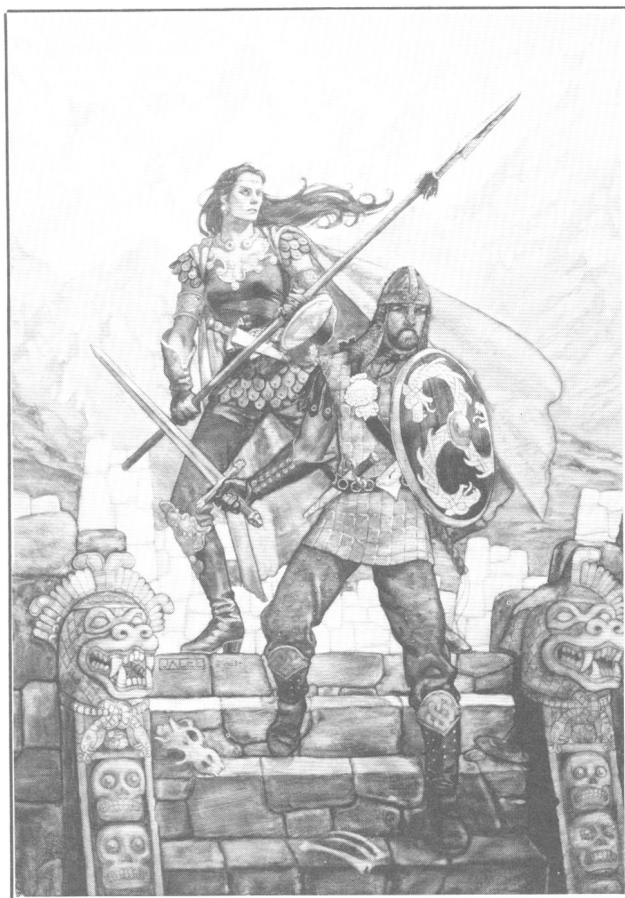
#### Damage to Parrying Weapons

Normally, a successful parry blocks damage points equal to the parrying weapon's armor points. Additional damage points go on to the body of the parrier, doing normal damage. The parrying weapon also loses 1 armor point, simulating the damage it took blocking the overwhelming blow. If the parry was a special roll, the weapon takes no damage in any case, and a critical roll with the parry means that no damage got through, even if the attack was a critical success.

When I introduced new players to *RQ* they were occasionally attacked by heavy cavalry, bearing down with lowered lances and their mount's damage bonus. The players almost always asked, "Can't I just hold out my spear and hide behind my shield?" Not in the old rules—but now:

#### Set Spear Versus Charge

The damage bonus from the charging animal can work against the charging entity, too. Long Spears can be braced against the ground (called "setting" the spear) and used to meet a charging animal. If it hits the animal, the damage done is the weapon's plus the damage bonus of the animal. Again, strike rank is effectively zero, plus the strike ranks for the animal's movement. The Spear user cannot parry or





Dodge while using this brace.

A Pike will always strike before a Lance, but any other Spear will strike after a Lance.

*EXAMPLE: The second guardsman drops back when Churchuk charges his partner and sets his Pike. On strike rank 3 of the same round, he hits Churchuk's horse in the forequarters with the Pike. The horse takes 1D10+1 from the Pike, and 3D6 from its own damage bonus. It goes down, but Churchuk lands safely. Nikolos, meanwhile, has prepared a Smother spell, and shortly kills the guard.*

## CLARIFICATIONS

### Examples from the Magic Rules

The magic system of *RQ* has also often received comment. I always offered some magical activities which were absent from other games. Important among these activities was the agency of spirits.

Yet I was never quite content with the way certain spirit functions worked. The cult of Daka Fal did not help matters any. I am glad that we have had this chance to re-clarify matters. For instance, in *RQ3* there are two ways which spirits may affect a character through possession:

### Possession

Possession is a state of existence where a spiritual being inhabits the body of another being. There are two types of possession:

**Dominant Possession.** The identity (INT and POW) of the original inhabitant is suppressed by the possessor, imprisoned beyond the reach of the normal world. The possessor controls the body.

Examples of this include demonic possession, insanity, the Bad Man of the Shamanic initiation, ecstatic forms of worship, and others.

When viewed with Second Sight, etc., the aura of the possessed creature will be in the shape of the possessor's natural aura. However, the entrapped soul will be visible as an ugly smudge within the aura of the possessor.

Dominant possession may occur only when a creature's magic points are reduced to zero during spirit combat.

**Covert Possession.** The possessing creature exerts no influence upon the actions or consciousness of the natural owner of the body, but shares the physical form.

No one ever thought that the religions of *RQ* were ill-defined. Indeed, many people have commented that the Rune-spell magic system of *RQ2* was an advanced clerical system.

That clarity of magic still exists in *RQ3*, but several problems are addressed which were glossed over in *RQ2*. For instance, we have at last defined the nature of temples, in every way:

### Temple Sizes

The size of the congregation determines the nature of the temple. Simply put, larger temples offer greater benefits.

Temple size is based on units of approximately

100 Initiates. The sizes overlap on their edges, and the GM must decide whether a temple with exactly 400 Initiates, for instance, is small or medium. The sizes are:

**0. Site (0-125 Initiates):** When fewer than this number of Initiates regularly worship at a holy site it has no additional powers. The energy flow is simply too weak to adorn it with magic. It will not usually support a full-time priest, and does not Detect as magical by itself (though some objects therein may, of course).

**1. Shrine (75-225 Initiates):** Every village has its local shrine. It might be to some obscure sprite or to some great deity. The priest for this holy place is commonly indistinguishable from the local peasants.

At a shrine only one Divine spell is available for both learning and for renewing. For greater gods this is always a cult specialty spell.

**2. Small/Minor Temple (200-425 Initiates):** This is the most common size of temple, found in small cities and in large towns. They will have a staff of priests, servants, and hangers on. This is the largest size possible for minor deities.

All cult special spells are available through this temple, for both learning and defense.

**3. Medium Temple (400-800 Initiates):** This size temple will not be found in a city smaller than 2500 people, and even then only when everyone worships the same great deity. This is the largest possible size temple for lesser deities.

In a temple this size all cult specialty spells are available, and all the common spells which the cult has as well.

**4. Large Temples (750-1600 Initiates):** These sites will only appear in major urban centers with 10,000 or more inhabitants. They house only major gods.

Spells available at these sites include all cult specialty spells, all common spells which are available to the cult, and all spells granted by associate cults.

**5. Great Temples (1601+ Initiates):** Only major urban centers will have temples of this size. They include subtemples to associated deities of the pantheon, making them in actuality a temple to many different deities.

Initiates and priests have access to all cult specialty, standard, and associated spells. The temple defense also has access to all the spells of all the cults worshipped within.

## NEW MATERIALS

### Taken from Magic and Creature Rules

And what of sorcery? Not all magic is dependant upon the gods, as the old *RQ* Rune spells (now called divine magic) had it, nor upon such petty influences as the old battle magic spells (now called spirit magic). What of the feats of wizards, defying god and man alike to brave the mystical powers?

*RQ3* addresses the matter of sorcery squarely. It is long in the making and in-house testing, and presents a completely new magic system for *RQ* players. It is impossible to explain its aspects in an article like this, but to whet your appetite we present the requirements to become a Sorcerer:

## Apprentice

In becoming an Apprentice the student has decided to devote more of his time and attention to the study of sorcerous principles and the understanding of the world necessary for the casting of complex spells. He begins learning more of the sorcery skills so that he will be able to vary the different qualities of his spells.

The Apprentice is a formal assistant to the Sorcerer. In exchange for regular service from the Apprentice, the Sorcerer will reveal basic secrets of the world and the spell-manipulating skills.

**Acceptance Requirements.** Applicants must meet nine requirements if they are to be accepted as an Apprentice to the Sorcerer:

### Requirements to Become an Apprentice

- ☐ Be a student for at least a year,
- ☐ have a magic bonus of 10% or better,
- ☐ know Read Own Language at 25% or better,
- ☐ know World Lore at 25% or better,
- ☐ know Intensity at 25% or better,
- ☐ cast all Divine spells,
- ☐ make a successful roll of POWx3%,
- ☐ and then sacrifice of 1 POW point to either the familiar or the master in an Apprentice-bonding ritual.

If the applicant meets these requirements then he has been accepted as an Apprentice by the Sorcerer. The POW expended is still lost if the POWx3% roll is failed. An applicant to apprenticeship can attempt his POWx3% roll once per year.

Finally, many people have complained that the *RQ* game was too closely bound to the world of Glorantha to make it easily playable in other settings. The new rules erase that problem, and they also present creatures ready to play from other realms as well. As an example, here are the stats for a new type of *RQ* creature, called an orc:

### Orc (*Orcanthropus piltdowni*)

Orcs are a swarthy, long-armed, bow-legged species of mountain-dwelling humanoids. Orcs are nocturnal and weaker races are Demoralized in daylight. Orcs generally live in rough country; mountains and poor terrain.

Orcs are a degenerate form of elf, and so have a peculiar relationship with them. Orcs and elves hate each other, and feel a sort of racial obligation to battle the other.

There are several different varieties of orcs, differing in size, strength, and resistance to daylight. The weaker races breed faster than the stronger ones, and often are, in fact, slaves of stronger orcs. Even the largest orcs are smaller than a large human, though they may be much stronger. Innate orcish cultural traits include slavery and cannibalism.

The orc stats given below are for an intermediate race of orcs. Smaller races have a STR of 3D6 and SIZ of 2D6 while larger ones have a STR of 5D6, CON of 3D6+3, and SIZ of 2D6+4. Other characteristics are identical in all races.

## Creating an Orc

### Roll 1D100

|       |               |
|-------|---------------|
| 01-02 | Crafter       |
| 03-70 | Hunter/Raider |
| 71-72 | Chieftain     |
| 73    | Sorcerer      |
| 74-00 | Warrior       |

**NOTE:** Orcish occupations give the same skills as their human Barbarian or Civilized equivalents. "Hunter/Raider" is the equivalent of Barbarian Hunter. "Chieftain" is the equivalent of Barbarian Noble. "Sorcerer" gives the skills of a Civilized Sorcerer.

Any orc receiving the Ride skill is considered to have Ride Wolf.

All orcs replace any Fist Attack skill received with an equivalent amount of Bow Attack.

### Characteristics Average

|     |       |       |         |    |
|-----|-------|-------|---------|----|
| STR | 4D6   | 14    | Move    | 3  |
| CON | 3D6   | 10-11 | Hit Pts | 10 |
| SIZ | 2D6+2 | 9     | Fatigue | 25 |
| INT | 3D6   | 10-11 |         |    |
| POW | 2D6+3 | 10    |         |    |
| DEX | 4D6   | 14    |         |    |
| APP | 2D6   | 7     |         |    |

| Weapon        | SR  | Attack | Damage | Parry | Pts |
|---------------|-----|--------|--------|-------|-----|
| Scimitar      | 8   | 25+7%  | 1D6+2  | 25+7% | 10  |
| Composite Bow | 3/9 | 25+7%  | 1D8+1  | —     | 6   |
| Spear         | 8   | 25+7%  | 1D8+1  | 25+7% | 8   |
| Medium Shield | 9   | 05+7%  | 1D6    | 25+7% | 12  |
| Knife         | 9   | 30+7%  | 1D4+2  | 30+7% | 6   |

**BASE SKILLS** (otherwise identical to humans: Conceal 15%, Hide 20%, Sneak 20%, Track 20%.

**ARMOR:** None natural. Usually wear at least ring-mail and open helm (4 pts).

**MAGIC:** Because of the convoluted and treacherous orcish social system, the few orcs that manage to learn powerful magic do not teach much to their fellows. Those orcs that use magic generally stick to sorcery.

### Orc Hit Location Table

| Area      | Melee<br>D20 | Missile<br>D20 | Points |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|--------|
| Right Leg | 01-04        | 01-03          | 4/4    |
| Left Leg  | 05-08        | 04-06          | 4/4    |
| Abdomen   | 09-11        | 07-10          | 4/4    |
| Chest     | 12           | 11-15          | 4/5    |
| Right Arm | 13-15        | 16-17          | 4/3    |
| Left Arm  | 16-18        | 18-19          | 4/3    |
| Head      | 19-20        | 20             | 4/4    |

## FINAL WORD

These are only a few of the many rules which we are adding to *RQ* to increase its universality and playability. It looks hard—certainly formidable. But as players will agree, it is simple to play and easy to understand once you grasp the few simple rules which underlie the whole system. Such accoutrements as the rules above are glitter and gold, enhancements to color the great splendor of the basic game. □



# Game Cons

Game conventions are the best place to meet new gamers. Organizers should send details of the convention at least six months prior to the event for announcement in this column.

*If you wish to see your convention announced in Different Worlds, send us the name of the event, dates, location, who to contact, number of attendees expected, and the number of attendees you had last year. There is no charge for this service, but please, game cons only.*

**Crusader Con III** January 13-15, 1984  
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**DunDraCon VIII** February 17-20, 1984  
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**GOLD-CON II** March 3-4, 1984  
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**CAPCON '84** April 6-8, 1984  
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6119 E Main St (Suite 202)  
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Be Ye Witch, or Be Ye Magistrate, it makes no difference. All are suspect

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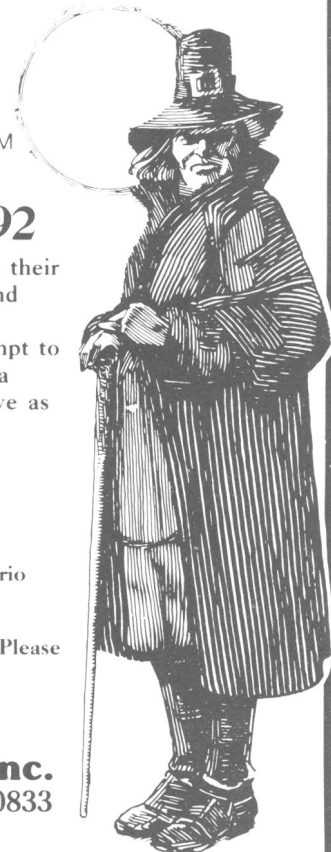
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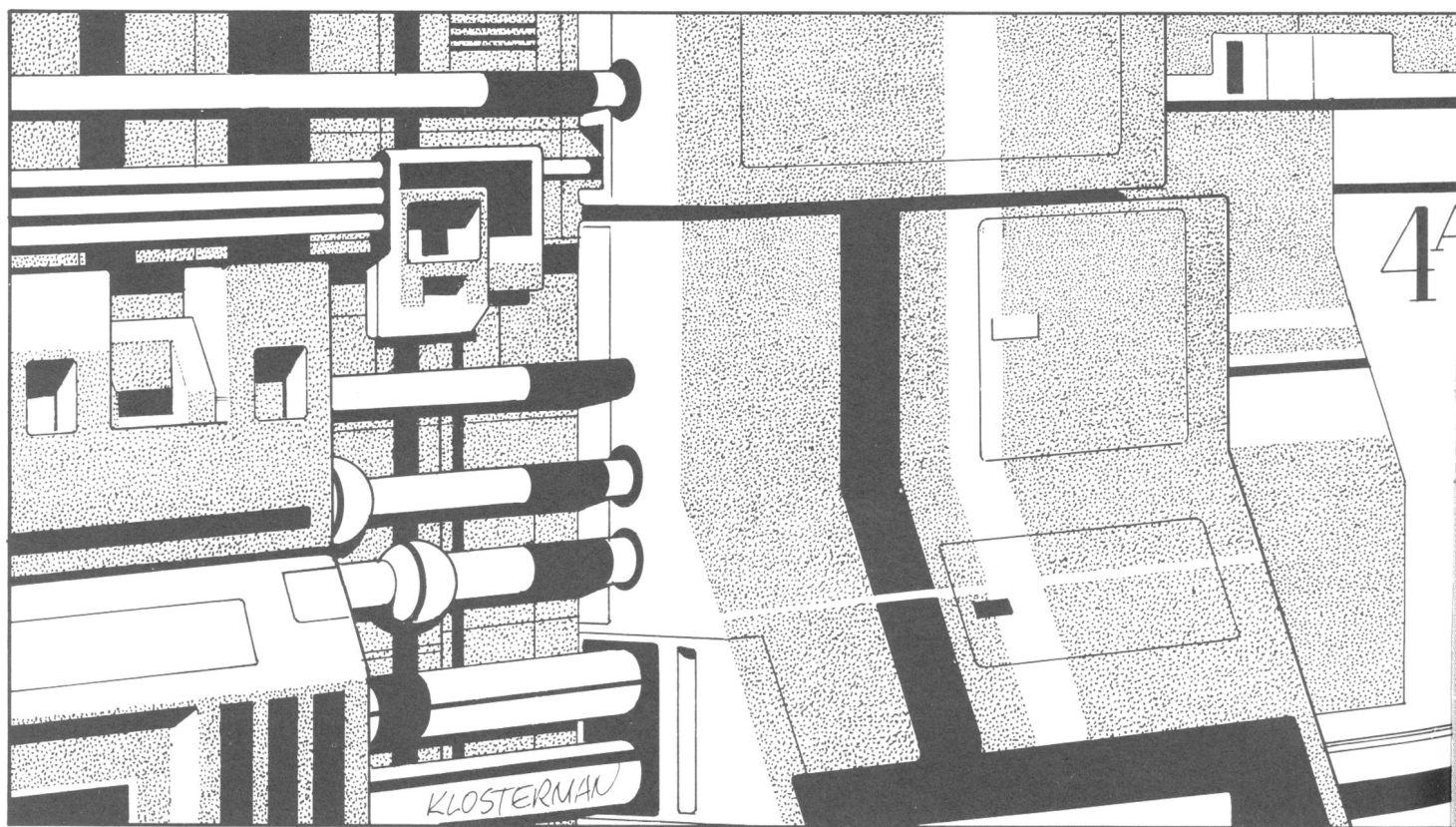
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# Make Love, Not War

## Sex and Romance in TRAVELLER

By Terrence McInnes

*A fiancée held captive by a religious cult . . . another missing and possibly dead on a survey mission to a plague planet . . . These are just two incidents mentioned in Traveller literature where human love and our race's sex drive have played a role in motivating an adventure.*

Since sex and romance are powerful motives behind human actions—as powerful, if not more so, than greed or revenge—these should not be left out of *Traveller* adventures and can be easily introduced through interaction with non-player characters, patrons, or the recently developed category of enhanced non-player characters such as Princess Glorinna of *Journal* fame.

Before we get into the emotional side of sex and romance, we must deal with the physical differences between the genders and how these would be reflected in the *Traveller* character generation system. Aside from the obvious external differences in sex characteristics, the in-

troduction of gender differentiation would appear in two ways.

First, the upper body strength of human females tends to be less than that of human males. (The author assumes this to be valid for all branches of humanity—however, there could be variations among a few minor human races.) Therefore, when generating a female character or non-player character, subtract 2 from the strength roll unless the roll is a 3 or less.

Second, the dexterity of human females is generally higher than that of males. Therefore add 2 to the dexterity roll when generating a human female character.

Note: If a female human player-character is being generated, she should be played by a female role-player in order to add the right touch of personality to the game. Female non-player characters can be controlled by the game-master as with other characters.





**SPECIAL DIFFERENT WORLDS MODULE**

# **“Threat of the NIGHTHAUNT”**

**A Superhero Adventure for  
SUPERWORLD and  
CHAMPIONS**



**By Jon Mattson**

**Stats by Steve Perrin**

**Edited by Tadashi Ehara and Sandy Petersen**

*Illustrated by Alan Okamoto*

To remove this module, simply bend the center staples up with a knife or some other flat implement, and pull out the module. Be sure to bend the staples back. We recommend the module be kept in the *Superworld* or *Champions* game box.



This adventure is designed for a group of three or four superheroes of average power. Although the scenario is set up as a series of "scenes" for convenient reference, the gamemaster should feel free to rearrange the sequence to suit the situation.

## PROLOGUE

The city streets seem curiously tense as the superheroes go out on patrol. Local police officers seem to be searching for something or someone and are ignoring less important crimes. Word on the street is that "the cops are lookin' for some freaked-out bat dude." Apparently, a dangerous criminal escaped several days ago from a mental institution and is yet to be caught.

The superheroes will suddenly hear sirens and see police cars speeding down the street. If they follow the cars, they will come to a large building, which they may recognize as a scientific research institution (if they do not follow the cars, go to scene one).

Outside the building is a large armored van with one of its sides smashed in. According to its driver, the van was delivering radioactive nuclear material to the research base and had just arrived at the institute when a swarm of bat-like creatures suddenly attacked the van, used explosives to break into it, and made off with a crate of radioactive material.

The guards managed to shoot down one of the creatures—its corpse lies on the ground next to the van. As the heroes approach it, it begins to smoke and burns into a crisp pile of ash. Left intact is the creature's utility belt holding a small grenade and a smoke bomb. A careful search of the belt (or a successful Spot Hidden roll) will also reveal a tiny leaf snagged on one of the belt's hooks. If the leaf's origin is traced (the institute is a good place to do this), the heroes will discover that it came from a rare plant found only on certain islands in the north Pacific, in the area of 150 to 160 degrees west longitude by 40 to 45 degrees north latitude.

Clues are starting to appear. . . .

## SCENE ONE

Later that evening, chaos breaks loose. On radio, television, crime-computer, and other media sources is a message from a super-criminal:

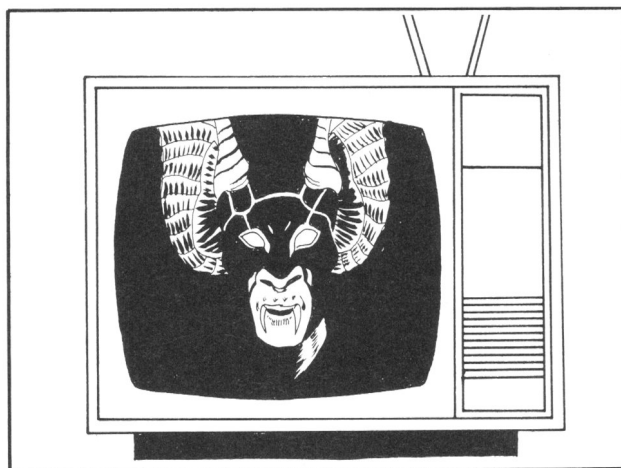
*"People of the world, hear me now. I am Nighthaunt, future ruler and beneficent leader of this planet. I speak to you now of a choice: submit to the power of the One True Faith or live in darkness forever! To show that I have the might to act, look to the sky and prepare yourselves."*

The sky suddenly turns black as if the sun, moon, and the stars suddenly disappeared (as per superpower Darkness). This lasts for ten minutes when the streets become full of chaos, police sirens blaring everywhere—the superheroes may have their hands full stopping looting and helping out with crowd control during this period.

Once the evening light returns, Nighthaunt's message continues:

*"The choice confronts you. Submit to the faith of supernaturalism as your sole religion and to me as its one true priest, or suffer the consequences of folly. You have one day to pay me fitting tribute as a sign of good faith. This tribute is to be an offering of ten billion dollars in gold, a sizable supply of fissionable material, and a division of crack troops, enough for your leader to have the wealth*

*and power befitting him. You have 24 hours before I blot out the sun finally and irrevocably. If you have not submitted to my leadership by that time, the blame rests upon your shoulders. Hear and obey."*



The superheroes are soon contacted by government agents and requested to meet with an important government official: the President of the U.S.A.

## SCENE TWO

The superheroes are taken to a top-secret government conference room. There, the president explains the situation to the heroes, replaying Nighthaunt's message for the benefit of those who may have missed the original broadcast.

The president's science aides believe that Nighthaunt has created a giant-sized version of his Light Dampening Field generator. They further believe that it is entirely possible for Nighthaunt to have created a field with an earth-blanketing, permanent effect.

The Army was able to triangulate on Nighthaunt's radio message. Evidently it was transmitted from somewhere in the north Pacific Ocean. It is up to the heroes to find the villain and prevent him from carrying out his dire deed. The president stresses that they have less than 24





hours left. The heroes will be provided with a long-range high-speed helicopter, and a pilot if necessary.

If the heroes succeed, the president hints that a grateful government may be induced to build an official "super-base" for the heroes.

### SCENE THREE: Greyygrove Island (Map A)

With any luck and competence, the heroes should eventually arrive on Greyygrove Island—Nighthaunt's lair. It is the only island in the area both large enough for a base and possessing the aforementioned leaves. The island is mostly covered with such trees, broken by patches of rocky terrain. A small lake sits at the northeast part of the island and a large crater from an extinct volcano is to the southwest. There are paths leading to Nighthaunt's installation, as noted on the map.

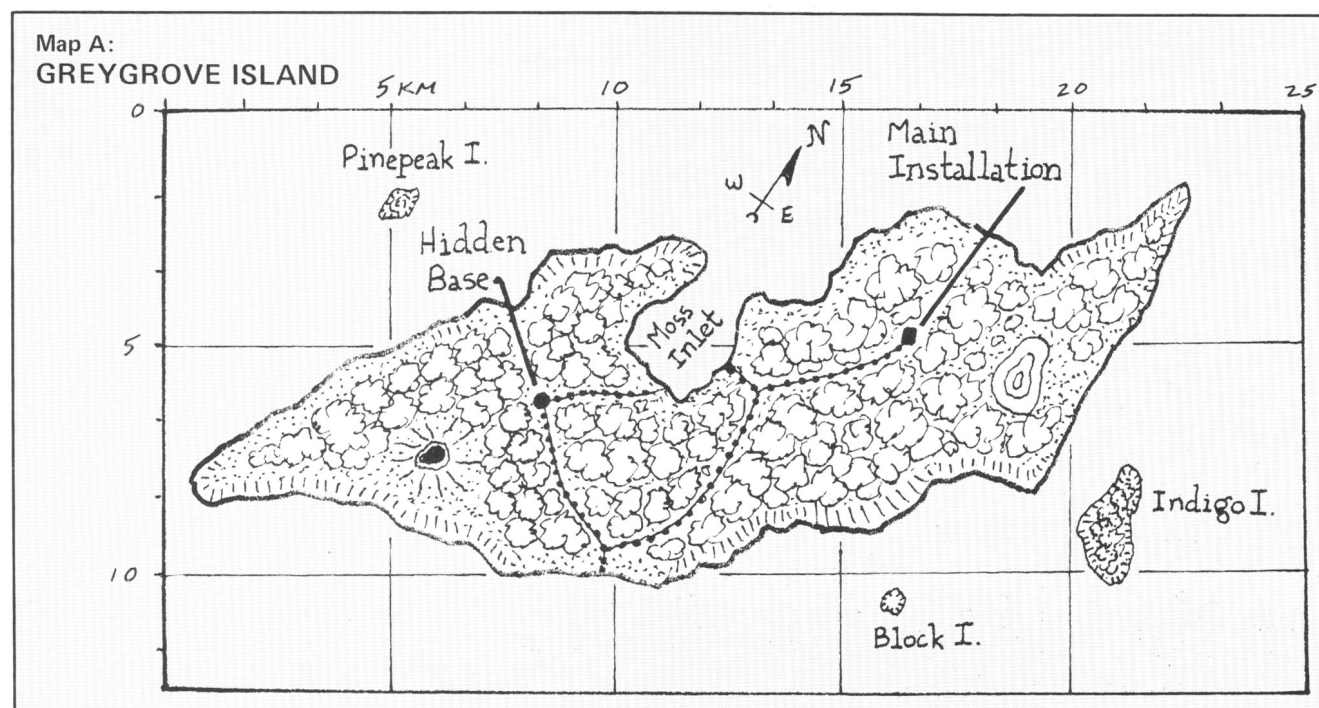
Encounters should be checked for per hour on the island. There is a 30% chance for an encounter on the paths and a 15% chance elsewhere. Roll 1D100 if an encounter takes place. If the result is 01-85, the heroes meet 1D6 of Nighthaunt's men. A roll of 86-00 indicates that 1D3 nighthaunts are encountered. Whatever the encounter, one minion will always flee (to warn Nighthaunt) while the others attack and delay the intruders.

### SCENE FOUR: Main Installation (Map B)

Nighthaunt built a rather elaborate base on the island prior to his stay at the mental institution. Now he has gathered a sizable band of human and nighthaunt followers. There are presently eight nighthaunts scattered around the base. There are twelve guards, as well as some special operatives described later. Each guard has a score of 10 in each attribute and is armed with a rifle (40% attack/3D6 damage—6D6 damage if the bullet impales).

Guards attack intruders on sight, shooting to kill unless an easy and obvious capture is possible. If multiple guards are met, one will warn Nighthaunt of the intrusion (via intercom or in person) while the others battle.

If Nighthaunt is ever warned about an invasion, he will sound a general alert, all the guards will converge on the



intruders, and all doors will lock automatically. Nighthaunt will stay in the communications center unless directly threatened.

If Nighthaunt feels his forces are losing the fight, he will flee rather than stick around and get captured.

The installation has intercoms on the corridor walls every fifty feet, as well as inside every room. Hidden cameras are linked to the communications center—there is a 50% chance that any group entering the installation will be spotted unless appropriate counter-measures are taken.

#### Room Key:

- 1. Guardpost:** A single guard stands watch.
- 2. Parking lot:** Three motorized carts are parked here with three guards. Guards will either attempt to ram intruders with the carts or use them for cover. The carts are SIZ 25 with resistance of 10 and can move 20 meters per action rank in combat.
- 3. Tool room:** This room contains tools, electrical equipment, radio parts, and similar objects. Two guards are here, and one of the scientists from room 4 is also present.
- 4. Communications center:** There is a large dish antenna on the roof of this room. The room contains several large panels controlling the communications complex (allowing world-wide transmission), the computer network, and the Light Dampening Field generator. If these controls are destroyed, the generator will be put out of commission—there is also a 50% chance that a roaring fire will start.

The panels are usually manned by five scientists. Nighthaunt and two bodyguards will also be present, if he has been warned of intruders. Otherwise, the master villain is in room 6.

#### Scientists:

##### STR CONSIZ INT POWDEXCHA Weapon

|   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |                        |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------------------------|
| 1 | 10 | 14 | 9  | 14 | 10 | 8  | 10 | None (50% Fist; 1D3)   |
| 2 | 16 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 8  | 9  | 9  | 50% light pistol; 1D6  |
| 3 | 8  | 10 | 8  | 16 | 14 | 16 | 12 | None (50% Fist; 1D3)   |
| 4 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 17 | 12 | 12 | 14 | 60% hvy pistol; 1D10+6 |
| 5 | 6  | 8  | 8  | 16 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 55% light pistol; 1D6  |

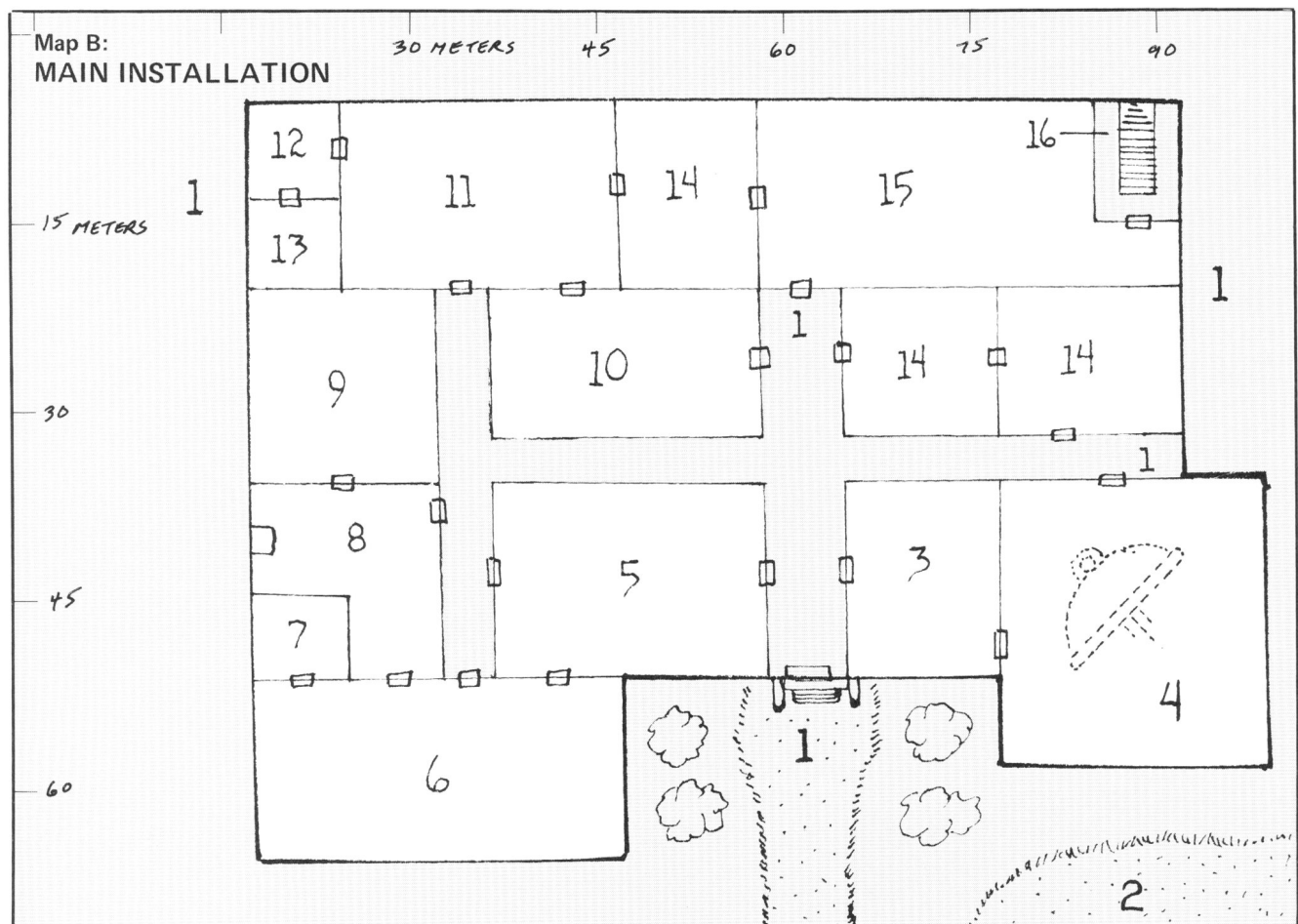
**5. Machine shop:** This room contains spare parts for the golf cart-cars, tools, a hydraulic lift, and so on. There are three mechanics armed only with crowbars, wrenches, and the like (50% attack/1D8+2 damage). They have a CON of 12, an INT of 8, and all other attributes are 10.

**6. Laboratory:** This is Nighthaunt's personal lab. If the heroes have not been detected, he will be in this room. Otherwise, he will be in room 4. There will be four nighthaunts here if Nighthaunt himself is present. Otherwise, only two will be present. The lab contains various pieces of scientific equipment, including parts for smaller Light Dampening Field generators.

**7. Supply room:** This room contains various chemicals, spare parts for devices, and so on. Two nighthaunts will be here.

**8. Bedroom:** Nighthaunt's personal chamber is sparsely furnished, with a bed, a desk, and a chair. There is a vault against the west wall containing \$75,000 in various types of currency. Two nighthaunts guard this room.

**9. Study:** Nighthaunt's library/living room/lounging area contains two nighthaunts, several bookshelves, a small table, two chairs, and a desk with two locked drawers. One drawer contains a map showing the island's location





and the other contains blueprints of the Light Dampening Field generator.

**10. Recreation area:** This recreation facility (for the humans on base) contains books, a long table, chairs, weight-lifting equipment, a ping-pong table, and more. 1D6+1 guards are present at all times.

**11. Galley/mess:** This room contains three long tables and many chairs. During mealtimes, 1D6+1 guards are here; otherwise, it is empty.

**12. Kitchen:** This room contains an oven, a refrigerator, countertops, cooking utensils, and various appliances. The cook will be here. He has 13 hit points, with a SIZ of 16. All other attributes are 10 (60% Fist/1D3+1D6 damage, 55% cleaver/1D6+1D6 damage).

**13. Food storage:** This room stores various dry and canned foods.

**14. Guard barracks:** Each of these rooms contains accommodations (beds, charis, and gewgaws) for four people. One guard is usually present.

**15. Helicopter maintenance:** This room contains one half-built helicopter, plus lots of spare parts and repair equipment. There are two mechanics here (identical to those in room 5). This room's roof can be opened from the communications center to allow helicopters to land and take off.

**16. Staircase:** These stairs lead to the roof so workmen can get to the dish antenna and to helicopters parked there—there are currently two chopper here. Nighthaunt will head for one of these helicopters if he feels his side is losing.

## SCENE FIVE: The Hidden Base (Map C)

If the heroes get through the defenses to challenge Nighthaunt himself, he will flee to this base, probably flying via helicopter.

The hidden base appears to be a slightly cleared area with a hill. Hidden in the hill is a ten-foot deep cave with a door to an elevator leading to the hidden base 30 feet underground. There are two traps that will require successful Spot Hidden rolls to notice and successful Fine Manipulation rolls to deactivate.

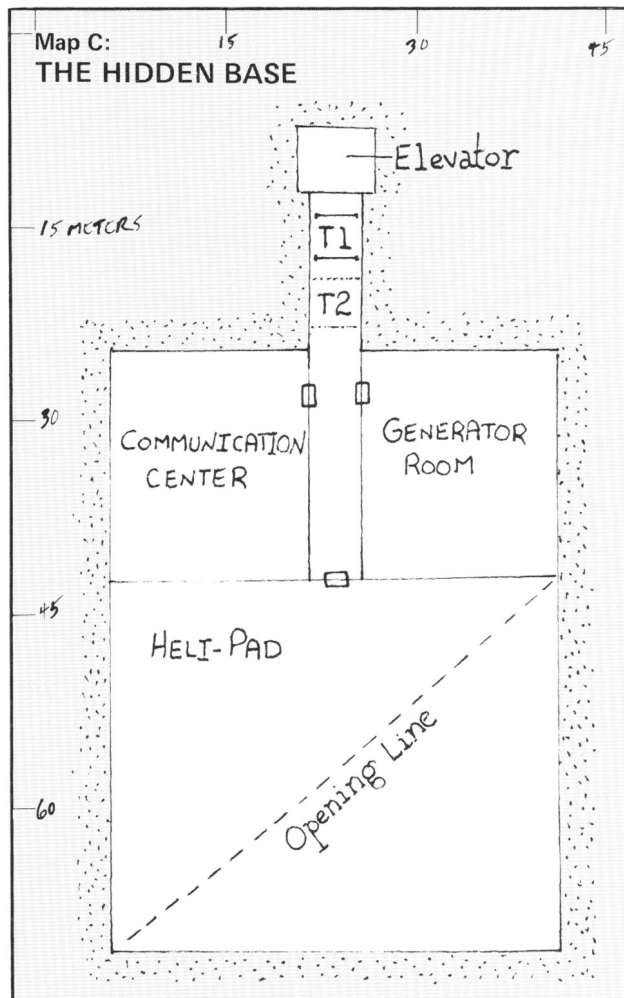
**T1:** Anyone standing on this pit trap will drop six meters, when the top will close again. The trap door has a resistance of 20 and segment SIZ of 20.

**T2:** Anyone stepping here will be trapped by walls dropping from the ceiling. Deadly gas of potency 18 then pours in. The CON roll to resist the gas' effect must be made very minute. The walls rise back to the ceiling automatically after 3 minutes. The walls have a resistance of 20 and segment SIZ of 40.

Nighthaunt's minions do not know of this secret base. If this hideyhole is invaded by the heroes, he will inform them via the PA system that he has started the five-minute countdown to set off an atom bomb hidden beneath the communications center in the main installation. The bomb will obliterate the island and everyone on it, including himself.

### Room Key:

**Generator room:** This room contains the generator that supplies electricity to Nighthaunt's devices. If this is destroyed, both bases will be left powerless.



**Mini-communications center:** This room contains several panels monitoring the island as well as world communications. One of the panels contains the atom bomb trigger mechanism.

**Underground helipad:** There is a large jet-helicopter (helicopter with jet-assist) in this room and not much else. Three nighthaunts are also present—independent of those at the main base. The roof of this room can be opened from inside or from the mini-com center. It will take two melee rounds for the roof to open enough to allow Nighthaunt to escape with the super-chopper (before the bomb goes off).

## EPILOGUE

If the superheroes fail in their mission and the Light Dampening Field generator blacks out the sky, they will have find some way to return the atmosphere back to normal. If they fail to stop the atom bomb from exploding—assuming they survive—they will have to quickly try to prevent subsequent quakes and tidal waves from causing massive damage to the coasts of both North America and Japan by either diverting the shock or dampening its effects. The gamemaster should allow any contrived plan by the heroes a chance to work no matter how implausible it may be.

But what of Nighthaunt? If on the island when the bomb exploded did he really die? If captured, he will be taken to a top-security mental institute—from which he may yet escape again. Nighthaunt may yet strike again to seek revenge on those who foiled his evil plot! □

## NIGHTHAUNT (William Wolfe: scientist)



World-renowned physicist Dr. William Wolfe's interests extended into the metaphysical. Determined to prove that supernatural powers are actually a form of psionic ability derived from certain abnormal states of mind, Wolfe at-

tempted to reach such states himself, using hypnosis, drugs, and similar methods. Eventually, he succeeded in gaining several unusual abilities; however, the techniques he used transformed him into something not quite human. Ironically, his abilities proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that his theories were wrong, for the bat-like night-haunts he is able to summon to his aid are certainly supernatural in origin. Wolfe, now going by the alias of Night-haunt, is somewhat unbalanced but still very intelligent (as proven by his invention of the Light Dampening Field generator which can create total darkness even in the most brightly lit spots). He is determined to use his powers to conquer the world and bring to it a bizarre theocracy under his leadership. It is unknown as to whether or not the self-induced malady afflicting him can be cured—further research into this area is recommended.

### NIGHTHAUNT

STR 15  
CON 18+10=28  
SIZ 12  
INT 20 Idea roll: 95%  
POW 18 Luck roll: 57%  
DEX 18+ 3=21 Agility roll: 95%  
APP 12- 4= 8

Characteristics 113  
Disadvantages 132  
Handicaps 59  
Experience 25  
Used 329  
Available 0

MOVE (m/AR): Run 8.

ACTION RANKS: 21/11/1.

#### SUPERPOWERS

|                                             | Level | Energy | Hero Pts |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|--------|----------|
| Super Characteristics: CON/DEX              | 13    | —      | 13       |
| Extra Hit Points: +30                       | 15    | —      | 15       |
| Supertouch: 100% at 90m                     | 7     | —      | 14       |
| Armor: 4K/4E/4R (skin)                      | 12    | —      | 12       |
| Emotion Control: potency 18                 | 6     | 18     | 18       |
| [D] Conditional Use: Fear only (1/3)        |       |        | + 6      |
| [D] Vulnerable Device: Control Belt (1/3)   |       |        | + 6      |
| Energy Projection: Laser                    | 9     | 0      | 27       |
| No energy cost for laser                    | 27    | —      | 27       |
| [D] Laser gun vulnerable device (1/2)       |       |        | +27      |
| [D] Laser only has 10 shots                 |       |        | + 8      |
| Darkness: 6-meter radius                    | 3     | 9      | 9        |
| No energy cost for darkness                 | 9     | —      | 9        |
| [D] Darkness belt vulnerable device (1/3)   |       |        | + 6      |
| Resistance: Radiation 30                    | 6     | 18 (A) | 18       |
| [D] Resistance belt vulnerable device (1/3) |       |        | + 6      |

Skills: Acrobatics +66%; Move Quietly +63%;  
Invent—Physics +80%; Laser Gun +20% 17 — 17  
Sidekicks: 3 nightaunts 150 50 (A) 150  
[D] Must use energy to create nightaunts +22  
[D] Nighthaunt disadvantages & handicaps +51  
Bad Luck: -33% Luck roll +11  
Low Characteristic: -4 APP +4  
Permanent Powers: Appearance precludes normal life +10  
Personal Problem: Arch-enemy (create your own) +5  
Physical Problem: -20% with any roll in sunlight +10  
Psychological Problem: Megalomania +5  
Psychosocial Problem: Arrogant +5  
Psychosocial Problem: Fanatic worshipper of the Dark +5  
Skill Limit: -20% Spot Hidden +4

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6.

| WEAPON | Attack | Damage  | Parry | Range | Energy     |
|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------|------------|
| Fist   | 50%    | 1D3+1D6 | 50%   | 0     | 3 personal |
| Laser  | 76%    | 9D6     | —     | 30m   | 10 shots   |

PROTECTION: Armor 4K/4E/4R; Resistance 30R.

HIT POINTS: 50.

ENERGY: Personal (recharge 5) 46.

SKILLS: Acrobatics 71%; Invent—Physics 80%; Knowledge 80%;  
Language German 95% (S)/95% (R); Language English 65%/80%;  
Move Quietly 88%; Science—Physics 100%; Spot Hidden 5%.

SPECIAL NOTES: Nighthaunt's rough and darkened appearance makes him a figure of terror for unprepared people who see him.

### NIGHTHAUNT

| VAL                   | CHA Cost | Cost | Powers                                                           | END | 100+ Disadvantages                                          |
|-----------------------|----------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15                    | STR 5    | 24*  | 4D6 RKA (energy laser) 10 shots                                  |     | 25 Hunted: (create your own) on 11                          |
| 20                    | DEX 30   |      | (OAF gun) (+½ 10 shots)                                          |     | 30 Hunted: UNTIL on 8                                       |
| 28                    | CON 36   | 60*  | 90 point Multipower                                              |     | 15 Bad Reaction on 14                                       |
| 10                    | BODY 0   | 6*   | 8m 12D6 Mental Control (½ fear only)                             | 12  | 15 Physical Problem: All DEX-based on 8 or less in sunlight |
| 18                    | INT 8    | 8*   | 12m Darkness—normal, IR, UV, X-ray, 3" radius (72-point battery) | 9   | 15 Psych Problem: Megalomania/irrational                    |
| 24                    | EGO 28   |      | Full damage resistance to energy attacks                         |     | 10 Psych Problem: Arrogant                                  |
| 23                    | PRE 13   | 13*  | 12PD/12ED Armor (skin)                                           |     | 5 (½) Psych Problem: Fanatic Worshipper of the Dark         |
| 2                     | COM -4   | 40   | Radar                                                            |     | 10 2D6 Unluck                                               |
| 6                     | PD 3     | 20   | Acrobatics on 16                                                 |     | 150 Villain Bonus                                           |
| 6                     | ED 0     | 16   | Gadgeteering on 16                                               |     |                                                             |
| 10                    | REC 2    | 16   | Linguist                                                         |     |                                                             |
| 5                     | SPD 20   | 3    | Fluent in German and English                                     |     |                                                             |
| 60                    | END 2    | 4    | Physics on 17                                                    |     |                                                             |
| 38                    | STUN 6   | 8    | Stealth on 16                                                    |     |                                                             |
|                       |          | 12   | +4 skill levels with laser                                       |     |                                                             |
| OCV = 7               |          |      |                                                                  |     |                                                             |
| DCV = 7               |          |      |                                                                  |     |                                                             |
| ECV = 8               |          |      |                                                                  |     |                                                             |
| PHA = 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 |          |      |                                                                  |     |                                                             |

CHA Cost 149  
Power Cost 226  
Total 375  
Disadvan 375



## NIGHTHAUNTS (Sidekicks)



Wolfe is able to summon three nighthaunts once per hour which will serve him without question for three hours at a time. These creatures are from another dimension and appear instantly when summoned. Nighthaunts are jet-black bat-like creatures, standing about five-feet tall. They have two strong legs, webbed wings, and prehensile tails. The face of a nighthaunt is featureless except for two glowing green eyes and a small mouth with needle-like fangs. These fangs inject toxin attacking CON into anyone bitten —any failing to resist the poison will fall into a deep sleep.

Nighthaunts prefer to attack in large groups and work together to carry off victims (dropping them from great heights is also fun).

Use the following stats for all the nighthaunts in this scenario. All the nighthaunts that appear in the scenario are able to remain in this dimension for the duration.

### NIGHTHAUNTS

STR 1+ 9=10  
CON 1+ 9=10  
SIZ 1+ 6= 7  
INT 1+ 3= 4 Idea roll: 5%  
POW 1+ 9=10 Luck roll: 50%  
DEX 1+13=14 Agility roll: 70%  
APP 1

MOVE (m/AR): Fly 300/60.

ACTION RANKS: 14/4.

#### SUPERPOWERS

Super Characteristics: All but APP

Extra Hit Points: +20

Flight: Basic 600m/MR

[D] Vulnerable Device: Wings (1/3)

Resistance: 15K/15E/15R

Poison: 3D6 potency

Reduced energy cost: 1 per use

Emotion Control: potency 12

Characteristics 99  
Disadvantages 5  
Handicaps 46  
Used 150  
Available 0

Level Energy Hero Pts

39 — 63

10 — 10

1 3(MR) 3

+ 1

9 — 27

3 9 9

8 — 8

4 12 12

[D] Conditional Use: fear only (1/3)

Supertouch: 36% 9 — 18

Imperceptive: -15% idea roll + 5

Added Damage: +2/die from light attacks +12

Personal Problem: Must follow Nighthaunt's orders + 5

Physical Disability: Blind in full sun light +10

Skill Limit: -20% Spot Hidden + 4

Phobia: Claustrophobic, goes into coma +10

DAMAGE BONUS: None.

| WEAPON | Attack | Damage     | Parry | Range | Energy |
|--------|--------|------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Bite   | 50%    | 1D6+poison | —     | —     | 9      |

PROTECTION: Resistance 15K/15E/15R.

HIT POINTS: Personal (recharge 2) 20.

SKILLS: Spot Hidden 5%.

SPECIAL NOTES: Brought from another dimension. Can only stay three hours. Remember, even if no bite damage penetrates, poison will still be efficacious vs. characters having only kinetic resistance or absorption. Armor and Force Field, however, will block all poison unless the bite actually does damage.

### NIGHTHAUNTS

| VAL | CHA Cost | Cost | Powers                                     | END | 100+ Disadvantages                          |
|-----|----------|------|--------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------|
| 25  | STR 15   | 33   | 10D6 Mental Control (+½ Fear only)         | 10  | 20 2x STUN from light-based attacks         |
| 15  | DEX 15   | 15   | Full damage resistance                     |     | 20 2X BODY from light-based attacks         |
| 33  | CON 46   | 12   | 12" Flight (OAF—wings)                     | 2   | 15 Blind in sunlight                        |
| 8   | BODY -4  | 20   | Active sonar                               |     | 15 Psych Problem: Claustrophobia/total eff. |
| 4   | INT -6   | 22   | 3D6 HKA (+1—will not work vs. resistant    | 9   | 15 Unfamiliar with this world               |
| 11  | EGO 2    |      | Defenses)—poison touch                     |     | 10 Enslaved to Nighthaunt                   |
| 23  | PRE 13   | 12   | +4 skill levels with Mental Control Attack |     | 15 Bad reaction on 15                       |
| 0   | COM -5   | 12   | +4 skill levels with touch attack          |     | 15 All perception rolls on 8                |
| 20  | PD 15    | 10   | +2 skill levels with hand-to-hand combat   |     | 40 Villain Bonus                            |
| 17  | ED 10    |      |                                            |     |                                             |
| 5   | SPD 25   |      |                                            |     |                                             |
| 12  | REC 0    |      |                                            |     |                                             |
| 66  | END 0    |      |                                            |     |                                             |
| 40  | STUN 4   |      |                                            |     |                                             |

OCV = 5  
DCV = 5  
ECV = 4  
PHA = 3, 5 8,  
10, 12

CHA Cost 129  
Power Cost 136  
Total 265  
Disadvan 265

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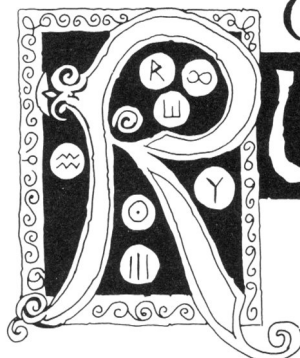
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SO I CAN BE  
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I'VE BEEN GETTING  
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SENT TO ME...



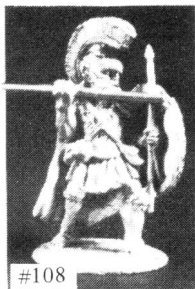
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If a non-player character is randomly encountered (and is introduced from a character listing such as those published in Supplement One or Supplement Four) and you wish to determine his or her gender, a simple way is to roll 2D. If the roll is equal to or greater than the non-player character's strength, the non-player character is female.

### WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Women are assured an equal position with men by law and custom on the more technologically advanced and intellectually enlightened worlds of the Imperium and the Zhodani Consulate. However, they may not be as fortunate on more primitive worlds, especially those outside the Imperium.

Thus we have already seen that women in the Imperium can pursue any military, naval, or civilian career with equal opportunity for promotion and success (or failure) than their male counterparts.

This is the official policy of the Imperium and the Consulate. However, since the Imperium by necessity rules with a loose hand, this policy will more often than not be violated on technologically primitive backwater worlds.

Indeed, this may happen out of necessity because of the general physical differences between men and women. The generally lesser physical strength and greater dexterity of women may limit their roles in a physically demanding primitive society much as it kept women confined to cave and cabin during humanity's early days on Terra and Vland.

Men were the hunters and farmers and fighters because of their greater physical strength while women served as the cooks and maintenance people for the family or clan's home cave, tent, or cabin.

Only as society progressed upward through the levels of technology did the use of machines and tools permit this specialization to end as men lost the advantage of their superior upper body strength.

Therefore, on worlds of Tech Level 4 or less, women will be precluded from the armed services and from most commercial ventures. They will usually be married and in a homemaking role. In some societies, particularly in theocracies, they may be cloistered—hidden away from all but their husbands and immediate families. There is a chance (roll 7+) that women will be cloistered regardless of tech level in a theocratic dictatorship because of anti-sexual attitudes on the part of the rulers.

On worlds with Tech Levels of 5 through 7 the role of women has expanded in society. They may participate in non-combat roles in the armed forces—usually with Medic and Admin skills, although not above skill level 2. Women will participate in the local political process (if there is one) and will be found in a subordinate role in commerce. This may be expanded and accelerated when a society is at war or has suffered a war in which a great percentage of the male population was killed.

Full male/female equality will generally be found (with the above mentioned theocratic exception) in societies with Tech Level 8+. In most of these societies, women will be found in a combat role in the armed forces and in managerial roles in business and government.

Outside the Imperium, however, there is a chance women may suffer discrimination even on high tech worlds. This is fairly common on worlds of the Solomani Confederation and a major difference in law and custom between the Confederation and the Imperium.

When on a Confederation world, roll 7+ for women to be banned from combat in the armed forces and 9+ for women to be banned from politics and commerce.

### COMPANIONSHIP

*Author's note: The following section assumes the adventuring characters are heterosexual. Some simple adjustments will allow these rules to be used by adventurers of other persuasions.*

Male adventurers will have a strong desire for the companionship of women while between voyages or between treks through planetary outbacks. This will generally, but not always, include the desire for sexual relations. The adventurer could be married or betrothed to a woman "back home," or could have taken a vow of celibacy—this is up to the individual player-character.

Women adventurers will want to meet men if they are not already involved with a male member of their adventuring party or men from elsewhere.

Friends of the opposite sex can be found in several ways while on "R&R" in a planetary city. They can be found in random encounters, at organized social events, or—if the adventurers "strike out" with social approaches—companionship is often available commercially (see section below).

Adventurers should remember, however, that contacts with members of the opposite sex of the non-commercial variety can and often will lead to emotional entanglements that could influence the course of an adventure . . . Gamemasters please copy.

Men and women friends can be met on a random basis through more or less chance encounters. These can be at organized social functions, or in stores, public areas, bars, and clubs. However, these encounters do not guarantee friendship or sexual relations. This depends on the emotional reaction of the person encountered by the adventurer which can be anything from a violent rejection to love at first sight.

Young enlisted soldiers, spaceheads, and marines of both sexes on liberty are often invited to social events organized by local civic or religious groups so they can enjoy "wholesome entertainment" without (it is hoped) tearing the town apart. The cost of entering these events is minimal (CR1-5) and 1D encounters are automatic. For the emotional reaction, roll on the reaction table in Book 3. Also, consult the reaction discussion below. Since most potential companions encountered at these events are relatively young, impose a DM of -2 on the reaction roll for every four-year term beyond the second term served by the character in the encounter.

Characters normally will not find companions of good character in Star Town; they will have to venture into more respectable urban areas such as the central districts of a major city. However, ship's crew members or mercenary soldiers or adventurers of low social standing are usually frowned upon when they go into the central city unless they are officers of high rank or have a sufficiently high social standing to conduct themselves with the social graces.

Therefore, characters with a social status of 7- are subject to increased police harassment (DM -2 on the law level/enforcement roll) when visiting urban areas outside of Star Town. Add Liason and Administrative skill levels as DMs.

An encounter with a companion of the opposite sex will occur on a 2D roll of 10+. This is a special companion encounter roll that should be made once each day the character is actively looking for a man or woman while in town. If the roll is successful, the emotional reaction of the encountered party should be determined from the reaction table in Book 3.

This emotional reaction is extremely important. Low rolls can get a character in trouble. A "2" will result in a scream for help from the encountered party, which may

attract police (throw law level or greater to avoid arrest) or local citizens (throw 6+ for 1D citizens to come to the other person's aid). On a "3" or "4," the subsequent attack roll will cause the same result. A "5" or "6" will result in a sneer, rejection, and an insulting "beat it, creep!" A "7" will result in indifference. An "8" or "9" means the new friend will be flirtatious and agree to a date on a roll of 10+ or 8+ respectively. A roll of "10" indicates some sexual attraction. The new friend will agree to a date and will stay overnight with the character on a second roll of 10+. A roll of "11" indicates sexual interest and a possible emotional attachment that could lead to an overnight stay on a roll of 6+ and a lasting relationship on 10+. Finally, on a "12," it will be love at first sight resulting in a strong emotional attachment that will last throughout the adventure, could carry over into subsequent scenarios, and might even result in a lifetime relationship.

## THE OLDEST PROFESSION

Humanity's oldest profession will no doubt be practiced legally or otherwise on most human settled worlds, and starport cities will no doubt have more than their fair share of practitioners. Star Town, that seedy part of a starport city nearest the starport gates, will have both the lowest quality and highest available quantity of these "hookers" on tap for an evening's entertainment. On any given world, roll 4+ for a prostitute to be available. They are legally available on 7+. DMs include -4 if the planet is governed by a theocracy, -2 if the local law level is 8+, and +1 if the character is searching for companionship in Star Town.

"Professionals" can be located in taverns, dancehalls, on street corners, in brothels where they legally exist, or in "massage parlors" for those interested in quick service. High class "professionals" can be found in the central city, usually in the better hotels and clubs. Often, hotel employees will refer clients to them. Local businesses may use them as a business development tool.

Prostitutes' services and prices include various massages and related activities for from CR 10 to CR 20 an hour; an hour in bed with a street corner hooker for CR 25; a visit to a brothel for CR 50.

High class courtesans are considerably more expensive. One night with these talented ladies will run from CR 250 to CR 500 depending on the quality of the service and the beauty of the courtesan.

On worlds where prostitution is illegal, throw 8+ for police interference while engaged; then throw law level or greater to avoid arrest.

## ROMANCE AND ADVENTURE

The introduction of sex and romance to an adventure can lead to many unexpected motivations and twists of plot during a campaign. Rejection in love could result in an adventurer undertaking a high-risk mission. A jealous husband or wife could result in a character being chased off-planet sooner than he or she planned. A character's lover could be in danger prompting a superhuman rescue effort. A lover might be lost prompting a wide ranging search. A peaceful family may be torn apart by war or other catastrophe, and the family's reunification may be the goal of an adventure campaign.

To many people, a faithful and lasting love is a goal far more valuable than all the gold in the Imperium. With the above framework, they now have a chance to include this fact of life in a *Traveller* campaign. □



# Video Games

Role-playing games of the future will be played on computers. Video games provide exciting adventure visuals for the players.

## DRAGON'S LAIR Video Wave of the Future

Reviewed by John Nubbin

Some of you have seen it, some of you have not. There is little doubt, however, that before the end of the year everyone will have seen it, and maybe a few more like it. It is called *Dragon's Lair*, and in many ways it has the potential to do to conventional video games what *Space Invaders* did to pinball.

*Lair* is the brainchild of veteran animator Don Bluth. Bluth, a long-time employee of the Disney Animation Studio, resigned from Disney in 1971 to try his hand at producing his own animated features. He and a small staff worked together on a number of small projects over the following years, finally reaching world recognition with their 1982 release of *The Secret of NIMH*. Just prior to the release of the film, Bluth began questioning ways to unite animation with computer technology in a way that would be popular. Several previous attempts had already been made, none particularly successful, but Bluth still felt it was an idea whose time had come. "It was the next logical step in the progression toward the future," He explained, "Computers are here to stay, and they have much to give us if we help them."

How Bluth decided to help computers help us was by creating an entirely new form of electronic game playing, one highly reminiscent of the typical *Dungeons & Dragons* fantasy role-playing game. Unlike so many video games of the 'enter-the-maze, kill-the-monsters, get-the-treasure, save-the-girl' variety, however, Bluth's game does not rely on an electronic grid of color to create

its images. *Dragon's Lair* is actually a short animated feature, the storyline of which is dependent on the player's moves. The game relies on high-resolution laser-disc equipment, making it more like a movie than any video games now in use.

"With *Dragon's Lair*," continued Bluth, "we've made a remarkable breakthrough in video game design, the aftershock of which will be felt throughout the entire game industry for a long time to come." There is little disputing the master animator on this point; lines already string around blocks at some arcades as ten-deep crowds cluster to watch players. No arcade game since *Pac Man* has caused this much excitement, nor generated as much capital (indeed, in many arcades, the charge is 50 cents instead of the standard 25 cents).

The movie-game follows a fairly routine storyline. Dirk the Daring, your basic Saturday morning heroic figure (with a tendency to be clumsy in a directly proportionate ratio with the player) enters a monstrous, dark, forboding castle on his quest to rescue the lovely Princess Daphne from the clutches of an evil dragon. Along the way, he has the opportunity to pass through 42 different rooms, each infested with a different threat. Dirk can face the likes of a flying suit of horse armor, a robot knight, a flaming sword, an acid creature, mudmen, geysers, tilting, falling, and rolling floors, a boulder trench, goblins, bats, hopping, bouncing skulls, growing slime, and a dozen and a half other dangers, all on his way to, of course, the dragon.

The length of the game depends on the skill of the player. Interestingly enough, the storyline also depends on the skill of the player. Unlike other video games, *Lair* does not tell the same story over and over. Going through different doors can lead to the same thing—going through the same door during different games can lead to different things. One of the major drawbacks to most video games is the lack of challenge they present after their particular pattern is learned by the player. There seems little to worry about in this regard in *Dragon's Lair*. With 25 possible minutes of animation for the player to fight his way through, learning the several million different possible random patterns seems a little unlikely.

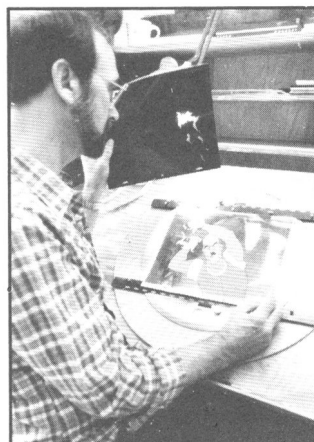
Bluth says, "We've made it our goal to maximize everyone's enjoyment of video games. *Dragon's Lair* is the first instance of full character animation being used in conjunction with computer technology, and it is a union we feel certain will be an exciting and popular one." Bluth feels so positive due to what he feels is a relationship which develops between the computer program inside the game, and the game player. "In this regard we feel that *Dragon's Lair* provides several advantages that video games heretofore have not furnished. Because of the human shapes and the elaborate, full artwork, we feel the game is easier to watch for extended periods of time. With the three-dimensional drawings, the conflicts and threats seem closer to actual human experience. Also, the viewer is constantly being trained to be wary of the innumerable threats that surround him. In these ways, the computer ends up giving more back to the human."

Whether all of Bluth's claims are valid, of course, is up to each individual player. Most who have tried *Dragon's Lair*, however, like

it—enough to keep shoving 50 cents into it time and time again.

The real advantage to this new system is monetary, though. At present, when an arcade owner wants a new game, an entire new unit must be purchased or leased. This is because present video technology calls for an entire replacement of circuits for each game. With the laser games, however, the only thing which would be needed to change from game to game would be new laser discs. This makes the cost difference to arcade owners approximately \$20,000 for a new video machine as opposed to around \$30 (after the purchase of the laser machine) per for each new laser game.

And new games there will be. Bluth's studio is working on a number of projects right now. One is their top-secret new animated feature. The rest are new laser games. Whether anyone else will soon be trying their hand at animating a few 'participatory movies,' as Bluth calls them, only time will tell. If they do not, though, it seems apparent that the Bluth Studio is more than willing to turn out as many as they can, and to reap the rewards therein. □



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# My Life & Role-Playing

Famous game designers reveal their experiences with role-playing.

## STARTING YOUNG

By Sandy Petersen

*Sandy is the designer of Chaosium's Call Of Cthulhu, among others. He has a B.S. in Zoology from Brigham Young University. He is presently employed as an Initiate Game Designer by the Chaosium. He lives in El Cerrito, California, with his wife and two children.*

For me, it all started when I was only 8 or 9 years old, around 1964. I found an old copy of Avalon Hill's *Gettysburg*, missing many counters and the rules. The counters appealed to me for some reason, and I spent many hours trying to rearrange them on the mapboard, set them up as if for some military attack, then only to collapse back in frustration, lacking the least idea of how to proceed about playing with them. My guardian spirit must have been with me to inspire me to love the game.

When I was 12 years old, I learned the game was still being sold (for some reason, I had the impression that all good things, such as *Gettysburg*, had long since gone out of print, like my father's lone H.P. Lovecraft book—but that is another tale). I got a copy somehow (I forgot the details), and played it with a congenial friend. Within weeks we had made our own pieces for variations on the game, and played out wars between his armies and my own. We even made up some naval and campaign rules.

Then, my friend obtained *1914* and *Blitzkrieg*. What wonders! We made up Russian corps and units for *1914* and played numerous other games. Before we knew of the existence of miniature rules, we had created our own for use with Airfix figures, and played out lengthy battles, using *Risk* blocks to outline terrain. We did not even know of the existence of any wargame companies besides Avalon Hill until 1973.

A word of explanation. I grew up in Utah, where wargames have never been plentiful. Worse, I was located in Provo, a section of the world where no wargames were even sold until the early 1970's. Also, being a penniless teenager, I could hardly afford to purchase even the few wargames that I did.

Nevertheless, I assiduously purchased all the Avalon Hill games I could, and oohed with proper awe when *Panzerblitz* appeared. I immedi-

ately created counters for a *Panzerblitz* variant set in the future and based on the science-fiction story *Gottlos*. In another science-fiction attempt, I created a socio-economic game spanning the galaxy.

In 1973, I learned of the existence of the late SPI. What's this? Another wargaming company? Cheaper than Avalon Hill? And with paper boards? Bears looking into. Thus I began to purchase selected SPI games, though I was never such a fan of that honored company as I was of Avalon Hill. Then, in late 1973, early 1974, something happened that changed my hobby gaming for good.

One of my small clique of wargaming friends (mostly converted by me) found a first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*. We played it and were immediately hooked. Soon, we had founded an entire cluster of gamers at the local university who played the game. With our natural passion for diversification, we altered the rules until they were only remotely recog-

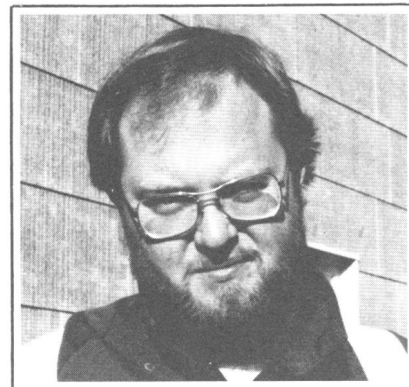
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### *My first writing for pay ever was for the Foundchild cult in Different Worlds 6.*

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nizable as *D&D*, though we never changed the magic system, that bane of variant *D&D* players everywhere. *D&D* was fun, though its flaws were soon manifest, and we played it for some time, with only brief jaunts aside for such diversions as *Chivalry & Sorcery* (a game in which we ran an entire campaign), and even a short try at *Traveller* (a game which, I am sorry to say, I have never been able to warm to).

By this time I had long since become one of those unhappy folk who purchase games continually, whether or not they are able to find opponents to play them. Among my random purchases and gaming interests, I found *White Bear & Red Moon*. I had remembered this from one of Lou Zocchi's catalogs, and had remembered it because of the neat catalog picture. So I bought it. It was cheap enough. Well, I rather liked the obscure background created for the game, and the many hints of full history with the colorful characters that appeared in the game, and I was often sad at the nearly complete lack of opponents for that game.



Some time later, I saw a copy of *RuneQuest* at the local game store which had sprung up since my adolescent gaming experience. When I picked it up, unimpressed with the drab exterior, I discovered that it was based in the world of Glorantha (it said so right on the back cover). Well, I decided that I needed to complete my collection of role-playing games and purchased it. Over the next year, we played both *RuneQuest* and *D&D*, but gradually slid more and more towards *RuneQuest*.

By the middle of 1979, I was a *RuneQuest* addict, and played it continually. By that time, I had made the acquaintance of Steve Marsh and, in fact, we had played together in our respective first campaigns and dungeons—a dual birth of eventual game designers! Steve, on his various travels, had met Greg Stafford, and told me that I should write to Greg and send him some of my stuff from my campaign and creations. I was quite diffident for a time, but Steve was persistent, and eventually managed to persuade me. So I sent Greg a letter in which I admired his wonderful game, asked questions about *Cults Of Prax* (which I had stolen from Steve with much rejoicing and enjoyment, and with some dismay as I saw how badly I had misjudged the cult of Zorak Zoran), and gave him a sample cult writeup of Thed, a minor counter from *Nomad Gods*, with a *RuneQuest* adaptation of the mindflyer from *D&D*. Greg was most kind and wrote back, saying that the cult was OK, answering my questions, and saying that he liked my mindflyer, but could not publish it because of copyright restrictions.

I wrote a second letter, with the Foundchild cult (another obscure counter from *Nomad Gods*, and a



writeup for another copyright-controlled monster—the monster from the movie *Alien*. In the letter, I asked Greg about the promised *RuneQuest* supplement to contain other monsters (see page 91 of *RQ II* to see the promise I referred to, which has still not been deleted). I mentioned that I could easily create more monsters, and he asked me if I could do as many as 60. As it turned out, I did 99, and *Gateway Bestiary* was born, my first venture into the world of game publishing. I could see no wrong in this, my first publication, and gloated unmercifully to all my friends over it. I still have a deep soft spot in my heart for it, and felt badly when it went out of print. I also have a spot in my heart for *Different Worlds*, which published the cult of Foundchild in issue 6; my first writing for pay ever. I showed the check for that to all my family and friends.

After some time, I kept up quite a correspondence with Greg, visited him on the first anniversary of my marriage. Later on in 1980, I wrote to Greg about a *RuneQuest* variant set in H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamworld universe. He wrote back . . . but I have already told that story in *DW 19*. If you want to read the full glorious account of the creation of *Call Of Cthulhu*, buy that issue, or steal a friend's copy, and read my article.

Since that time, I have moved to California to attend school, and finally been employed at the Chaosium. While continuing to waste my efforts among a host of minor projects, I have managed to get myself listed as co-author on *HeroQuest* (though it has not been published yet). Also, I came to California in time to put the finishing touches on *Trollpak*, which I began work on in Utah.

That is my story. Except for a two-year hiatus when I served as a missionary for the Church of Latter Day Saints, I have been playing wargames and role-playing games steadily since 1968. I have never regretted it, even when my grades faltered. Now, with some of my efforts sublimated into creation of my own games and scenario packs, I have managed to pay back some of the immense debt I owe this hobby for so much pleasure. Maybe someday my lovely wife of four years will be able to share my enthusiasm. □

**"My Life & Role-Playing"**

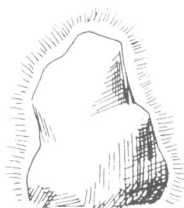
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**By Ken St. Andre**

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# Metal Marvels

This column reviews die-cast metal miniature figures used to represent characters in role-playing games.

## THE ADVENTURERS

By Ral Partha Enterprises

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

*Ral Partha offers sixteen boxes in their series called "The Adventurers," containing six to eight different figures for \$7 per boxed set. The line includes some figures from the old Ral Partha game line as well as newly-designed ones. They offer an extensively-illustrated catalog for \$2, available from Ral Partha Enterprises Inc., PO Box 9116, Cincinnati OH 45209. Three of the boxed sets are covered in this review.*

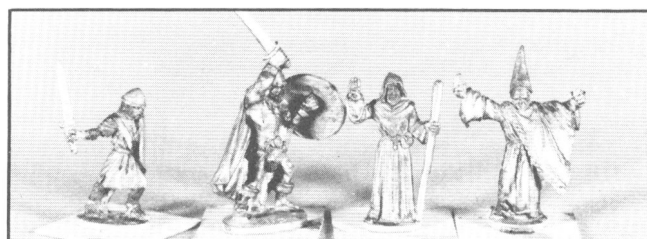
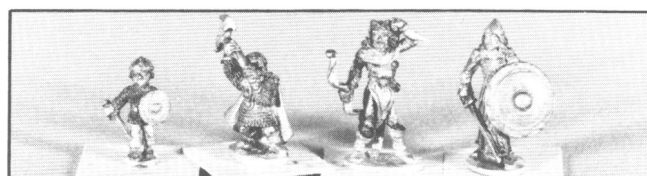
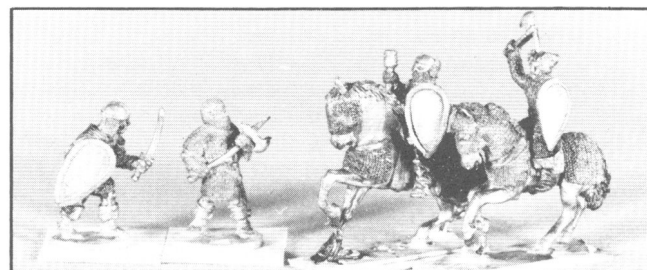
*Eight Adventurers*, box 98-002, is by Dennis Mize. This is a welcome addition to the catalog because not only does it provide personality figures for characters, four of them are the very under-represented female half of the population. The male figures average 25mm from head to foot, and range from prehistoric barbarian to 17th century Puritan. The barbarian is heavily muscled, but is bereft of equipment other than his fur loincloth and his broadsword. The Puritan is a Solomon Kane type, with tunic, trousers, and full boots covered with a full cape and broad-brimmed hat. His only visible weapon is a square-bladed thrusting sword with protected handgrip in the fencing style of that period. The next figure is a Viking in chainmail, metal helmet, and fur boots. He holds a round shield and a war axe in a waiting posture. The remaining male adventurer is dressed as a medieval knight. He is dressed in a full suit of chain tunic, metal boots, and a closed metal helmet. He holds a kite shield at the ready, and has his broadsword raised to strike.

The female adventurers are matched to all but the barbarian in equipment. For the Puritan, we have a swordlady in tunic, trousers, and boots, and with a similar fencing sword. For the Viking, we get a female in chainmail, fur boots, axe and round shield. For the knight, we have a woman in chainmail augmented by vambraces, with a tunic covering most of her armor. She holds a halberd in her left hand, and has a sword scabbarded at her right. The fourth female is in chainmail, with a round shield and a rapier. None of the ladies was given a helmet—the sculptor seems to think a helmet would muss their hair-

style. But at least they are all dressed, and three are armored decently, a great improvement over many of the female leads on the market. The females average 24mm from head to foot.

*Four Fantasy Knights*, box 98-005, contains six figures by Dennis Mize. There are two standing knights, two mounted knights, and two horses in barding. It is a nice touch that you get two individual horses, instead of two duplicates. The mounted figures do not match the standing figures—Dennis decided to go for maximum variety instead of giving you dual versions of the same figures. The standing figures are about 25mm tall. One is in chainmail plus helmet, cape, and boots. He holds a curved sword and a kite shield. The others wear a full suit of chain, including headpiece, but no helm. He holds a two-handed battleaxe at the rest in both hands, with a sword scabbarded at his waist. Both mounted figures have kite shields, suits of chainmail, and helmets. One has a handaxe and the other a round mace. Neither fits very well into his saddle, but that can be fixed quickly by filing or cutting down on the rear of the saddle.

*Dungeon Party*, box 98-006, is by Tom Meier, and contains eight adventurers of the traditional variety of races and occupations. The elf (26mm) is a lefty, holding his bow in his right hand and reaching for an arrow from his quiver with his left. He wears leather armor, and has a sword scabbarded at his back. The dwarf (18mm) wears chainmail and helm. He holds a two-handed battleaxe ready to swing. Any other weapons or equipment is hidden under his heavy cape. The halfling (18mm), though of a height with the dwarf, is in fact much lighter in build. Despite the traditional bare feet, this fellow wears a chainmail shirt and metal helm, and carries a shortsword and a small round shield, and obviously wishes to be accepted as a fighter. It is not clear whether the battle maiden (24mm) is intended to be human or elvish. She wears chainmail and metal helmet, with her limbs covered by sleeves of cloth and a full skirt under her armor. She carries a sword and a really enormous round shield 14mm across, which I think improbably over-sized and would weigh too much to parry with. A nice figure,



aside from that complaint.

The rest of the party consists of male humans. The wizard (24mm) wears the expected robes of his profession, the over-the-shoulder half-cape being a variation, and the traditional pointed hat. He is clean-shaven, for a change, and gestures as if casting a spell. The cleric (26mm) is an ambiguous figure. He is dressed in the robes and hood of a monk or priest, rather than the armor of a fighting cleric, and thus is not what would be expected ordinarily of a cleric figure. A nice figure in its own terms, this could also serve as

a martial monk, considering its quarterstaff, or as a mage with magic staff. The remaining two figures are fighters. One is a giant of a barbarian (27mm) whose only protection is his metal helmet and shield. He wears a cape, boots, and a fur loincloth complete with the head of the beast, and is attacking with broadsword. The other fighter is a slender young man in chainmail and helmet. He carries sword and shield, with the sword in a somewhat awkward swung-back posture, and is looking down as if towards a fallen opponent (24mm). □



# Sword Of Hollywood

Cinema news and reports  
of interest to  
adventure role-players.

By Larry DiTillio

Well, through an odd twist of fate, Ye Ol' Sword graduated for a brief moment from behind-the-camera to in-front-of-it. This all occurred on October 12, courtesy of the NBC news department.

It seems that Jim Thomas and Laurel Erickson, a local news duo who do a segment known as the "Team 4 Report" in *Lost Angels* wanted to do a story on *Dungeons & Dragons*. Some friends up in San Francisco recommended they contact me and after a brief conversation they decided to interview me for the segment.

The story dealt with the latest controversy surrounding *D&D*, to wit, the Trinity Broadcasting Network's attack on fantasy role-playing. The TBN is a Christian broadcasting outfit that is once again leveling charges that role-playing promotes devil worship and causes untold mental harm to its players. They have even gone so far as to retain a lawyer to bring the case to court. Their goal is to have *D&D* banned throughout the country. The case does not involve any game other than *D&D* (indeed it is a moot point whether TBN is even aware that other games exist) but obviously such a move has to affect all role-playing games in the long run.

NBC decided to examine the issue in a two-part story. Part one, which aired on October 11, dealt with the anti-role-playing side. Appearing were various representatives of TBN, the lawyer who is pressing the case, and several teenagers who claimed that *D&D* had warped their minds and ruined their lives. Part two presented the pro side of the issue and featured Gary Gygax (now living in Less Angles), game store owner Skip Gardella, and myself.

All in all, the report was one of the best balanced examinations of role-playing I have ever seen. The reporters took great pains to research the subject and not make statements that cause role-players to fall on the carpet in hysterics as many such media reports do.

The issue itself is an important one for all of us, not just because our hobby is under fire, but because one of our most basic freedoms, the freedom to read what we wish to, is being threatened. I sincerely doubt that *D&D* will be banned in the U.S., but the fact that an attempt is being made should alarm any freedom-loving individual, particularly when the

source is a broadcasting network. Adolph Hitler achieved facism in Germany with only a small group, imagine what he might have done had he owned a TV network.

Please do not misconstrue my meaning here. I am not calling all Christians Nazis. I am a Christian myself, I just do not believe that burning books is really God's work. I wish TBN would take some of the energy they are putting into destroying *D&D* and use it where it is really needed, in places like Lebanon and El Salvador. People are dying there, the wars are real and not harmless stories.

The reason I am telling you all this is to keep you aware that role-playing is under attack and urge you to speak up against that attack if the chance presents itself. We cannot afford to remain silent, for more reasons than just playing our games. And that is it for this unpaid political announcement.

**Coming up on the silver screen:** In November 1983, the 48th annual MIFED meeting takes place in Italy. MIFED (the name is an Italian acronym for International Film Market) is the convocation at which film companies from around the world trot out their upcoming products for sale to countries overseas. Most of the films presented at MIFED will show up in America sooner or later and so you will be pleased to hear that there is a great deal of interest to role-playing gamers among the films being pitched. Let us sneak a peek shall we?

**Swords aflashing: 681 A.D.: The Glory of Khan** is a spectacle flick, dealing with a character named Khan Asparouch who must lead his homeless barbarian tribe against the mighty legions of Rome in an attempt to win a new homeland. It is a Bulgarian production. **Merlin & the Sword** is a big-budget retelling of the King Arthur legend with Malcolm McDowell as Arthur. It is supposed to have dynamic special effects and its cast is terrific. However, do believe that this is the same film which will appear on American TV as *Arthur The King*, expanded for theatrical release overseas. **Deathstalker** is a Roger Corman sword & sorcery epic which I mentioned last column. What will probably be the best thing in this for fantasy fans is the poster which has been drawn by famous

fantasy artist Boris Sagal. **Knights From Navarre**—another straight sword-slinger, this one about three-hundred Navarran knights who conquered Albania, Thebes, Athens, and Corfu in the 14th century. This one was given a special award at a film festival in Biarritz, so it stands to be better than the average run of spectacle films. **Lion Man vs. the Wrath of the Witch Queen**—how is that for a lurid title? Look for it to be changed for American release. The film is about a medieval king of Thracia known as Lion Man who is captured by a terrible Witch Queen. There are clashing armies, vile sorceries, and plenty of action, and when I find out the new title, I will let you know.

**Science fiction, wizardry, and all that good stuff:** Let us start with **War of the Wizards**—Ty, a poor fisherman finds a magic pot which is also sought by the beautiful but evil Flower Fox, an alien who wants to conquer the universe (don't they all?). Ty uses the magic device to fight Flower Fox and her monster allies and naturally, save the world (don't they always?). **Zoo Ship**—here is a goodie, an intergalactic ship which collects endangered species from all planets crash-lands on Earth and the zoo creatures escape to wreak havoc. It is a class-A production with special effects by Jim Danforth and Sidney Dutton. **Warrior of the Lost World**—haven't I heard that title two-million times? Anyway, it is about a post-holocaust Earth that is a wasteland and a might hero who saves a beautiful girl from oppressive overlords. On the plus side, it has Persis Khambatta from *Star Trek: the Motion Picture* and personal favorite Donald Pleasance. **Space Vampires**—there's a title that says it all. An Earth-bound scout ship comes across a huge alien spacecraft in which they find glass coffins containing the frozen bodies of odd creatures. Needless to say, they wake the vampire-sickles up and the Earth becomes their target. Could be better than it sounds, thanks to director Tobe Hooper, one of horror's new shining lights. **RageWar**—this one appeals to me. A two-thousand-year-old wizard who thought he has run out of challenges meets a guy who is a hybrid of man and computer. The result, a fantastic battle between the ancient powers of sorcery and

the modern powers of science. **Primevils**—this one is about explorers searching for the Yeti and supposedly contains some staggering stop-motion animation.

**Cthulhu stuff:** Horror is always a seller in films and there is plenty slated for the year to come. I will skip the array of spatter movies and concentrate on less mindless exercises. **The Keeper**—well, as *Call Of Cthulhu* fans, you have got to see this. It stars Christopher Lee as the head of the Underwood Asylum, a place where nightmares and death reign. **Deadline**—a famous horror screenwriter decides to drop writing tales of the macabre and do something more edifying but he discovers that he cannot escape his own creations. Ooh, that is scary! **The Demons of Ludlow**—the village of Ludlow is celebrating its 200th anniversary and receives as a gift an ancient piano. At night this piano begins playing by itself and spewing forth ghosts to ravage the poor citizens of Ludlow. Hoo-hah! **Cataclysm**—an ex-Nazi SS officer who has never aged meets an old survivor of a concentration camp. This leads to a cult of devil worshippers and the death of the old man. This death is only the first of many, and get this, it all ends up with the slaughter of the devil himself on an operating table. Now that's ambition!

**Action adventure and junk:** You cannot miss this one—**Swordkill**. A samurai, frozen in a block of ice for four-hundred years returns to life and becomes a champion of justice in modern-day Los Angeles. It stars Hiroshi Fujioka, who was the star of one of Japan's hit series, in fact the country's second longest running series. **The Lost Empire**—haven't I heard that title before? It is about three gorgeous tootsies who infiltrate the secret island of Dr. Sing-Do where they uncover a hidden world full of various crazed types. **Robbers of the Sacred Mountain**—No, I have not heard that title before, but gee, it sounds familiar. It is about a dashing young British reporter who leads a search for a mysterious lost treasure with magical powers. Hmm, the plot sound familiar? **Jungle Warriors**—would you believe seven beautiful models held captive in a hidden drug-runner's empire deep in the Amazon jungles? I didn't think

*Continued page 40*

# Game Reviews

Villains And Vigilantes/Enemies/Enemies II/  
Death In Dunwich/Pirates And Plunder/  
Merc/In Country/ Prison Planet

## VILLAINS AND VIGILANTES

By Jeff Dee and Jack Herman  
(FGU, \$12)

Reviewed by Paul Ryan O'Connor

The original *Villains And Vigilantes* first appeared in 1979. The role-playing game scene of the day was dominated by fantasy games, leaving FGU with near-total control of the comic-book role-playing game market. Sadly, there was not much of a comic-book role-playing game market to speak of back in those pre-*Champions* days, and the original *V&V* went pretty much unnoticed. Nonetheless, the original *V&V* proved to be one of FGU's best-selling games.

The original *V&V* had a great deal of charm, but it was also plagued by sloppy editing and vaguely-worded rules. It quickly became apparent that *V&V* needed a complete reworking if it was ever to fulfill its potential. The original rules were allowed to fall out of print while a new edition was readied. Around this time, Hero Games came out with *Champions*, a system which made most gamers happy enough to look no further for a comic-book role-playing game. This is a terrible shame, because the new *V&V* is an excellent game, and deserves greater attention than it has thus far gotten. The game is gorgeously illustrated, has quick character generation, an exaggerated and entertaining combat system, and an inherent sense of humor that makes it a wonderful game to play. The new *V&V* is a far better game than *Champions*.

Inside the new *V&V* boxed set you will find a 48-page rulebook; a blank character sheet; a game-master's shield; a 20-page introductory adventure "Crisis at Crusader Citadel"; and an assortment of the polyhedral dice needed to play the game. The components are attractive and thick enough to justify the \$12 price tag.

The new edition of *V&V* retains the most novel aspect of its ancestor: allowing gamers to play characters based directly on themselves. The gamemaster and player are expected to hash out attributes for each character based upon the player's real-life strength, intelligence, endurance, agility, and charisma. A few guidelines are given to help the gamemaster with this task, but in

the end he will still be required to walk the razor's edge in assigning attributes without making any of his players feel especially slow, ugly, or fat. It can get a little embarrassing, but it is worth it—the intense player-character identification this system develops more than makes up for any hassles the gamemaster must initially endure.

Superpowers are assigned through a combination of dice and free will. Players receive a random number of superpowers, which are determined by rolling percentile dice and consulting one of five tables. The "Powers" table is the best place to pick up fairly standard super-abilities like ice powers or flight—or some of the wonderfully weird ones, like the ever-provocative vibratory powers. The "Devices" table is, naturally enough, slanted toward super-gadgets and gizmos. The "Magic/Psionic Items" table assigns magical devices, while the "Magic/Psionics" table awards true sorcerous abilities. The "Skills" chart is concerned primarily with boosting attributes, but can also award characters with pets, heightened expertise with weapons, and several other interesting abilities. Characters are also required to roll once on the "Weakness" table, resulting in anything from a reduced attribute to a special vulnerability.

Next comes the most tedious part of character generation, though familiarity and a calculator makes the task far less unpleasant. The mathematics used at this point to determine a character's hit points, carrying capacity, and various modifiers are at times convoluted and difficult to follow. Working the process through a few times smooths

things out, but the system can at first appear daunting. Do not worry—if I can figure it out with my stunted mathematical abilities, so can you.

Something that should be noted is the importance of body weight in *V&V*. A character's ability to lift things, take punishment, and inflict damage are all based in part upon a character's body weight. In general, the heavier a character is, the better he will perform at these tasks, although an abnormally obese player should lose most of the advantages of his weight in the form of reduced endurance. What this means is that *V&V* blows apart the "Mighty Mouse" syndrome—you will not have many characters three-inches tall lifting battleships in one hand and swinging them around like baseball bats. While there are numerous cases in the comics to support things working the other way around, I like physics the way they work in *V&V*. The mass-based system that *V&V* employs reduces the abilities of characters with tacky attributes, and puts real fear into people when someone still manages to pick up a building. The physical weight rules are the ones most easily abused in this game, and the prospective gamemaster must be aware that there is great potential for misuse here.

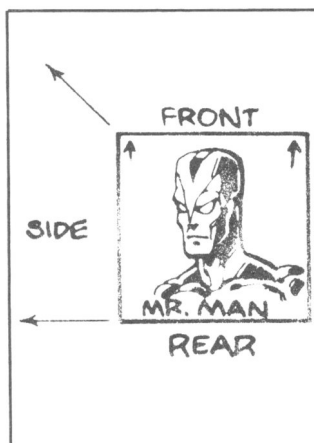
After all the math has been worked out, it is up to the gamemaster and the player to hammer out the fine details of the character's powers. As in the first edition, the new *V&V* relies heavily upon player-gamemaster interaction to make the powers unique and interesting. Some power descriptions are little more than guidelines for the gamemaster to follow, while others are quite

detailed. All the powers are far better explained than those found in the game's original edition. Like everything else with this game, the more you put into it, the more you get out of it. I have seen some weird and wonderful characters spring out of those oddball tables.

After everyone has developed a character, and given themselves a name, costume, and origin story, it is time to go out and beat bad guys to a pulp in the name of justice. Here is where the fun really starts.

*V&V* still retains its old world origins in that it slants its combat system towards use with miniatures, but it can be gamed just as easily on paper or in the player's heads. Everyone makes initiative rolls based on their agility, with the character rolling the highest going first. The number that the first character rolled for his initiative becomes the first phase of the turn, which is then counted down backwards to zero by the gamemaster. Characters are allowed to act as their initiative total comes up, or fifteen phases after their last action if they have already done something. Characters must follow some simple guidelines for moving and shooting, and are allowed to make multiple or special attacks (i.e., "I hit him on the head with a lamp post," or "I want to shoot it in the eye"), governed pretty much by what the gamemaster will let you get away with. The cost of most movement is negligible, but using superpowers drains points from the character's Power rating, determined by combining all his attributes except charisma. Characters usually do not have the time to recover Power during a firefight, so players have to avoid indiscriminate use of superpowers.

Combat involves selecting an attack to be used against an opponent, cross-indexing it on a table with the target's best defense, checking another table to determine modifiers based on the levels of the characters, and applying miscellaneous other modifiers based on range, facing, and the accuracy of the characters. This involves looking at about two more tables than I usually like to deal with, but I got used to it in a hurry, and most table-happy role-players will not mind at all. The character must roll less than or equal to the final to-hit number on 1D20 to strike his target, with





provisions made for automatic hits and misses at the extreme ends of die. As a whole, the combat system works pretty well, and has a great deal of flavor—essential to a game simulating comic-book combat.

The rest of the rules are a study in contrasts. Nearly three full pages of the rules are devoted to reproducing the New York state laws for everything from criminal mischief to offenses against public order—a bit overwritten for my tastes, but I know at least one gamemaster who found the section useful, so I guess it is okay. Vehicles and military weapons are given inconsistent treatment—we are given stats for helicopters and hovercraft, but we have to figure out tanks for ourselves. The authors do give stats for your average Tyrannosaurus Rex, though. . . . The rules for breaking things are adequate; the rules for charisma effects do not make much sense; and the guidelines for awarding security clearances have some holes in them. The sections on role-playing, especially on how to act the part of a superhero, are beautifully written and betray a deep love of comics on behalf of the authors. These conversational sections alone make this game required reading for enthusiasts of any role-playing game.

The introductory adventure, "Crisis at Crusader Citadel," is greatly padded, but gives enough substance to get the players started. The adventure details a battle between the Crusaders, a crew of good guys, and the Crushers, a gang of baddies. The characters are well-developed and fun to run, and have applications far beyond the adventure they are presented in. The first half of the adventure is hopelessly over-written, but the second half nicely details the Crusader's Citadel, an excellent place for characters to hang out after the adventure is over. The artwork is great throughout, providing illustrations of all the characters, thus allowing the players to see with

their own eyes what they are up against. The adventure deals primarily with beating each other up, as any good comic-book adventure should, especially one intended to introduce players to the game. It will do.

In summation, *V&V* carries my highest recommendation. The new second edition is a vast improvement over the original game. *V&V* is entertaining to read, and a lot of fun to play. *V&V* belongs in every gamer's collection.

## ENEMIES

Edited by Steve Peterson and George MacDonald (Hero Games, \$5.95)

## ENEMIES II

Edited by Bruce Harlick (Hero Games, \$5.95)

Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

The *Enemies* books for *Champions* supply the most important thing that superheroes need—supervillains. Where would Superman be without Lex Luthor or Spidey without Doc Ock? Between the two books, there are 68 supervillains, two new groups of agents, and six supervillain groups (one of which is also one of the agent groups).

Most of the power in the *Champions* book are used by at least one of the villains, with Energy Blast the most common (for obvious reasons). The various other obvious attacks (Increased Strength, Martial Arts, Killing Attacks, even Entangle) are also high on the list with one exception—Ego powers. Although a number of villains have at least a little Ego Defense, only two had any other Ego powers at all.

There is an obvious and simple reason for this—Ego powers can be devastating to the poor guy who is placed under their influence, particularly if his mind is read deep enough to find out all

his secrets. If a villain does this, the hero's secret identity is right out the window. Moral: do not have a number of Telepaths running around on the villain's side (This still does not justify not having Mental Illusions or Mind Control or even more Ego Attacks. Admittedly it is not fun being forced to act like a chicken or to attack one's friends, but a total absence of such powers in *Enemies II* is really hard to explain). The problem is even worse if a hero in the campaign has Ego powers—there is nobody here (but one) to counter his mental powers as explained in *Champions II* (in fact, only "Escape From Stronghold" adds any other Ego powered felons).

If Ego powers are so nasty that only a select few are allowed them, why are Killing Attacks so much more common? Over five times as many villains in the two books have Killing Attacks, although admittedly most have some other attack to fall back on. It is easy to come up with a justification for the number of Killing Attacks; after all, there are plenty of different defenses for Killing Attacks and only one for Ego powers, and besides, Killing Attacks are more the villains' style. Still, for all their scarcity, one might figure Ego powers to be much more expensive (and if they are so tough, why are they not?).

A nice touch is the individual pictures of the criminals. This enables the gamemaster to show the heroes what they are facing. This idea could be improved if Mark Williams could show more restraint as far as action shots are concerned. A few of these shots obscure some of the detail on the costumes and a number reveal something about the villain's powers. "Mug shots" more like the recent *Marvel Universe* series would be more in order (although I will admit that this adds more variety). Since I am discussing art, I would like to point out that putting villains on the cover (as they did on *Enemies II* and two of the

three modules) makes it harder for the gamemaster to surprise them with some things (Oculon's eye bolts and the Monster's grim appearance, to use some examples from *Enemies II*). The panorama of a group of obviously trashed heroes on *Enemies* was really well done and what I would prefer, knowing that the covers cannot be left blank.

Should you buy these supplements? If you are a player, obviously not. If you are the gamemaster, the choice is up to you. The foes are attractively presented and are really handy if you want to run an adventure sometime without a great deal of preparation. They are also very nice examples of how to create villains that fit together and how to lay them out so that their abilities are easy to read. Many of them can easily be transformed to heroes for the players to meet as well, something that *Champions* otherwise lacks.

One slight problem—these villains, despite what it says in the introduction to *Enemies*, are not quite accurate to the changes made in the second edition rulebook. The gamemaster will either have to fiddle with the powers to make them fit (as a hint, the cost of Armor using limitations in Multipowers are the two most common changes) or he can simply ignore costs as given and increase Villain Bonuses accordingly. Even with this drawback (which may have already been taken care of by the time this review is printed), I still recommend these supplements to every *Champions* gamemaster who does not have unlimited time to create his own foes for the players.

## DEATH IN DUNWICH

By Ed Wimple (TOME, \$8)

Reviewed by Larry DiTillio

*Death In Dunwich* is the second scenario for *Call Of Cthulhu* to come from TOME. The first, *The Arkham Evil*, dealt with a scheme of Nyarlathotep and his minions and was composed of three scenarios linked together to come to a final conclusion. *Death In Dunwich* provides the prospective keeper with one scenario, a murder mystery with occult overtones that has nothing to do with the Cthulhu Mythos *per se*.

*Death In Dunwich* begins with a very brief description of two groups, the Left Hand and the Right Hand. They are secret societies, on the order of the Illuminati, the Left Hand promoting evil (and supposedly being largely responsible for starting World War One), the Right Hand dedicated to overseeing the evolution of



| Name: COBRA |      |      |      |     |     |
|-------------|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| VAL         | CHA  | COST | Cost | P   |     |
| 20          | STR  | 10   | 50   | Mul |     |
| 29          | DEX  | 57   | 5    | U   | Ven |
| 30          | CON  | 40   | 10   | U   | Cob |
| 15          | BODY | 10   |      |     | att |
| 18          | INT  | 8    |      |     | Def |
| 10          | EGO  |      |      |     | Fie |
| 30          | PRE  | 20   |      |     | Res |
| 6           | COM  | -2   |      |     | mus |
| 15          | PD   | 11   |      |     | 14  |
| 15          | ED   | 9    | 25   |     | Mul |
| 6           | SPD  | 21   | 5    |     | 1/4 |
| 10          | REC  |      |      |     | Bla |
| 60          | END  |      | 5    |     | 1/2 |
| 40          | STUN |      | 30   |     | Pas |
| CHA         | Cost | 180  | 5    |     | TR  |

mankind, with the goal of transcendence of good and evil. Rasputin, the mad monk, was one of the Left Hand, perhaps the founder of it. As might be expected these two societies are at constant odds. *Death In Dunwich*, we are told, "is a mere footnote in the ancient struggle between these two brotherhoods."

The players are first brought into the scenario by one M. Feldspar, a member of the Right Hand. Their mission is to investigate the murder of Dale Plunckett, an expert in art appraisal and an art dealer of some repute. He was found dead in Dunwich, Massachusetts, his body pounded into a pulp. The investigators must find out how Plunckett (a resident of Paris, who was apparently in New York on business) came to be in Massachusetts and what he was doing there. The circumstances of how the investigators learn this are interestingly atmospheric. They are invited to a crumbling house in Boston and are greeted by Feldspar. The investigators learn that the pay is good and there is an extra incentive, an old oil painting, a self-portrait of Leonardo Da Vinci. (An Art History roll is necessary to determine this and the fact that it is an unknown painting—Da Vinci never painted a self-portrait. Art History is one of the skills suggested for investigators in this scenario.)

Now to the plot, and it is, I must say, a dandy idea. A wealthy art collector named Rothenfelder has a passion for rare works, the more unattainable the better. He lunches with an agent of the Left Hand named Dunkelherz, during which he passes on the opinion that it is a shame that great masters of the past lived so short a time. This gives Mr. Dunkelherz an idea, one that comes to fruition when the Left Hand acquires a book with the Resurrection spell in it. Starting to get the idea? The Left Hand starts stealing the remains of great artists, resurrecting them, and passing

them on to Rothenfelder who has dealt with the brotherhood in the past. The artists are kept in cells beneath a gazebo on Rothenfelder's Dunwich estate where they turn out new masterpieces for him. Most of the captives are painters (Da Vinci, Rubens, Caravaggio, etc.) but Rothenfelder has also acquired Vivaldi and Goethe.

The scenario strongly urges destruction of the captured artists, suggesting that they be perforated with a wooden stake or other object so they will crumble back into dust. This seems totally antithetical to the goal of most Cthulhu investigators, knowledge. If you were face with a living, breathing Leonardo Da Vinci in circumstances that suggested he was Da Vinci would it make sense to summarily kill him? Not to me. By the same token the scenario states that if Dunkelherz is killed, the artists will eventually crumble into dust anyway, but it does not explain why this is so. Certainly the Cthulhu Resurrection spell as explained in the rulebook does not indicate any such thing. All in all, while the plot does intrigue it seems that the author added too many contrivances to make it work his way, and spent all too little time considering other possibilities.

Another flaw in the scenario is the non-Cthulhu plot. Besides the art plot, there is a subplot concerning the famous Whately family of Dunwich and the burning of Ambrose Whately by the townspeople in 1882 (he was involved in stealing bodies and resurrecting them). A legitimate red herring certainly, but the investigators will waste time with it and find out nothing particularly interesting except in a very abstract fashion. (There is an unknown metal, strange symbols, etc., connected with the Whately burning). My problem with this construction is that the overall motif of *COC* is connected to Cthulhoid happenings and the players know it. For this reason, *Death In Dunwich* does not so much trick investiga-

tors as it does players and this strikes me as off-base in a role-playing game. Just as players should not use knowledge their investigators would not have in a game, I do not think the keeper should lead them down a blind alley by using the very game they are playing against them, not as investigators but as players. It struck me as a somewhat cheap ruse. The designer says the middle of the game should be frustrating and I can easily see why it would be. They are simply not chasing what by rights they should be chasing, as Cthulhu investigators.

In organization, *Death In Dunwich* presents a lot of information very well. Even better it outlines the whole town of Dunwich, complete with residents, very useful for other scenarios (though it is not quite the paranoid Dunwich one expects). The reading can be somewhat dry at times, but is in general interesting enough. Good organization is a plus and *Death In Dunwich* fully deserves the plus. On the other hand, the artwork included is some of the worst I have ever seen, a problem that *Arkham Evil* had as well. For aesthetics, a minus.

One other minor problem: the publishers apparently forgot to include Roland Dunkelherz in the text and instead sealed his stats in an envelope marked "Keepers Only" glued in the back pages of the book.

Summing up, *Death In Dunwich* leaves a lot to be desired in terms of a Cthulhu scenario. The two brotherhoods are interesting but not too well-developed. The investigators will not learn much of anything about the Cthulhu mythos (a few books and the Whately incident are included, but they seem to have been thrown in to satisfy the Cthulhu label and in fact the keeper must pick the books himself—they are not detailed) and the best thing about it from that stand point is the detailing of Dunwich itself. On the other hand, with a little bit of hole-plugging and expansion, the mystery itself might make a good change of pace scenario in a Cthulhu campaign. My recommendation: think it over before buying and if you do buy it, keep a grain of salt handy for the designer's suggestions.

## PIRATES AND PLUNDER

By Michael S. Matheny  
(Yaquinto, \$19.00)

Reviewed by Anders Swenson

*Pirates And Plunder* is Yaquinto's second adventure game. It is subtitled "A role-playing game of the golden age of piracy"—more

about that later. The comes in a box with the classic three rulebooks, a pad of character sheets, some playaids, and dice.

On reading the rules, one quickly understands that *P&P* is intended to be an adventure game for beginners—for people who would normally not play fantasy role-playing games. It seems to be for the beer-and-pretzles level of play, without complications. The text is written in prose fully as purple as anything by Dave Hargrave or E. Gary Gygax, and then some. The overall style is one of specifying every action of the gamemaster as he guides the players through the adventure.

That, in fact, is what the game is—the adventure. *P&P* is written so that the players begin as the participants in a scenario, and as play progresses, the character sheets are completed, rules explained, so that by the end of the second booklet, the players have been exposed to all elements of the game, and have completed quite a bit of action. The adventure itself is continued through book three, by which time, the gamemaster is assumed to be able to carry on alone.

The game mechanics of *P&P* are relatively well detailed in the areas of eighteenth century combat, and are somewhat primitive elsewhere. The combat system works by combining the difference in weapons proficiency of the opponents with a die roll and consulting a table of possible results. Combat skills are derived from characteristic values modified by additional random rolls for specific weapon skills. The weapons are: Musket, Pistol, Sword, Fist/Dagger, and Thrown Weapons. There are additional skills of Swimming and Drinking, other character actions may be governed by rolls against characteristics.

The advanced game rules in the second book extend the basic rules and cover special situations such as aimed blows and mass combat. Apparently, though, it is the intent of the author that *P&P*



## ATTACK

|            | Porous | Scanty |
|------------|--------|--------|
| Berserk    | +6     | +4     |
| Aggressive | +4     | +3     |
| Cautious   | +2     | +1     |
| Probing    | +2     | +0     |
| Posturing  |        | MA     |
| Disengage  |        | MA     |
|            | + = ac |        |
|            | - = su |        |



adventures do not take place on or near the water! Since most human activity does occur on land rather than at sea, I suppose that this is not a terribly serious fault, but my image of the golden age of piracy includes lots of swinging from ropes, braving storms, etc., none of which seems possible in this game.

This is a very violent game. The training scenario in the first book leads the characters into captivity under a cruel and degenerate Spanish grandee. The player-characters first get into a fist-fight with some of their fellow-prisoners, a ploy to teach the fist-fight rules, and then are required by their captor to entertain the household by fighting individual sword duels to the death among themselves, in order to make explicit the rules concerning sword-play. Although I can see the need for some sort of practice combat to get everybody familiarized with the rules, this is just a bit much for me! Eventually, the prisoners escape, murder their guards, and kill and burn the Spanish household who had treated them so nicely. . .

The real problem is that *P&P* is set up to run at about this level of violence generally. During the scenarios presented, there seems to be little opportunity for role-playing, except as from one pirate to yet another pirate with a generally exotic background different from yours. I would casually note that there is no provision for female player-characters, much less for non-pirate player-characters. The action is limited to foot-slogging around, etting into duels, arm-wrestling matches, burning buildings, having drinking contests, fighting and killing non-player characters, and other such B-movie stuff. There is, generally, no redeeming social importance.

I suppose that I could recommend *P&P* for a certain limited set of players—adult males who are of a non-literary bent of mind, who enjoy some gaming, but who have no time for magic or outer

space. Established gamers will do better to save their money for books about the Spanish Main, for they will not get the expected background or color or glimpse of real pirates that one might expect from a game like this, and most gamemasters who desire a pirate game will do far better to adapt their regular game system to cover the period.

## MERC

### Merc Supplement 1: IN COUNTRY

By Paul D. Baader, Lawrence Sangee, and Walter Mark (FGU, \$12 and \$5 respectively)

Reviewed by William A. Barton

Modern-day combat role-playing is one area that, until recently, has been largely neglected by the various game companies. One could use the *Mercenary* rules supplement for GDW's *Traveller* science-fiction role-playing game to simulate modern combat situations to some degree, but the limitations of the *Traveller* combat system left much to be desired—or filled in by the gamemaster, either making up material or adapting it from board games such as *Squad Leader*. There was also SPI's award-winning *Commando*—not a bad game, but now unavailable with SPI's demise. More recently there have been a number of other attempts at mercenary-type role-playing games, such as *Blade's Mercenaries*, *Spies & Private Eyes* or the essentially Vietnam-oriented *Recon*, which can also be used for other modern-combat situations. One of the more detailed, and thus more interesting for the purpose, of the mercenary-oriented role-playing games now available is FGU's *Merc*, subtitled "A Modern Role-Playing Game of Counter Insurgency."

In its basic form, *Merc* comes in a boxed package consisting of a 35-page rulebook, a cardstock character sheet, two cardstock sheets with game charts printed on both sides, a cardstock sheet with front and side human-target silhouettes on one side and several vehicle silhouettes on the other, and a plastic gunsight template, with small and large sights for use with the human and vehicle silhouettes, respectively. Three six-sided dice are also included. The rulebook is divided into two "rulebooks": Rulebook 1, "The Twilight Soldier," and Rulebook 2, "The Corporation" (this being *Merc*'s term for the gamemaster). A supplementary rulebook to the basic set was released at ORIGINS 83. It is subtitled Rulebook 3, "In Country," and is meant to expand

and clarify somewhat the original rules.

While relatively detailed, the basic systems behind *Merc* are all quite simple, and thus quite playable as well. All rolls, whether in character generation, combat procedures, or determining encounter and other miscellaneous data, are generated using either one, two, or three six-sided dice, read normally, or two six-sided dice read with one as the high number and the other the low number (giving a range from 11 to 66). Character generation is very swiftly accomplished, more so than most FGU's role-playing games, yet produces a character quite adequate for play. The entire section of the rules devoted to creating your mercenary is only seven pages long, including a sample completed character sheet and the list of character "tests." Character generation covers three different factors, each consisting of several steps: Physical Appearance, Physical and Mental Attributes, and Character Specialties.

Physical Appearance covers such details as age, nationality, height, color of hair, eyes and complexion, voice, and whether a character is right- or left-handed or ambidextrous. Most of these characteristics are determined by a 3D6 roll, except handedness, which is rolled on 1D6, and nationality and name, which are up to the player to choose. Age adds the 3D6 roll to a base of 20. For those who wonder how necessary such details are in most role-playing games, take into consideration the effectiveness of a blond-haired, blue-eyed European merc cut off from his unit behind enemy lines in Zimbabwe, for example. Height can be a limiting factor, as the designers point out, when attempting a recon—how easy is it for the enemy to spot you? And a character's voice quality can be a factor in Command Control (how effectively you are in command of your troops); a commanding voice can be an asset, while a squeaky one could prove detrimental.

Physical and mental attributes include strength, agility, intelligence, knowledge, intuition (luck and "gut feelings"), and prior military service, all of which are pretty self-explanatory. These are generated by rolling 2D6 and reading the numbers as high/low, giving a range from 11 to 66, with 11 being, variously depending on the attribute, scrawny, clumsy, dense, man-in-the-street, no intuition, and no prior service, and 66 representing very strong, nimble, sly, advanced, killer instincts, and special services vet (Green Berets, French Foreign Legion, Israeli Commandos, etc.). A character's

level in each attribute will give him positive or negative modifiers for the various tasks, called "Tests," a merc is expected to perform in the line of duty, and will also determine whether he can take certain character specialties as primary or secondary specialties. So that the character's attribute scores—and thus the specialties available to him—are not totally random, the player simply rolls the high/low dice six times, records the scores and then determines which attributes receive which scores based on the specialties he wishes his character to have. This is a nice touch, and gives the player more control over his character's fate than totally random die rolls, yet prevents the "supercharacter" syndrome to which some players fall prey when given total freedom in designing a character from scratch, or the tendency to overbalance certain skills or attributes while neglecting others. It also allows for the randomness of the characteristics determined at birth, while avoiding throwing characters to the mercies of fate in all aspects of their development, as do systems in which attributes and skills are determined completely by random rolls, such as in *Traveller*.

There are 15 different specialties to which merc characters may attain in the basic rules, from Driver/Pilot, Map Expert, Medic, and Interpreter/Interrogator to Heavy Weapons Expert, Martial Arts Expert, Recon Expert, and Sniper/Sharpshooter. Supplement 1 adds restrictions to some of these specialties, making them more realistic, and expands the list of specialties to include Technician/Mechanic, Underwater (Frogman), Airborne, Survivalist, Archer, Equestrian, and Escape Artist. Each specialty describes briefly what the specialist can do and lists the attribute level necessary to claim this as a primary or secondary specialty. For most specialties, two attributes must be at a certain level to claim the spe-



cialty, though several require minimum levels in three attributes (to gain Martial Arts as a primary specialty, for example, requires Agility of 62, Intuition of 64, and Knowledge of 61), while Medic specialty only requires minimums in Knowledge. Having a primary specialty in a certain area allows a character extra modifiers when attempting certain actions, while having a secondary specialty awards fewer modifiers to success. The only problem I see here is that the lowest minimum attribute score on any of the specialties for one attribute out of two is 32, and this on a secondary, so it is just possible that with a lot of low rolls, a character will be stuck as an ordinary grunt, with no specialties whatsoever. This is probably a fair reflection of reality, however, and lacking a specialty in most cases only means the task is not as easy for you to accomplish as it is for a specialist, so this will not be too much of a problem—unless you are on a search and destroy mission in which demolitions skill is a must and no one in the group could qualify for the specialty.

In addition to these three main areas of character generation, there is also a short section that enables a player to generate his character's frame, carrying capabilities, build, and weight, all which are interlinked, adding a bit more nice detail to the game.

As noted, success in activities is determined by Tests. There are three major tests: the Stress Test, which is a morale check to determine if the character freezes, runs, or opens fire blindly in stressful situations (which are most combat situations); the Dexterity Test, for avoiding obstacles, dodging traps, climbing walls, etc.; and Command Control, to see how well troops listen to and follow commands. The roll that must be made on a 2D6 high/low roll is determined by adding the test modifiers derived from the applicable attributes to a base 36 and rolling under it to pass the

test. There are also nine skill tests in the basic game, from Detection and Evasion to Concealment and Set/Disarm Traps, plus an additional nine, including an Unskilled Skill test for those attempting an activity about which he knows nothing, in the supplement. Success at these are determined by adding modifiers for specialty and other conditions to a base 6 and rolling less than that on 2D6.

Movement and combat are equally simple, yet playable. How far a character can move in a certain time frame is determined by cross-referencing the type of movement (crawl, walk, run, etc.) with terrain type and is expressed in multipliers of the time frame involved, from 30 seconds to ten minutes. This is somewhat overly simplified, but workable in most cases. Combat rounds themselves are 30 seconds long. Determining whether a character hits a target in hand-to-hand, small arms fire, or in throwing grenades or firing mortars are all determined by adding positive or negative modifiers for various factors, such as a character's attributes or specialties, position and movement of target, type of weapon fired, range, and position inside a burst radius for explosive weapons, to a base roll ranging from 6 to 12 and rolling under that number on two or three dice. Damage for characters hit by weapons fire is gauged by referring to a hit location table in the Corporation section, which gives basic location, number of body-point damage done initially and each round until treated by a medic, and any special damage, such as internal bleeding or death. *Merc* characters are assumed to be equal in body-point damage that can be sustained before unconsciousness or death, a somewhat questionable concept, but playable.

Information is also included on determining vehicle damage. This is handled somewhat abstractly in the main rules, and expanded and covered in much greater detail in the supplement. Also included in

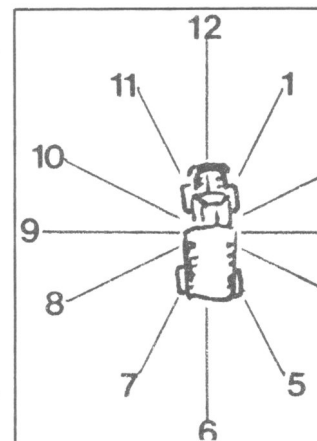
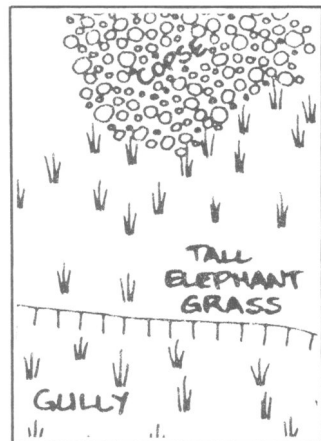
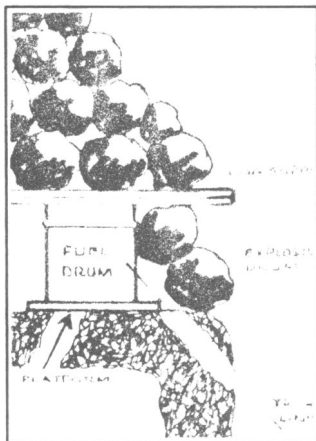
the basic game are notes on booby traps and ambushes, and a list of various weapons available to the modern merc, including pistols, rifles, assault rifles, sniper rifles, submachine guns, machine guns, anti-tank rocket launchers, mortars, and flame throwers, providing ranges, weights, round capacities, and other pertinent information. The Corporation section, in addition to the hit location and wound information, also covers awarding experience points for the completion of missions. Experience points are divided among the characters and taken as cash payments (for purchase of better equipment), attribute improvements (which may allow the gain of a specialty), and straight experience points. The latter seem to do nothing in the game except determine when a character must be retired (i.e., hired by the corporation as a regular employee). It also includes a brief encounter table section (the idea being the Corporation should create specific encounters and only rarely rely on random tables), optional fatigue rules (usually such realism is not worth the loss in playability), a list of booby-trap types with interesting illustrations, a bibliography of books on mercenaries, a brief sample mission to demonstrate to the gamemaster how a typical *Merc* encounter might run, and a short mission scenario involving an overt mission in Zimbabwe, which is somewhat hurt by the lack of any scale on the maps provided.

Supplement 1 further expands the *Merc* rules to include procedures for the use of poison, airborne operations, and parachute procedure, rappelling vehicle malfunctions (including breakdown, getting stuck, going out of control, and leaping from vehicles that are out of control), and guidelines on special situations in towns. Certain restrictions on small arms fire are added for extra realism, as are rules on the use of medkits and walkie talkies. The vehicles section also includes extensive lists of land, sea, and air vehicles likely to be encountered or used by merc forces, and covering ramming, hot wiring, and abandoning vehicles.

Overall, *Merc* offers a fairly detailed, playable system for mercenary operations, more so than is available in most other modern combat role-playing games particularly those that attempt to cover other non-mercenary occupations as well, such as *MS&PE*. And in conjunction with Supplement 1, the game provides rules for most situations in which a mercenary force would find itself. I did note some problems with the game, none of which were

covered in the supplement, that need to be addressed if a Supplement 2 is ever published. While ranges for most small arms weapons are expressed as short, medium, and long, and intended to be further broken down into increments of that total range for modifier purposes, this becomes impossible, due to the lack of any top range listed under long range (which is stated to be 401 meters and up), for any weapons rated above medium range. A solution to this problem would be to pick up a book of weapons that includes those listed in *Merc* which gives a weapon's top range (an excellent choice would be Firebird Ltd.'s *The Armory, Vol. 1*, by Kevin Dockery, available for \$12.95 postpaid, from Firebird at 802 W Washington, Ann Arbor MI 48106). Another thing I find a bit too simplified is the lack of differentiation in the amounts of damage done by various weapon types to characters; a hit in a certain location with a pistol does as much and the same kind of damage as a hit in the same place with a flamethrower. Since varying damage for different weapons hitting vehicles is listed, I find this generalization somewhat odd.

There are other minor errors that really should have been caught, at least in the supplement. There is no breakoff point for what is a light wound and what is a serious one for purposes of medical attention, and it is a bit fuzzy as to whether continuing damage is continually applied until a character is dead or treated by a medic or if there is a point where it cannot get any worse. The weapons tables fail to list how many rounds each weapon can fire in a 30-second combat round (quite a few for most weapons in that length of time), or how much each weapon and ammo for it costs, should a merc wish to spend his hard-earned cash on a better gun or more ammo. The section on grenades fails to distinguish between the kill zone and the casualty zone when giving





damage radius, which is important in determining how many hits to apply to a character caught in a grenade's burst radius. Instead of addressing these particular problems, the supplement added some more on its vehicle tables, in that several new weapon systems were listed as vehicle armaments, yet no information on those weapons is included in either the basic game or the supplement (another instance in which *The Armory* book could come in handy).

The main problem with *Merc* however is that the overall contents of the basic game seem rather light when compared to the \$12.00 price. The additional information in the supplement increases the value of the game, but boosts the price by another \$5.00 to \$17.00 for both (plus whatever you may want to purchase for additional weapons info). This is just a bit steep for those not thoroughly committed to modern merc role-playing, though again, you will be getting what is probably the most detailed and playable merc combat role-playing game currently available. If the thought of going into corporate employ for combat missions in third-world countries on a regular basis is appealing to you—or if you desperately need additional information to bolster campaigns based on systems such as *Traveller's Mercenary*, which lacks data on most of the situations covered by *Merc*—FGU's little game of modern counter-insurgency situations might not prove a bad buy for you at all. But if you do decide on *Merc*, go the extra five bucks for Supplement 1, too.

## PRISON PLANET

By Erik Wilson and Dave Emigh (GDW, \$4.98)

Reviewed by Tony Watson

Several months ago I could have really used *Prison Planet*, GDW's new adventure for *Traveller*. In the course of the campaign I run, one player-group had made a

number of serious mistakes and fateful miscalculations and ran afoul of the Imperial authorities. I had not planned for the situation to this point, but the players had so blatantly screwed up, I (in my capacity as the instrument of Imperial justice) could not let them get away with their poorly implemented plan. The crime of which they were convicted was of a nature to suggest that several years in prison would not be out of line as punishment. Unfortunately, I was ill-equipped to competently run through their stay in prison (my information at the time consisting of a smattering of knowledge about the criminal justice system and some dim recollections of some old George Raft movies). I had to settle for giving them a perfunctory 90 days and a stiff fine.

*Prison Planet* is exactly what I needed at the time. Instead of a heavily plotted adventure like many in the GDW line, this offering concentrates on providing a detailed setting. This is not to say that there is no element of adventure in *Prison Planet*; just surviving can prove interesting. Ostensibly, the task before the players is to live through their stay at the Imperial prison facility on the planet Newcomb, and somehow escape.

Newcomb is a lightly populated world in the Banasdan subsector of the Solomani Rim; the thin atmosphere is tainted, and the terrain is largely desert. The planet's claim to notoriety is its penal institution, a former mining facility now converted to use as a prison. Pitchblende mining, under hazardous conditions, continues with the inmate serving as the labor force. The prison is severely under-funded: the guards are overworked and under-paid, and the equipment and facilities are old and in disrepair. The administration is largely corrupt and uncaring and the prisoners themselves are a mean and dangerous bunch. The prison on Newcomb is hardly a country club.

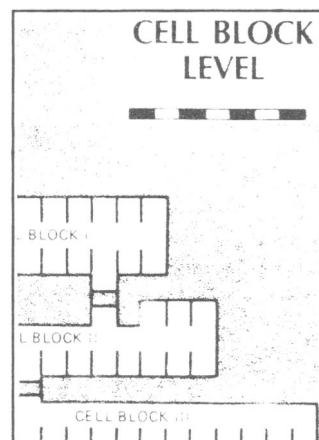
The adventure is set up to be played in weekly installments, with time telescoping for incidents of note. The flow of the adventure is structured around an event table, an encounter table and an extensive list of rumors. The range of events is impressive, ranging from gambling sessions and assignment to safe job areas to thefts, cell searches, and encounters with guards or inmates. The events table certainly seems to get across the nature of prison life, while a separate list of incidents provides illumination of certain key aspects of life in the prison. The rumors, which are gleaned from fellow inmates and the staff, give the players important information about the prison, mines, other inmates, and escape opportunities. Rounding out the data lists are eight pages of prisoners, guard, and staff profiles. UPPs and skills are given, along with a sentence or two on personality, background, and information known. Forty-nine different non-player characters are given.

*Prison Planet* is rounded out by two additional sections. The first details the prison and the mines, and includes six maps. Because the facility was once a mining installation, much of the prison is

underground; only one map is of ground-level buildings. Underneath the surface buildings is an administrative level and below that a cell-block level. The last three depict the mining areas. The second of these last sections is termed simply "Outside" and features a world map of Newcomb, animal and event tables, and a short description of the town of Circle City. Such information should prove vital if an escape attempt comes off.

I was very impressed with *Prison Planet*. Even though the topic is somewhat esoteric (how often are *Traveller* players going to wind up in the clink?) it is very well done and contains a surprising amount of detail. It is all there: corrupt guards, bad food, prison gangs and tough guys, and assignments in the danger zone for committing infractions. There is even a system for determining player's prison reputation, based on courage, brawling ability, squealing, and such. All the maps, rumors, and events combine to create the atmosphere of a correctional institution. Certainly recommended for the gamemaster who wants to be prepared for anything. Now let my players get themselves in a situation where the Imperials throw them in prison; I will be ready. □

| Event Table   |             |                        |
|---------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 2nd           |             |                        |
| 1             | 2           | 3                      |
| Staff Friend  | Snoop       | Gamble w Guard<br>1    |
| Good Behavior | Vocat Rehab | Safe Job<br>1          |
| Laundry       | Incident    | Gamble w Prisonrs<br>1 |



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# Books & Gaming

Reviews of books with interesting world settings useful for creating imaginative role-playing campaigns.

## MAGICIAN

By Raymond Feist  
(Doubleday, \$19.95)

Reviewed by David Dunham

*Magician* is, as far as I know, the first inversion of a growing trend. It is a novel based on a campaign, rather than a game based on a series of books. Mr. Feist is senior editor at Midkemia Press; *Different Worlds* readers may know him as co-author of such products as *Tulan* and *Jonril*. *Magician* is set in the same world, the world of Midkemia.

The central character is Pug. When we first see him, he is a keep boy for the Duke of Crydee. When he shows some magic talent, he is apprenticed to the court magician. But Pug has a problem: although he has great potential as a spell user, he is unable to learn a single spell. He does manage to save the princess by casting a spell at some trolls, but is unable to repeat the feat. Then his studies are interrupted.

The kingdom is being invaded by people from another world, who arrive through 'gates' in vast numbers, seeking metal. The rest of the book is about this conflict (the Riftwar), which lasts for years. It is more concerned with the behind the scenes intrigue on both sides than with battles. During the course of the war, Pug and his friend Tomas are transformed (in addition to simply growing up). Both play major roles in resolving the struggle, with the aid of an enigmatic wizard.

The idea of parallel worlds joined by gates is not a new one to gamers, but it was handled

well. There were intriguing commonalities between the two worlds (both play chess), but as can be expected, they are primarily different. The kingdom seems based on medieval Europe, while the Tsurani are modeled on the Japanese. For some reason this bothers me. There is nothing wrong with a culture with many things in common, such as strict adherence to a code of honor, but even the names sounded Japanese, and the language is described as being tonal. This is supposed to be a fantasy, but I found too many familiar elements. Still, conflict between two cultures is always an interesting topic, and one which can be used to advantage in any role-playing campaign. But while I am on the topic of gripes, I was amazed that a duchy can carry on warfare for nine years without some economic deprivation.

The book has a grand scale. The action spans two worlds and over ten years, while the characters range from slaves to kings. Despite the diversity, I was interested in all the subplots, and enjoyed the book as a whole.

*Magician* is a genuine book, not a writeup of a campaign. It is an excellent example of campaign background, although in this regard it would be most useful to those who have seen Midkemia Press' game products.

## THE WIZARD AND THE WARLORD

By Elizabeth Boyer  
(Del Rey Books, \$2.95)

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

When we did a special Norse issue in *Different Worlds* 26, we missed an opportunity to include reviews of books with themes drawn from Norse sagas. *The Wizard and the Warlord* is Elizabeth Boyer's fourth novel for Del Rey in this category, and each of them offers meat for the enjoyment of anyone whose enthusiasms include the Northern Thing. The three earlier novels are *The Sword and the Satchel*, *The Elves and the Otterskin*, and *The Thrall and the Dragon's Heart*.

*Wizard* introduces us to the bleakness of life in a farming community threatened from within by superstition and from without by winter, wolves, and the nightly predations of the trolls. One by one, families have pulled up

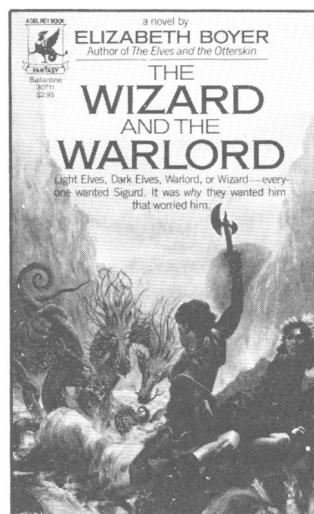
stakes and moved south into probable thralldom, to escape the apparent doom that prowls the land, which they blame on Sigurd's grandmother, his only surviving relative. When Thorarna dies, Sigurd accepts a combination of capture and adoption by a band of outlaws, and finds himself taken from his world to the realm of the Alfar. And right into the middle of the war between the light and dark elves for domination of the land.

Sigurd is a rather unattractive lead character. As Anna Russell said of Wagner's Siegfried, this hero is young, strong, handsome—and stupid. He consistently misjudges the character and motivations of the people he meets, giving some justification to the

melodramatic turns of the plot. In fairness, someone brought up in virtual isolation by a grandmother who was protecting him from his enemies would really be that unsophisticated about people, even if it does leave the reader somewhat frustrated.

Readers of the sagas will recognize themes and motifs used by the author in details of the plotline: the isolated heir, the cursed sword, kinslaying/friendslaying, the persecuting monster, and encounters with people are not what they seem, among others. The real justification for recycling old materials is that by doing so, the author brings them to life for the modern reader in greater detail than the novice can get from simply reading translations of the original sagas. The only thing I hesitate about in this process is the happy ending Boyer gives her tale, but that is the modern preference, unlike the original Vikings who liked sagas with tragic endings.

The alert gamer will see many details that can be added to a role-playing campaign as plot elements and touches for flavor. The part that most impressed me was the treatment of the undead. Anyone who enjoyed Laurence J. P. Gillespie's article in *DW* 26 on Norse beliefs about the nature and powers of the undead will find them vividly brought to bear on the living in this novel in ways that should allow you to convert them to your campaign without much difficulty with mechanics. □



## SUPERWORLD ERRATA

Continued from page 39

Page 39. **Special Vulnerability:** (Correction)

HERO POINT GAIN PER LEVEL: 2 if the substance is very rare. . . , 4 if the substance is reasonably common. . . , or 6 if it is very common.

## GAMEMASTERS BOOK

Page 19. **Blackflash:** (Corrections)

MOVE (m/AR): Walk 8; Fly 40-200; Teleport 3000.

| SUPERPOWERS | Level | Energy | Hero Pts |
|-------------|-------|--------|----------|
| Teleport    | 28    | 14     | 28       |

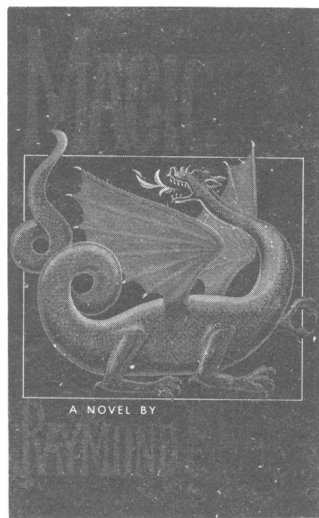
Page 29. **Brainwave:** (Addition)

| SUPERPOWERS    | Level | Energy | Hero Pts |
|----------------|-------|--------|----------|
| Gimmick Points | 60    | —      | 180      |

Page 29. **Cerebella:** (Correction)

| SUPERPOWERS          | Level | Energy | Hero Pts |
|----------------------|-------|--------|----------|
| Energy Supply: +240  | 24    | —      | 24       |
| Mind Block: 6 pts    | 6     | 6 (A)  | 6        |
| Teleport: 20 SIZ pts | 20    | 7      | 20       |

Page 37. **Leviathan:** (Correction) Leviathan should not get Conditional Use bonus for having increased SIZ only when a giant, though getting the bonus for the STR is legitimate. Find him a 2-point handicap (Bad Habit: always follows orders—?). □





# SUPERWORLD errata

By Steve Perrin

Someday, there will be the perfect set of rules—first edition *Superworld* was not it. The following additions, corrections, and revisions are the result of many notes from eagle-eyed readers and continued play.

## SUPERHEROES BOOK

**Page 8. Hero Points:** Stormbolt's hero points add up wrong. This is left over from the original *Superworld* in *Worlds Of Wonder*, and was never checked. Total should be 100, and Stormbolt should have additional problems to make up his hero points.

**Page 10. Recharge Rate:** This belongs on page 12. Also, the Recharge is per action rank, not per melee round.

**Page 16. Delaying Tactics:** (Correction) A hero may *not* delay his action rank beyond his next action rank. If he does not use it by then, it is lost.

**Page 18. Action Time Table:** (Clarification) If a flying character is maneuvering (doing anything but going in a straight line) while getting to his destination, he must use combat flight speed and this counts as a semi-action. If he moves in a straight line and intends to do something else after he gets where he is going, he must use combat flight speed and it is a quartermove. He cannot both maneuver and perform a semi-action unless he uses 1/4 of his combat speed while maneuvering.

(Addition)

### Semi-Action

Mental Control attack  
Emotion Control attack  
Mind Blast  
Telepathy  
Empathy  
Animate

### Instantaneous

Renew Mental Control  
Renew Emotion Control  
Force Field  
Dangersense

### Melee Round

Mind Search  
Heal

### Quartermove

Shape Change  
Impersonate

**Page 20. Damage Resulting from Throwing:** This is wrong. Use the Throw skill writeup in the *Superpowers Book*.

**Page 21. Impact Damage Table:** Round off values of SIZ and speed to the nearest entry on the table.

**Page 25. Hand-to-Hand:** Beginning percentage with a Fist is 50%, damage is 1D3. Beginning percentage with a Kick is 25%, damage is 1D6.

**Page 26. Hand-to-Hand:** (Continued) Basic percentage with a Grapple is 25%.

**Page 26. Archaic Weapons Table:** A shield will parry 6 points of damage, not 3 as implied by its hero point cost.

**Page 28. Smash:** The impacting hero will take half of the damage done to the target of the attack. "The SIZ of the smasher *on the Impact Table* may be increased. . ."

**Page 28. Aura Attack:** (Clarification) "... the hero may add his experience *points, both used and unused* to the resistance chance."

**Page 29. Parry:** Parries may be done one per one of the hero's action ranks. If his action ranks are 15 and 5, and he parries on 13, he cannot parry again until after action rank 5 has passed.

**Page 30. Double Knockback:** "Damage to the hero is determined as if hitting a solid object with *segment SIZ* equal to the lesser damage."

**Page 30. Preparing for Knockback:** "... based on his STR+SIZ vs. the damage. . ."

**Page 32. Glossary:** "No Time" should be "Instantaneous."

## SUPERPOWERS BOOK

**Page 4. Absorption—Purchase Restriction:** This power can only convert damage into energy or powers and characteristics which use energy at least every melee round, if not every action rank. Thus, it cannot be used to enhance hit points or Armor, unless these powers are bought with the disadvantage of costing energy per melee round to use. Force Fields and Mind Block, which cost energy when they are assailed, count as using energy per action rank.

**Page 5. Animate:**

HERO POINT COST PER LEVEL: 1.  
ENERGY COST PER MELEE ROUND: 1.

**Page 6. Mind Block:**

HERO POINT COST PER LEVEL: 1.

**Page 8. Emotion Control:** "Costs only 3 total to maintain control of *one target*, expended on the controller's first action rank each following melee round."

**Page 9. Energy Projection Special Effects:** (Next to last paragraph) "... the amount of protection is equal to the *hero points* in the projection."

**Page 12. Flight:**

HERO POINT COST PER LEVEL: 1/2 SIZ. *Add* minimum of 1 per level.

ENERGY COST PER MELEE ROUND: 1/2 SIZ. *Add* minimum of 1 energy point per level.

**Page 14. Gravity Projection:** (Explanation) Like any other projection, the user has a 50% chance to hit which can be increased through experience or expenditure of hero points.

(Clarification) Combat skill abilities are only reduced once for increased or decreased weights, no matter how many times they are doubled or halved.

**Page 16. Martial Arts:** Eliminate extra attack option. Buy Simultaneous Attack advantage if you want the hero to do more than one attack per melee round (qv).

**Page 18. Mind Search:** "May be attempted once per *melee round*."

**Page 19. Reduction:** (Correction) The superpower reduced must be specified when the power is *purchased*. Energy projections may be specified by either energy type (Electrical Projections) or by source (magical energy projections). Other powers are treated similarly.

**Page 20. Sidekick:** (Clarification) The sidekick's characteristics may be increased to the maximum possible *for the hero*. Thus, a hero with an INT of 18 could bring his INT up to 24, so a Sidekick would have a maximum INT of 24.

(Addition) Sidekicks may not use their points to buy more Sidekicks or Gimmick points.

**Page 20. Snare:** (Clarification)

LEVEL: 50% chance to entrap a target within 30 meters with an entrapping force with 1D6 potency.

(Change) PURCHASE RESTRICTIONS: None.

**Page 24. Teleport:** (Addition) Level effects are specified at time of use. Teleport will not take a hero into a solid object. He will appear as close to the object as possible on a line drawn from his starting place to the point he would have appeared if clear space was present.

**Page 26. Impaling:** (Clarification) Maximum of 1/4 POW in levels is only for damage producing levels, not for levels in increasing chance to impale.

**Page 26. Power Transfer:**

ENERGY COST: If the power has no normal energy cost, Transfer costs one energy point per hero point transferred per melee round.

If the Transfer is an attack, such as using Shape Change to turn a target into a toad, the target may resist the attack in a POW vs. POW roll on the Resistance Table.

**Page 27. Rapidfire:** (Correction)

ENERGY COST: None, each shot has normal energy cost.

**Page 28. Simultaneous Attacks:**

LEVEL: One additional attack of one level of damage of the power doing the simultaneous attack.

**Page 29. Skills:** (Clarification) If buying a skill through previous experience, the level increase is based on the original rolled characteristic. If buying with regular hero points, the level increase is based on the final characteristic.

**Page 29. Skills List:**

| Skill   | Base Chance | Level Increase |
|---------|-------------|----------------|
| Fist    | 50%         | 05%            |
| Grapple | 25%         | 05%            |
| Kick    | 25%         | 05%            |
| Smash   | 25%         | 05%            |

**Page 35. Action Rank Delay:** (Clarification)

LEVEL: One of *the hero's* action ranks.

**Page 39. Psychological Problem:** (Correction)

HERO POINT GAIN: 10 if the inciting occasion is common, 5 if uncommon. . .

Continued page 38

# Adventure by Design

The philosophy behind designing and gamemastering scenarios.

## ADAPTING PUBLISHED FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING MATERIALS FOR YOUR OWN CAMPAIGN

By Ken Rolston

Why use published materials at all? In a vague sense a gamemaster may feel that it reflects negatively on his creativity, originality, and imagination. (This silly preoccupation with "creative talent" is ironic, since we borrow most of our ideas from literary and archetypal sources anyway.) If we look on a published scenario as a play-script, it is easy to see that there is plenty of opportunity for creative interpretation. In many ways, it is harder to present a published scenario than to write and present your own. Most published fantasy role-playing materials are more detailed and intricate in design than our own creations. Studying them is time-consuming, and living up to their professional standards can be a real challenge. Though published materials may be time- and labor-savers, their greatest virtue is their superior quality and the inspiration and stimulation they provide for the gamemaster and players.

### Utilising Published Fantasy Role-Playing Materials

Some fantasy role-playing systems have campaign materials as an integral part of their design, and published supplements fit into these campaigns without extensive adaptation. For example, Chaosium's Gloranthan *RuneQuest* adventures are intended to fit smoothly into anyone's Gloranthan campaigns. However, most gamemasters have campaigns of their own devising, and published materials will have to be adapted to fit into their fantasy role-playing worlds.

The simplest scheme is to introduce the published scenario as a subplot to the ongoing campaign. The only adaptations will be to make allowances for the specific motivations of the player-characters and to make any necessary connections with the antagonists and themes of the main campaign. Each player-character must have a plausible reason for entering into the subplot (desire for wealth, glory, honor, protection of the weak, etc.), and the action must have some significance in the larger context of the cam-

paign (advancing toward an ultimate confrontation with an arch-villain, or furthering the universal causes of justice or avarice).

More often individual fragments from published material will provide elements in a gamemaster's more-or-less original scenario. Settings, characters, and narrative ideas may be used to fill out an outline, or may become the central inspiration for an adventure. Whenever a scenario idea calls for a small village, a knight and his retinue, or a couple of action encounters, the gamemaster can scan his library of game supplements for the elements he needs. He may take a tavern from one city pack (the setting), a band of outlaws from a wilderness adventure (bad guys), a priest of an exotic religion from a dungeon setting (the victim), and glue them together for an evening's entertainment. Most useful are town and city environments, with diagrams of dwellings and streets—these are too time-consuming to create by yourself for a single adventure. It also takes a lot of time in some systems to set up the stats and personalities of powerful non-player characters (particularly spellcasters and comic superheroes); it is much faster to adapt some ready-made non-player character from a published adventure. Often a trivial encounter from a supplement will expand into an entire session of action. The "Encounter Book" in the *RuneQuest Borderlands* package, for example, is a gold mine of minor adventures, easily adapted to most wilderness settings.

### What to Look for in a Published Fantasy Role-Playing Supplement

**Ease of reference:** So you do not have to dig through everything to find the detail you want. Look through the table of contents and index; make sure the structure of the presentation is logical and well-outlined, with bold-face type and sub-headings to emphasize the organization of the material.

**Useful layout:** Modular design—easy to use a small part of the material. Separate handouts for the players: background material, scale diagrams and maps of the setting. Separate summary sheets of non-player stats. Single-page-unity—the page as the basic unit of design. Avoids need to turn or flip pages during scenario to reference the details of a setting, encounter, or personality.

**Detailed antagonists:** The tactics, strategies, and objectives of the bad guys or monsters should be complete and explicit. Often overlooked, this element of scenario design relieves the gamemaster of the burden of improvising his forces' tactics while trying to impartially referee the fast, tense action of dramatic conflict.

**Campaign compatibility:** Adaptable to the topography, climate, history, politics, economics, level of civilization and technology, and basic themes of your established campaign. Divinities and magic systems are often very difficult to adapt, and critical to a stable campaign, even though they may be a relatively small portion of the supplement.

**Style compatibility:** Consistent with your gamemastering style—role-playing, wargaming, or storytelling.

### "But My Players Always Read the Supplements. . ."

One real problem with using published materials is that your players have access to them. In this case the gamemaster should keep up-to-date on forthcoming publications, and extract agreements before publication that the players will not read them until they are used in the campaign. Another solution is to use materials from obscure sources. Many excellent materials are produced by small independent game designers or published in magazines with small circulations. Back issues and "Best of. . ." reprints can be mined for ideas and scenarios. Though it is a pain trying to keep one step ahead of your players, it is the only way to feel completely comfortable about presenting them an adventure using published materials. □

## HOLLYWOOD

*Continued from page 31*

you would, but the picture does star Sybil Danning, the new queen of action-adventure. See it for Sybil. *Dark Warrior*—another samurai-type flick in modern-day times, with Sho Kosugi playing Kishi, a master teacher, leader, and warrior fighting injustice. Mr. Kosugi did the stunt choreography on *Enter the Ninja*, which was one of the best martial arts films I have ever seen. The film takes place in Houston TX, and begins filming there in March of 1984.

**A quick TV trip:** Well, it is affirmed, *Blue Thunder* will be a TV series. However, not to be outdone, the tiny tube has brought two other series based on super-helicopters. One is called *AirWolf*, the other untitled. Like we always say, a good idea can work over and over again. Or is that be worked over again?

*Listen, with all this news, I have only begun to list the films which should be coming your way in 1984. Next time, more snappy titles and synopses. Keep going to the movies, keep gaming, and keep happy. It is a good way to live life. Bye!*

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# What's New

New products and publications for the adventure role-player. Game companies are encouraged to send samples of their new releases for announcement in this column.

## NEW SYSTEMS

**Donjons & Dragons** (TSR, Box 756, Lk Geneva IL 53147, \$?) par Gary Gygax et Dave Arneson. This is the French edition of the *Dungeons & Dragons* "Niveau Debutant" Basic Set.

**James Bond 007** (Victory Games, 43 W 33rd St, Suite 603, New York NY 10001, \$9.95) by Gerard Christopher Klug. This 160-page book describes a secret agent role-playing game based on the popular spy novel/movie series. There is a player section and a gamemaster section with rules on chases, tailing, seduction, interrogation, torture, gambling, fame, shady contacts, thrilling cities, tarot, and the island of Dr. No.

**The Palladium Role-Playing Game** (Palladium Books, 5669 Casper Ave, Detroit MI 48210, \$19.95) by Kevin Siembieda. This 280-page book describes a fantasy role-playing system with 20 character classes, 290 magic spells, 60 wards, 50 magic circles, races, psionics, dragons, monsters, etc.

**Mach** (Alliance Publications, 13 Sunset Cir, Bettendorf IA 52722, \$?) by Michael Lange. This is subtitled "A role-playing game of soldiers of fortune in a New World." Comes boxed with three books, the first two books, 32-pages each, contains the rules, and the third, 16-page book, contains a frontier scenario by Martin Miller.

**Super Squadron** (Adventure Simulations, Box 182, Mitcham 3132, Victoria, Australia, \$?) by Joseph Italiano. This is a superhero role-playing game in two books. The first book is 56 pages and contains rules on character generation, encounters, combat, world creation, romance, etc. The second, 24-page adventure book, contains ten scenarios of increasing complexity.

## FOR AD&D

**Monster Manual II** (TSR, \$?) by Gary Gygax. This 160-page book contains all new monsters including an expanded list of lycanthropes, giants, and others. There is also an extensive set of encounter tables incorporating all three monster books.

## FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

**Cthulhu Companion** (Chaosium, Box 6302, Albany CA 94706, \$8) edited by Yurek Chodak. This 64-page book contains articles on Cthulhu in Mesoamerica, notes on the Necronomicon, prisons, new phobias, additional Cthulhu dei-

ties, races, and monsters, four scenarios, Cthulhu poetry and songs, and more.

**Pursuit To Kadath** (TOME, 2706 Hamilton Dr, Kirkwood NJ 08043, \$10) by Bob Gallagher. This 76-page book describes an investigatory adventure into the First National Bank robbery by a young Miskatonic University student. There is also a bonus scenario titled "The All-Seeing Eye of the Alkali" by E.S. Erkes involving a disappearance in Turkey of an English archaeologist.

## FOR CAR WARS

**Reference Screen** (Steve Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin TX 78760, \$5) by the staff of *Auto-duel Quarterly*. This is a 25 1/2" x 11" folded cardstock printed both sides with reference charts and tables. Also included is a vehicle design data sheet and record sheets for characters, vehicles, cycles, tractors, copters, etc.

## FOR DAREDEVILS

**Daredevil Adventures 2** (FGU, Box 182, Roslyn NY 11576, \$5). This 24-page book contains an article on adding ninja to the game and two scenarios: "The Secret of Tahuka Hiva" by William H. Keith, Jr., involving an escape from hostile Japanese forces on a lonely Pacific island; and "The Menace Beneath the Sea" by J. Andrew Keith, a sequel to "Deadly Coins" in *Adventures 1*.

## FOR D&D EXPERT SET

**Maze of the Riddling Minotaur** (TSR, \$?) by Jeff Grubb. This 32-page scenario comes with an invisible ink pen for solo-play. The adventure is based on the Theseus/Minotaur/Labyrinth Greek myth.

**Temple of Death** (TSR, \$?) by David Cook. This 32-page adventure is the second module in the

"Desert Nomads" series. The adventure involves battling fierce guardians, traveling through a hostile kingdom, and discovering the secret of the mysterious "Master."

## FOR DONJONS & DRAGONS

**Le palais de la Princesse Argenta** (TSR, \$?) par Tom Moldvay et Jean Wells. This is the French edition of *D&D Basic Set* module B3.

**La Cite Perdue** (TSR, \$?) par Tom Moldvay. This is the French edition of *D&D Basic Set* module B4.

## FOR EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE

**Tekumel Source Book** (Gamescience, 01956 Pass Rd, Gulfport MS 39501, \$?) by M.A.R. Barker. Comes boxed with a 136-page book and a 21" x 27" double-sided map, this supplement describes Tekumel's history, families and clans, religion and magic, social groups and institutions, government, military, priesthood, customs, entertainment, the arts, etc.

## FOR ESPIONAGE AND MS & PE

**Border Crossing** (Hero Games, 92A 21st Ave, San Mateo CA 94402, \$5.95) by L. Douglas Garrett. This 32-page book describes various scenarios involving daring missions across the Iron Curtain into East Germany.

## FOR JAMES BOND 007

**Q Manual** (Victory Games, \$9.95) by Greg Gorden. This 144-page book describes with over 150 illustrations weapons and equipment used in the James Bond movie series. Weapons include air-to-air missiles and the LPO-50 flamethrower. Vehicle descriptions include the Aston Martin Lagonda and the Rolls Royce Silver Spirit with such modifications as revolving license plates and oil slick sprayer. Exotic devices include Oddjob's hat, sodium amy-tal, special attache cases, and garrotte watch.

**Gamemaster Pack** (Victory Games, \$8.95). This semi-boxed module (does not include box cover—only the base) includes a 32" x 11" gamemaster screen, 23 counters with bases, 40 character record sheets, and a map grid.

**Goldfinger** (Victory Games, \$6.95) by Robert Kern. This module describes an investigation into the secret dealings of gold-smuggling suspect Auric Goldfinger. Comes in a semi-box with a

48-page gamemaster's guide, an agent's briefing dossier (envelope) with eight information sheets, and a 17" x 11" folder with maps.

**Octopussy** (Victory Games, \$6.95) by Neil Randall. This adventure involves an investigation into the Soviet's sale of a tsarist treasure, one of the Faberge Eggs, at Sotheby's in London. Comes in a semi-box with a 48-page gamemaster's guide, an envelope with eight mission sheets, and a 17" x 11" rogues gallery folder.

## FOR MERC

**MERC: Supplement 1** (FGU, \$5) by Paul D. Baader, et al. This 28-page book adds more specialists, more skills, poisons, vehicles, and clarifies as well as adds restrictions to the material in the original game.

## FOR SPACE OPERA

**Agents Of Rebellion** (FGU, \$5.50) by Phil McGregor. This 28-page book contains a series of adventures for a rebel underground involving a rescue mission, a star-base raid, escape from a hostile planet, and more.

## FOR STORMBRINGER

**Stormbringer Companion** (Chaosium, \$10) by Steve Perrin, et al. This 80-page book contains six scenarios including a solo-adventure, twelve new creature descriptions, nine Melnibonitan player-character descriptions, and miscellaneous potions, adversaries, and magic items.

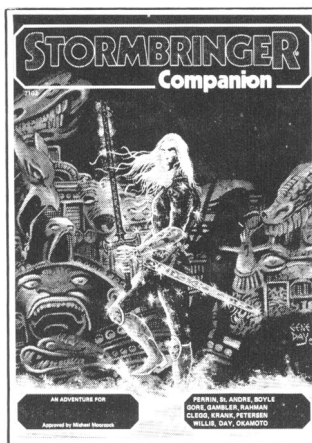
## FOR THIEVES' GUILD

**Thieves' Guild 8** (Gamelords, 18616 Grosbeak Ter, Gaithersburg MD 20879, \$?) by Kerry Lloyd, et al. This 32-page book contains notes on ranged weapons, highwayman encounters, the first part of a pursuit adventure, and a rescue scenario.

## FOR ANY SYSTEM

**The Compleat Alchemist** (Bard Games, Box 7424, Greenwich CT 06836, \$7.50) by Steven Codovano & Stephen Michael Sechi. This 48-page book describes an alchemy system. It includes among other things notes on ingredients, ciphers, elixirs, talismans, apprentices, experimentation, and explosions.

**The Compleat Spell Caster** (Bard Games, \$7.50) by Stephen Michael Sechi & Vernie Taylor. This 44-page book is intended as a supplementary magic system. It includes among other things notes





on character classes, familiars, runes, circles of protection, demons, elementals, and guardians.

**In Search of Kelandor's Gold** (Judges Guild, RR 8 Box 9, 1221 N Sunnyside Rd, Decatur IL 62522, \$3) by Greg Geilman. For 5-8 adventurers of levels 6-10, this 80-page book describes an adventure to clear an ancient castle of its monstrous inhabitants.

**The Imliv River Valley** (Labyrinth Games, c/o Olympus Publishing, 3114 Rvr Fls Dr, Northbrook IL 60062, \$3.50) by Scott Roy. This 16-page adventure comes with six pre-rolled character sheets. The adventure involves saving a gnome town from feuding goblin tribes.

## FOR LOST WORLDS

**Dwarf in Chainmail with Two-Handed Axe/Giant Goblin with Mace and Shield** (Nova, 46 Dougherty St, Manchester CT 06040, \$11.95) by Alfred Leonardi. This is two 32-page booklets, each with a character sheet. Rules include character development, height advantage, and multi-player games.

## GAMEBOOKS

**The Warlock of Firetop Mountain** (Dell, 245 E 47th St, New York NY 10017, \$1.95) by Steve Jackson & Ian Livingstone. This pocketbook involves a perilous quest to find the warlock's treasure.

**Endless Quest Book 7: Hero of Washington Square** (TSR, \$2) by Rose Estes. This 160-page pocketbook, based on the *Top Secret* game, involves "a gang of cut-throat spies who will stop at nothing to gain the secret of nuclear weaponry."

**Endless Quest Book 8: Villains of Volturnus** (TSR, \$2) by Jean Blashfield. This 160-page pocket-

book based on the *Star Frontiers* game involves "evil space pirates, strange and shapeless Dralasites, (and) the terrible quickdeath monster!" as "YOU find yourself stranded on the forbidding planet Volturnus."

**Endless Quest Book 9: Robbers and Robots** (TSR, \$2) by Mike Carr. This 160-page pocketbook based on the *Top Secret* game involves "(s)pies . . . out to steal technological secret from your uncle's robot factory."

**Endless Quest Book 10: Circus of Fear** (TSR, \$2) by Rose Estes. This 160-page pocketbook based on the *D&D* game involves "a cruel circus owner(s) plans to take over the country."

## MAGAZINES

**The American Wargamer Vol. 10, Nr. 9** (c/o George Phillis, 1225 Island Dr, Apt 204, Ann Arbor MI 48105, 75 cents) edited by George Phillis. This 12-page issue contains game reviews, editorials, news and reports, generally on wargames and miniatures gaming.

**Crypt Of Cthulhu 15** (c/o Robert M. Price, 35 Elmbrook Pl, Bloomfield NJ 07003, \$2) edited by Robert M. Price. This is an H.P. Lovecraft/Cthulhu fanzine. Digest-sized, this 36-page issue contains, among other things, comments of the Dunsany-Lovecraft influence, book reviews, and notes on the Lovecraft fandom titled "Fun Guys From Yuggoth."

**The Spell Book Vol. 2, Nr. 3-4** (c/o Corey S. Cole, 863 San Pablo Ave, Sunnyvale CA 94086, \$1.50) edited by Corey and Lori Cole. This 40-page digest-sized issue contains fiction, "monsters to send you screaming," books for a

fantasy gamer's library, a review, fantasy wanted ads, letters, and more.

## PLAY-BY-MAIL

**Feudal Lords** (Graff Simulations, 27530 Harper, St Clair Shrs MI 48081, \$2.50 per turn/\$2.50 for rules and first turn set-up) by John Van De Graaf. The game begins in the year 801 AD following the death of King Arthur who left no legal heir. The object of the game is become the new king of Britain. There are up to 15 players in each game and each turn represents one year. The rules are 16 pages long.

## BOARDGAMES

**Bug-Eyed Monsters** (West End Games, 251 W 30th St, Suite 4E, New York NY 10001, \$?) by Greg Costikyan. The aliens have landed in a remote American town. For two players, in the first scenario, the aliens attempt to capture human women; in the second, they attempt to capture presidential candidate Dwight Eisenhower. The game comes boxed with a 17"x22" map, 160 counters, an 8-page rulebook, a pair of dice, and a counter tray.

**The Fellowship of the Ring** (ICE, Box 1605, Charlottesville VA 22902, \$25). This is a two-player game with the Fellowship player attempting to carry the Ring towards Mordor and its eventual destruction in the Cracks of Doom, and the Sauron player attempting to hunt down the Fellowship and capture the Ring. Comes boxed with a 21"x26" mounted map, 222 cards, 65 playing pieces, 40 counters, a 24-page rulebook, playaids, and a twenty-sided die.

**Hannibal** (Aulic Council, \$?) by

Glenn E. Kidd. This boxed game comes with a 22"x17" mounted map, 176 counters, 80 cards, an 8-page rulebook, and two dice. This two-player game covers the Second Punic war fought between the Carthaginians and the Romans. The game involves the Roman senate, naval movement, storming cities, leaders, recruitment, treachery, etc.

**Shadowlord!** (Parker Brothers, Box 1012, Beverly MA 01915, \$?) by ?. A 2-4 player game for ages 10-adult each vying to become the Master of the Universe, it comes boxed with power rings, character disks, space ships, the power stone, power cards, the battlefield, guide cards, two 8-sided dice, and a 24-page rules booklet as well as a counter storage tray. The game involves space ships, allies, bribery, multiple duels, diplomatic immunity, verbal agreements, and more.

**Survive!** (Parker Brothers, \$?) by ?. A 2-4 player game for ages 8-adult, it comes boxed with a 19½"x19½" playing board, one die, 5 sea-serpents, 5 whales, 6 sharks, 12 boats, 40 "people" tokens, 40 land pieces, and a 4-page rules booklet. The game involves people trying to survive an island which an underwater volcanic reaction is causing to sink into the sea.

## CARD GAMES

**Jasmine** (Jasmine Publications, Box 648, Lk Geneva WI 53147, \$13) by Darlene Pekul. This is a card game for 2-4 players. Based on the illustrated-fantasy adventure "The Story of Jasmine," the object is to gain control over the lands of Mid-Realm. Comes in a small plastic box with 112 cards and an 8-page rulebook. □

## FILMS

*Continued from page 45*

ticipants, whose senses flow more easily with new experiences, the effect of *Brainstorm* will be even more penetrating."

*Brainstorm* is the story of a revolutionary invention: a sophisticated recording machine which, when linked to superconductive brainwave sensors and the newest computer equipment, reads and stores the complete range of perceptions, new or remembered, of any individual, making those perceptions available as recorded 'experiences' to be played back at the touch of a button. Thus, the challenge to Trumbull and his staff was to recreate human experiences for the screen, enhancing them to trigger a sense of participation on the part of the

audience. Of course, the job of any director is to do this throughout any film. Here, Trumbull had to make the film seem real, and then make the 'Brainstorm' segments seem even more real. A great deal of care was taken to avoid revealing the contents of these 'experiential sequences,' in order to insure the maximum potential of these effects to the audience. "We want people to come to this new process with as few preconceptions as possible, so they will watch the movie, rather than watching for the movie's special effects," explained the director. "If we've done our job right," concluded Trumbull, "no one will be disappointed."

No one should be. *Brainstorm* is a well-thought-out, visually exciting, and yet subdued film, the kind the science-fiction genre could use some more examples of.

Trumbull has been involved with a number of 'thinking' science-fiction films. He directed and created *Silent Running*, and did much of the special effects work for *Close Encounters* and *Bladerunner*. In *Brainstorm*, he has turned his back on the 'showier' aspects of the genre, choosing to work with a much more internalized idea. His choice is a good one; the film works on several levels at once at all times, giving the audience much more to think about than it does to look at. More than just another fantasy or pulp novel, like *Star Wars* or *Yor, Brainstorm* is an involving film. As Trumbull explained, "What we tried to do is to make a movie that will feel like a dream. You don't simply watch a dream as a passive observer—you fall into its world. A dream surrounds you, and at the same time penetrates

you at a sensory level. (Again), if we've done our job right, you won't simply see *Brainstorm*, you will feel it."

Trumbull's concern for doing his job right paid off; *Brainstorm* is the best science-fiction film of the year. Well-acted, suggestive rather than hard-hitting, reserved instead of flamboyant, the film accomplishes much by merely presenting its topic and letting the audience extrapolate the details.

After the mess the field became during this summer, I was ready to turn away from reviewing altogether. It was beginning to look as if serious science fiction and fantasy, adult films capable of provoking thought as well as emotions seemed dead.

Efforts like *Brainstorm* luckily show that the genre's obituary may be a little further off than I thought.



# Film Reviews

Reviews of outstanding feature films of interest to adventure role-players. Good movies are indispensable sources of gaming ideas.

Reviewed by John Nubbin

*The last column of the summer; at times I thought I might never make it. Unlike most of the public, a film reviewer has to see everything. While most of you sat safe at home, watching MTV or enjoying a wander through Dexter House, or the mines in Gibbsville, I was out there, seeing all the movies you wouldn't waste your time on. And wasted time it would have been.*

*This was the summer science fiction and fantasy paid the price of popular success. This was the year every two-bit huckster in Hollywood managed to scrape together enough capital and equipment to help coat the screen with more trash. If next year is worse, then I'll quit reviewing. Another three months like the past trio I could not take.*

*Superman III, Krull, Hercules, Nightmare, Jaws III-D, Return of the Jedi, The Man Who Wasn't There, and a dozen other thoroughly awful mounds of gutter slime were pumped up on the screens, all bellowing for our dollars. Fortunately, the fact that most of the above did tepid business at best may help to put a curb to such fare. All in all, though, there were basically three types of films in the science-fiction/fantasy field this year: totally awful; not good, not bad; and good idea, poor execution. And, the three films that most typify these categories are: Yor, the Hunter from the Future, Space Hunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone in 3-D, and Metalstorm: the Destruction of Jared-Syn in 3-D.*

## YOR, THE HUNTER FROM THE FUTURE

Producer . . . . . Michele Marsala  
Director . . . . . Anthony M. Dawson  
Screenplay . . . . . Robert Bailey/  
Anthony M. Dawson  
Music . . . . . John Scott/

Guido & Maurizio DeAngelis  
Photography. Marcello Masciocchi

### CAST

Yor . . . . . Reb Brown  
Ka-Laa . . . . . Corinne Clery  
Overlord . . . . . John Steiner  
Ena . . . . . Carole Andre  
Pag . . . . . Alan Collins

Out of all the totally awful films this summer, *Yor* was by far the worst. Whereas some had at least good effects, or good acting, or a few brilliant strokes by the director, what have you, *Yor* had absolutely nothing. The camera work was not up to your Aunt Tillie's home movies. Pre-schooler renditions of *Red Riding Hood* have captured more of the spirit of classic fantasy than it does, or any kind of fantasy for that matter.

Not having a lot of room, I will not waste what I have listing *Yor*'s faults, or placing blame. There is no point. Every single thing about *Yor* was bad. Cheaply put together with little-to-no forethought, it rambles on from beginning to end, never bothering with anything so trite as a plot or understandable action.

## SPACEHUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE

Producer . . . . . Ivan Reitman  
Director . . . . . Lamont Johnson  
Screenplay . . . . . Edith Rey  
& David Preston/  
Dan Goldberg & Len Blum  
Music . . . . . Elmer Bernstein  
Photography. .Frank Tidy, B.S.C.

### CAST

Wolff . . . . . Peter Strauss  
Niki . . . . . Molly Ringwald  
Washington . . . . . Ernie Hudson  
Overdog . . . . . Michael Ironside

The middle-of-the-road award goes to *Spacehunter*. For those who saw it, you will remember that like any other 3-D film ever made, there was no reason for the 3-D. It is a bothersome process

which has defied the best people who ever worked with it to do anything worthwhile with it.

Skipping past the movie's major selling point thusly, we can then examine it as we might any other film. Here, *Spacehunter* does not lose as many points. It was not as bad a film as it was pointless. A section of the story made a fairly good comic strip in *Heavy Metal*, but unfortunately, that was the best part of the show. All of *Spacehunter* never rises above the level of a comic book, and while I still like a number of comics myself, I am not in the habit of paying \$4.50 for an average one. And therewithin lies the trouble.

The people who put *Spacehunter* together made an effort to get good people. The acting works in all of the principal roles (although some of the supporting characters got the empty elevator); direction and photography were always at least standard, etc. The picture was a perfect example of its classification: not too good and not too bad. The main problem here is that we have seen it all before.

Every move in the script we have seen, every word out of the speakers we have heard, somewhere before. Comics, pulp stories, Saturday serials, C-movies since they were first made—everything contributed something to the film, but no one tried to make it do anything new. Or different. Or involving. Or (ultimately) very interesting, either.

## METALSTORM: THE DESTRUCTION OF JARED-SYN

Producer . . . . . Charles Band/  
Alan J. Adler  
Director . . . . . Charles Band  
Screenplay . . . . . Alan J. Adler  
Music . . . . . Richard Band  
Photography. . . . . Mac Ahlberg

### CAST

Dogen . . . . . Jeffrey Byron

Jared-Syn . . . . . Mike Preston  
Rhodes . . . . . Tim Thonerson  
Dhyana . . . . . Kelly Preston  
Hurak . . . . . Richard Moll  
Baal . . . . . R. David Smith

*Metalstorm* is the type of movie we see every couple of years. In many ways it is the most heart-breaking of the three. With the first two, we only lose money and time. We come out of the theater feeling vaguely dissatisfied, cheated, and foolish. We vow again never to waste money on such garbage, and we go home wondering why people can't make good movies any more.

With *Metalstorm*, however, we hit that odd picture like *Maniac*, or *Mad Max*, which is just seething with potential, and yet everything does not quite come off. Despite a number of extremely good actors, fine jobs of directing by Charles Band and scripting by Alan Adler, a good score (if a somewhat limited one), and a lot of imagination, *Metalstorm* misses the boat for only one reason . . . not enough money.

Despite the clever Western steals, the subtle blending of traditional story-lines, and all the rest, the film simply falls apart at the end. The effects, which have been top-notch until then (again, in a limited sort of way), lose everything they had going for them in the last fifteen minutes, as does the story, and everything else.

It is apparent that towards the end, the producers (also Band and Adler) started to run out of money. Despite the clever ways they found to stretch the dollar throughout most of the film, the budget strained their wiles towards the end of the production, and the entire project suffers vastly for it. If money had not been wasted on 3-D, the picture might have been much more enjoyable. As it is, it just misses the mark, which is a true shame. Like the above mentioned *Mad Max*,



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the team has left itself open for a sequel. We can only hope that like *Max*'s producers, Band and Adler will be recognized as men trying to do something in the field who have the potential for turning their humble beginnings into a box office buster like *Road Warrior*.

*It is a sad statement, but a true one, that the movie industry is run by accountants. Men with money, not with imagination, vision; people who do not read, and who barely think, let alone wonder, control what is and is not made in the way of films. Going to see the same old thing without any discrimination only adds to their determination to give you the same picture again as soon as they can.*

*Like a mother with limited cooking skills, they will serve the same dish over and over until you are bloody sick of it, and then scratch their heads in amazement when suddenly, after four years (ten years? twenty years? Some people have strong constitutions) you say you don't want any more.*

*I shudder to think what we will have on our screens next year if films like *Yor* make a profit.*

*However, with summer over, this fall did bring in a couple of gems, namely the return of Sean Connery as James Bond in *Never Say Never Again* and *Natalie Wood's* last film *Brainstorm*.*

## NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN

Producer . . . . . Jack Schwartzman  
Director . . . . . Irvin Kershner  
Music . . . . . Michel Legrand  
Photography . . . . . Douglas Slocombe, B.S.C.  
Screenplay . . . . . Lorenzo Semple, Jr.

### CAST

James Bond . . . . . Sean Connery  
Largo . . . . . Klaus Maria Brandauer  
Blotfeld . . . . . Max Von Sydow  
Fatima Blush . . . . . Barbara Carrera  
Domino . . . . . Kim Basinger

One can look at *Never Say Never Again* in two ways; in fact, one is almost forced to look at this film in two very different lights. On the one hand, it should only be viewed as the latest James Bond film, nothing more or less. On the other, though, it is the latest Sean Connery/James Bond film, something that no one ever thought was going to happen—and something which forced comments of comparison, whether they are fair or not.

Many critics have gone completely overboard, calling *Never* the best Bond picture in ten years. This is not exactly true. *Never* is a fair Bond film, settling in fairly comfortably at 'above average.' It is better than some of the other Connery films, and is certainly better than most of the Moore pictures, but it is far from the best. Although Sean is in fine form, never once losing that intrinsic perfection of character which will always make him the best Bond, *Never Say Never Again* is not a film necessarily worthy of him.

*Never* spends too much time making the action humorous—far too many cheap jokes are imbedded throughout, jokes oftentimes made at Bond's expense. Lorenzo Semple, Jr., the screenwriter who made a laughing stock of Flash Gordon, who wrote Dino de's *King Kong*, and who is largely responsible for television's *Batman*, has a grand history of treating heroes with contempt. It might be he really had no idea that you cannot expect an audience to respect an adventurer who looks like a moron most of the time. Possibly, Semple has never sat through a serious adventure film such as *The Empire Strikes Back*, or the original *King Kong*, and noticed how much more exciting and involving a picture which takes itself seriously can be. No matter; the screenplay for *Never Say Never Again* is a damaging factor here, one which almost ruins the film despite Connery's

quite formidable presence, and the more than capable cast backing him up.

And capable they are; Klaus Maria Brandauer may be the most interesting Bond villain ever. Certainly Barbara Carrera is the best villainess ever to grace an 007 adventure. Both of the characters are fleshed out with intriguing quirks, ranging from morbid senses of humor to sadistic and perverted attitudes so opposed to Bond's basic 'normal' humanity as to make them seem unbeatable. They are so sure of their power Bond does not seem to stand a chance, a hard attitude to get across to an audience who knows there is no possible way Bond cannot win.

And, of course, win he does. Despite the reeking awfulness of most of the script, the out-of-place jokes, useless gimmick scenes, and the mindless confusion of the film's last half hour which makes the picture almost pointless, Connery does pull it off. In a Moore Bond, people would have been walking out in large clumps, extremely disappointed. But for Connery they will stick it out, and even though the film might be disappointing here and there, the star never is, and in that way, *Never Say Never Again* succeeds.

The producers made a bad choice in Semple, and in Michel Legrand for the score. Legrand is an accomplished film scorer, but not of this type of film. He was out of his league as Semple, and the film suffers for both their presences. Luckily, though, their choice of stars (every actor picked with only a few minor role 'so-so' performances) was exceptional, as was their good fortune in netting Douglas Slocombe (*Raiders, Close Encounters, Rollerball*) as director of photography. His lensemanship saves many scenes which might have appeared far more trivial without his extraordinary camera sense. Coupling his talent with that of director Irvin Kersh-

ner was more than fortunate, it made up for the film's very serious defects, and allowed the performers to turn what would have been an otherwise mediocre movie into something pleasantly watchable.

*Never Say Never Again* is not great, but Connery is—and for a lot of people, including myself, that was enough. This time, anyway.

## BRAINSTORM

Producer . . . . . Douglas Trumbull  
Director . . . . . Douglas Trumbull  
Music . . . . . James Horner  
Photography . . . . . Richard Yuricich, A.S.C.  
Screenplay . . . . . Robert Stitzel & Philip Frank Messina

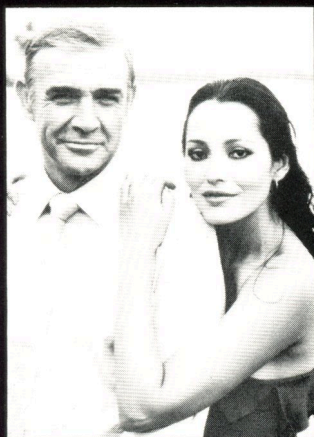
### CAST

Michael Brace . . . . . Christopher Walken  
Karen Brace . . . . . Natalie Wood  
Lillian Reynolds . . . . . Louise Fletcher  
Alex Terson . . . . . Cliff Robertson  
Gordy Forbes . . . . . Jordan Christopher

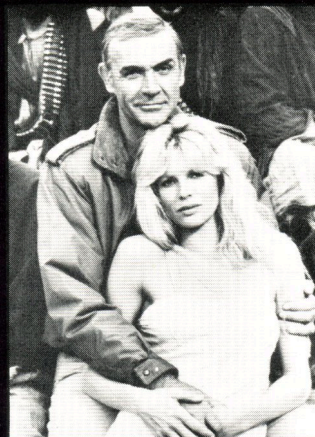
*Brainstorm* is the talk of the 1983 fall film season. Because of Natalie Wood's death which occurred during the filming, because of its 'unique' approach to science-fiction films (no lasers, monsters, sexy, brainless women, cute aliens, or spaceships) in this dollar-oriented time, and because of Douglas Trumbull's inventive genius and basic integrity toward science fiction, *Brainstorm* is by far the most controversial genre film of the year.

Describing the story is difficult in a few words. The main reason for this is the way the film works for different age groups. As Trumbull says, "Everyone will experience this movie differently, because the perceptual mechanisms each of us has are unique for us as individuals." He explained to us, "For some adults the impact of this film will be more subtle—a gentle series of sensations including motion, depth, and sharpness. For most adults and younger par-

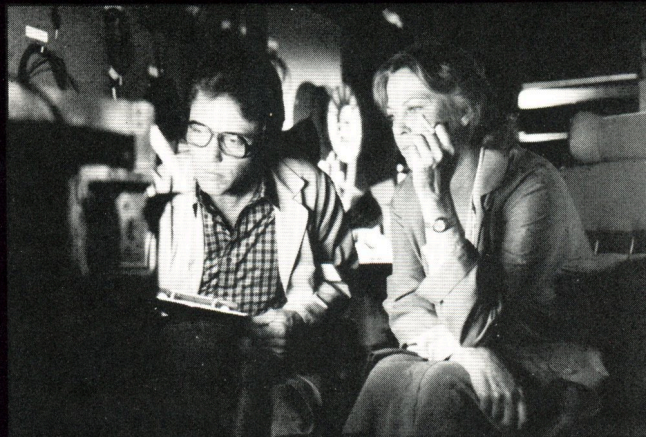
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# A Letter from Gigi

Adventure gaming news and gossip from the nosiest gamer-reporter in the world, Gigi D'Arn.

Dear Tadashi,

I was in Hawaii last month where I saw this tall, skinny, hairy white thing come out of the water. My first thought was that it was the creature from the dark lagoon, but it turned out to be GREG STAFFORD! I looked around and there was LYNN WILIS too. I knew you had to be around also and when I spotted you I was going to announce myself but I decided not to disturb that dreamy look in your face you had gotten from ogling all the cute Japanese girls.

TSR does it again: This time it was the entire GENCON staff that got fired. I guess this means there won't be a GENCON next year. Is TSR bankrupt? Was the *Dragon's* KIM MOHAN also fired? What is TSR's secret project code-named "the *Boot Hill* revision"?

Some employment stats: Hero Games has three full-time employees, Chaosium has eight, Steve Jackson Games has about 25, and Avalon Hill probably has over 150. I wonder how many TSR has nowadays. I wonder how many are lawyers.

Have you seen the "1983 *Games* 100" list in their Nov 83 issue? The role-playing games category includes *Call Of Cthulhu*, *RuneQuest*, *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set*, and the *Traveller Book*. The reviewers finally picked a couple of Chaosium games—I guess they couldn't ignore your games any longer.

BART has changed their name to the Society for the Advancement of Gaming in America (SAGA). The heads of the organization didn't think the old name sufficiently described the group's activities.

Where is Chaosium's *Ringworld*? It should have been published by now. Rumour reports the original designers are now off the project.

Eon is working on two expansion sets for Avalon Hill's *Dune* game, this in time for the major motion picture based on Frank Herbert's classic novel. Eon also reports the discontinuation of their *Encounter* magazine as it has not been self-supporting and causing a serious drain on the company's resources. They have also licensed three of their games for publication in Japan; they plan to hold the 1985 World *Cosmic Encounter* Championship Tournament in Tokyo!

I just found out the name of Cult of Gestetner's associated cult (see *DW* 6). It's Xerox Xoran.

You can tell LARRY DiTILLIO is a New Yorker. Only someone from there would use the word "nauseous" as many times as Larry did in his "The Cup of Death" article in *DW* 31.

There's a new class of undead. They're called the Moonies.

Grenadier has received the license to produce *Champions* miniatures. Hero Games has already received the first set for approval.

Midkemia Press has expressed

their intention to get out of the publishing business. They are interested in just designing games for other companies (aren't they all?). Anyone interested?

TimeLine's next offering will be a time-travel game titled *Time and Time Again*. It will be designed by BILL WORZEL and NICK VOSS.

From FASA's press releases: They have signed a licensing agreement with Paramount Pictures for the production of game products for *Star Trek III*. They have also signed with Universal Pictures for *Battlestar Galactica* and the upcoming major motion picture *The Last Starfighter*.

FASA also plans to produce small format games based on their licensed games to sell for under \$6.

For this winter season, GDW/Traveller plans include (finally) MARC MILLER's *The Traveller Adventure*. Also by Marc will be *Book 6: Scouts and Adventure 10: Safari Ship*, and one by WILLIAM KEITH, *Adventure 11: Murder at Arcturus Station*. After that should be the second *Traveller* boxed module *Beltstrike*.

Is there any truth, Tadashi, to the rumor that you are going to Avalon Hill to head the role-playing games division of the company that is about to be formed? I didn't think so. I like Maryland crab but California's closer to Hawaii.

Chaosium's first *Superworld* module will be *Bad Medicine for Dr. Drugs* by KEN ROLSTON. With Chaosium agreeing to put

*Champions* stats in their *Superworld* modules and Hero Games agreeing to put *Superworld* stats in their *Champions* products in the future, Ken's module will be the first to feature stats for both games. Hero Games is rapidly developing a reputation as the most cooperative game company in the business.

AARON ALLSTON has resigned from the *Space Gamer* and joins FASA to edit their *Stardate* magazine which will consist mostly of *Star Trek* material. He will be working out of his home in Texas.

Rumour reports that GREG COSTIKYAN will be editing a fantasy & science-fiction magazine for West End Games tentatively titled *FTL*. I always thought he was a magazine editor at heart.

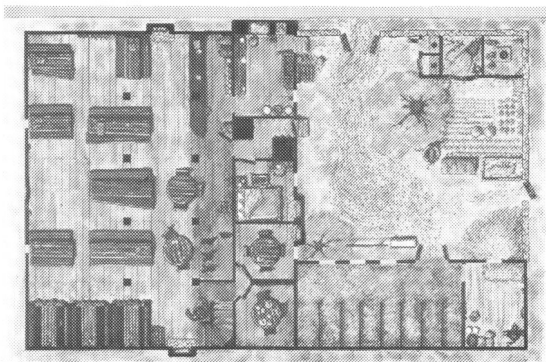
The next two *Call Of Cthulhu* products should be Chaosium's *The Fungi from Yuggoth* by KEITH HERBER and TOME's *Whispers from the Abyss and Other Tales*.

Why is DAVE ARNESON walking around with a "Death to Uni" button?

Love,

Gigi

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OVERALL, THIS INN IS AN IMPOSING STRUCTURE, NEARLY THREE STORIES TALL. IT HAS A SOLID WOODEN FRAME OF TIMBERS, WITH WOVEN WATTLE WALLS (INTERWOVEN WOOD STRIPS OR STRONG REEDS, COVERED WITH DRIED CLAY) BETWEEN. THE GROUND FLOOR IS MAINLY A LARGE COMMON ROOM, WITH A HIGH CEILING AND BALCONY, WHICH PROVIDES ACCESS TO SOME INEXPENSIVE ROOMS. ON THE FLOOR ABOVE ARE MORE EXPENSIVE ROOMS OF VARYING SORTS.

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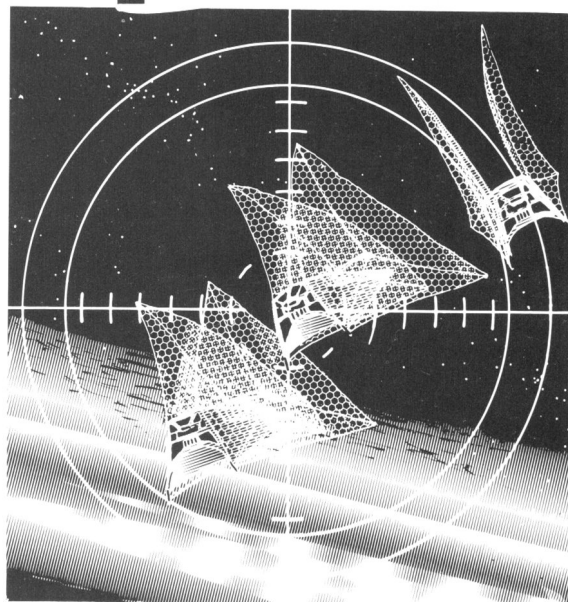
**You are Vela-Kar, Grand Admiral of the glorious Zelqaran Spacefleet.** As your flagship glides by twisted metal, minutes ago the proud vanguard of the enemy fleet, your thoughts drift over your homeworld, now far behind, and the glory of what will come . . .

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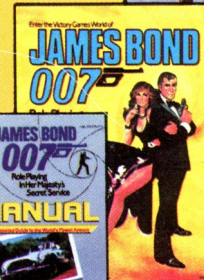
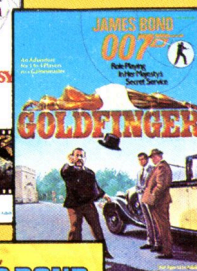
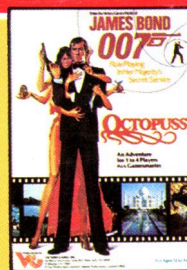
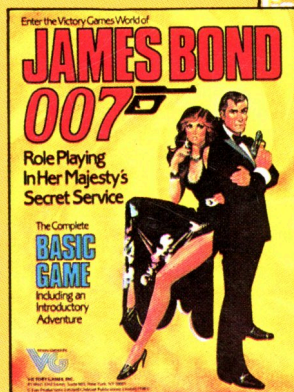
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