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Different Worlds

THE MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTURE ROLE PLAYERS

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Special
CALL of CTHULHU
Module
Inside!

TheGamer

Editor's Views

IS FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING DEAD?

Though not dead, based on the recent releases of the game companies in this field and what gamers are playing at game cons, fantasy does indeed seem to be slipping in popularity—making this a valid question.

Less fantasy systems and modules have appeared in the recent months than in the past. In their place have popped up more superhero and occult role-playing games, as have time travel, espionage, and science-fiction systems.

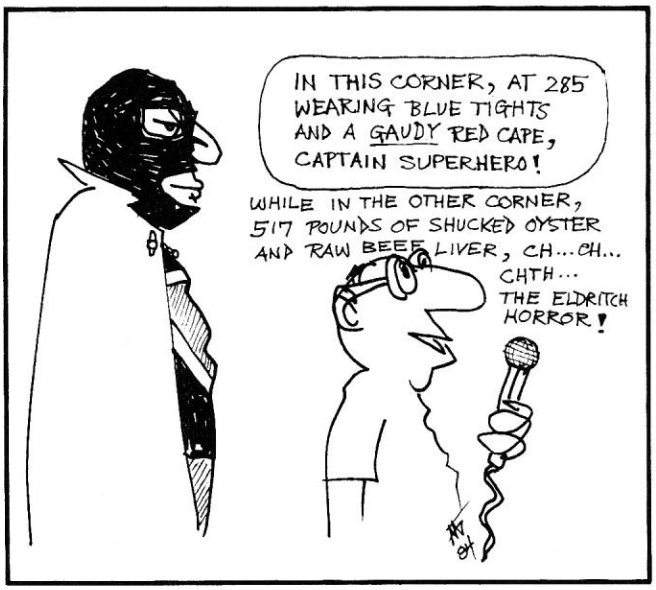
I see this trend toward more variety in game milieus continuing. In the past fantasy accounted for as much a 90% of all published adventure games. Now it is more like 25%.

Why has this occurred? Entropy of course. Fantasy simply ran out of steam and gamers flocked to other genre games. This does not mean, of course, that no further innovations for fantasy gaming will appear. Just less percentage wise.

Different Worlds has always encouraged variety in role-playing games—variety being the spice of life. The more different types of games we have available, the more we can enjoy this great pastime of ours.

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ehara



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Sword Of Hollywood

It has been said,
The pen is mightier than the sword.
How about celluloid?

By Larry DiTillio

Aloha, you bombastic buffs of the silver screen. Ye Ol' Sword has a passel of films and TV shows to yak about this go-round, but before we get moving I want to make a little announcement. Ye Ol' Sword is traveling north again in February of 1985 to attend DunDraCon as he has done every year for about the last six years. However, as a special treat I will be giving a seminar on films as they relate to games. It's called "Tips From Tinseltown" (don't blame me, blame Steve Perrin, I wanted to call it "The Sword of Hollywood Seminar") and I'll be covering a wide variety of topics concerning film and games. I might even explain what this column has to do with gaming. So if you're going to DunDraCon, stop by willya. And now the news. . .

THE DUNGEONMASTER IS READY TO ROLL: In a netherworld between dimensions lives Mestema, the DungeonMaster, the overlord of evil magic. Ol' Messy is kind of a bored fellow, so he combs the universe to find a worthy opponent for a bizarre game of sorcery and death (that sound familiar?). Mestema finds Paul Bradford, an ace computer troubleshooter. Poor Paul is forced to survive seven challenges created by Mestema, the last of which is a stupendous battle against the DungeonMaster himself. Richard Moll (you can catch him as Bull on TV's *Night Court*) plays Mestema and the flick is produced and ready for the theaters. *The DungeonMaster* is one of a number of fantasy and science-fiction adventure pictures from a group called Empire International. And to prove it, here's another upcoming release:

ASK NOT FOR WHOM THE BELL TROLLS: *Troll* tells the tale of an ancient and very evil troll who takes over a modern-day apartment building and starts changing the residents into strange fairy creatures. A young boy (played by Noah Hathaway) is befriended by a mysterious old witch and together they try and stop the mean old troll from unleashing his mythical creations on an unsuspecting world. Now does not that sound like fun?

IT'S JUST ANOTHER MUTIE: Take one small southern town and add the effects of toxic waste and what you wind up with is some very strange and terrifying residents. It all happens in a weird thriller called *Mutant*. Starring are Wings Hauser, Bo Hopkins, and the lovely Jennifer Warren.

A COUPLE OF CARTOONS: Animated fantasy features seem to be picking up. Announced for spring release is *StarChaser: The Legend of Orin*, a space opera that is not only animated but is also in 3-D! Hot stuff! And for fantasy buffs, there's *Warriors of the Wind* in which a week of fire destroys civilization and leaves the world covered by a toxic jungle. The saviors of the world are a 15-year-old princess and her followers who undertake a hazardous mission to prevent the ultimate destruction of everything. Can you wait?

LET'S GET SILLY: *Prison Planet*, a film due out sometime this year doesn't seem to hold much promise. Its story concerns a female secret agent who is sent to uncover the diabolical truth about a prison which houses thousands of the galaxy's most insidious criminal minds. The catch? These criminal masterminds are all female. I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for this one.

LET'S GET REALLY SILLY!!!: How about a picture called *Voyage of the Rock Aliens*? It's a spoof of everything from music videos to 1950's science fiction and if that doesn't sound silly enough, let me add this: It stars Pia Zadora. Now we're talking silly. Of course, there is this upcoming film to consider:

THOSE CUTE LITTLE KILLERS: Jonathan Graves and his girlfriend Rebecca are exploring a house that Jonathan has recently inherited when they release six small creatures (something like E.T.) who are cursed to do evil. In an action-filled ending, Jonathan and his friends find a way to free the creatures from their spell. The creatures and the film they inhabit are called *Ghoulies*. Don't mix them up with *Goonies*, that's a whole other film that politely rips off *Gremlins*.

Star Trek IV:
Will William Shatner fly again as Captain Kirk ?

NO, IT AIN'T GEORGE CUSTER: For you gamers who prefer the Indiana Jones-style scenario, try *Yellow Hair and the Fortress of Gold*. Yellow Hair is the luscious Laurene Landon, a daring adventurer who along with a rowdy male companion quests for an ancient Mayan fortune. It should be in your theaters even as you read this.

THE GODFATHER'S FATHER TURNS TO CHIVALRY: Francis Ford Coppola, the brilliant director-writer who gave us the *Godfather* films, is turning his hand to the medieval with his current production *Lionheart*. It's an epic about a young knight who comes of age during the time of chivalry.

CLASSIC SCIENCE FICTION IN PRODUCTION: One of the greatest classics of all time is Alfred Bester's *The Stars My Destination* and it is now being made into a film. Screenplay is by Julian and Judith Plowden and Lorenzo Semple, Jr. Budget is a biggie so look for a class production here.

HARD TO RESIST: I can't help mentioning this upcoming feature, mainly because it's the kind of stuff I know Sandy Petersen would revel in. The title is *Hard Rock Zombies*. The plot, a murdered rock & roll band comes back from the grave to seek revenge. Put that in a Cthulhu scenario and see what happens.

BUT CAN THEY COOK?: It's 2980 A.D. and a tribe of warrior-women try to enslave all the remaining men in the wastelands of Colorado. If you'll buy that plot, the title is *ThunderWomen*. It's a little bit of *Road Warrior*, from a female angle.

BUT CAN HE COOK?: Chuck Norris does an awful lot of movies and he's got yet another ready to wing your way. It's called *American Ninja* and tells the tale of Colonel Clay Stack (another one of those ultra-American Chuck Norris movie names) who teams up with old adversary Montgomery Falcon to fight the growing terrorism in the world. The catch is Falcon is adept in the ways of the ninja and they use the secret techniques to make life miserable for the poor terrorists. Should provide food for thought for those who like *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes* and other bang-bang games.

BOND MEETS GRACE, LOOK OUT!: Anyone who saw *Conan The Destroyer* has ample evidence that former disco queen Grace Jones is one tough lady (of course fans of the lady knew that to begin with). Well in *From a View to Kill*, the next James Bond film, Grace plays one of Bond's adversaries. Can 007 take on growling Grace and hope to live? We'll know soon.

GIVE US A BREAK, CAPTAIN KIRK: Production of *Star Trek IV* has been delayed because of contract negotiations with William Shatner. Shatner, who as you all know plays Captain Kirk, wants an astronomical sum to appear in the next film. The producers of the film don't want to pay it. Par for the course here in Hollywild, but let's hope it's settled soon, otherwise the Enterprise and her Captain may not be appearing on the big screen for more years than we want to wait.

Phew, that's a lot of films and I have more to tell you about, but they'll have to wait until next time. Right now, here's some apologies:

BOY IS MY FACE RED SONJA: A short while back I reported that Sandhal Bergman (Valeria in *Conan I*) was slated to play Red Sonja in the upcoming film based on the adventures of the scarlet-tressed she-devil. Well Sandhal will be in the movie, but her part is that of Gedren, an evil queen who is the enemy of Big Red. Brigette Nielsson, a towering Nordic newcomer is actually the actress picked to play Red Sonja. Sorry gang, but at least now the record's straight.

AND TALK ABOUT GOOFS: In yet another example of the dictum that even film columnists are fallible, I mistakenly told you that *Tales from the Darkside*, a TV anthology series devoted to weird stories would be on sometime next year. Actually the show is already on the air, in fact it began a few weeks after I wrote the column. Sorry again. If it makes any difference, the show has been fairly terrible so far and you haven't missed anything.

That's all there is this time around. Hope to see some of you faithful fans at DunDraCon. Until the next time we roll through Hollyweird, take care, keep those dice rolling, and hey, see a movie willya. Bye! □

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RuneQuest PREVIEW

From the upcoming
Gods Of GLORANTHA

The Cult of ULERIA The Love Goddess



By Sandy Petersen and Greg Stafford

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY

Uleria is an ancient deity—the only survivor from the Celestial Court. The stories about her are so old that, though most of them may be true, they usually do not agree with each other. Some places even claim Uleria to be a god, not a goddess.

Uleria winds in and out of the other gods' lives, sometimes appearing in person as a mother or wife, or simply as the central figure of a vast orgiastic frenzy.

Wherever Uleria went, plenitude followed. All she touched increased, and wherever she rested a great gathering came around her. So boundless was her ability to generate that she created a whole race like herself, called Tilntae or love demons. They are often the mothers or fathers of races, nations, or demigods, and are often nameless, or their name is simply a feminized form of a husband's name.

Most stories about the goddess are sensual and erotic. Some are lewd and questionable, and a few are gross and perverted. All fall within the compass of the Goddess of Love.

Her other aspects, social and fertile, receive their share of storytelling as well. The attraction of Uleria brought the founders of the Theyalan Council together, as well as earlier alliances.

Some Uleria worshipers believe that their souls are carried forward in their children, resulting in a sort of descendant worship (as compared to ancestor worship). Most, however, place faith in the afterlife beliefs promulgated by their local community.

Uleria is the source of the Life Rune, and this is her only Rune.

II. CULT ECOLOGY

Love is the invisible Life Force energy which can fill and permeate anything physical, spiritual, or magical. It always acts in two ways: first, it brings together; second, it seeks to reproduce itself.

Bringing together is apparent in all of nature. When two bubbles of mercury spring together, that is caused by Love. When leaves fall to the ground, or anything at all falls to earth, that is because the Earth Mother's Love pulls us there. Water flows downhill to the sea because it seeks to come together with the ocean. Societies meet out o of brotherly love, and everyone knows of how genders are attracted to each other. All these activities are motions of Love through the Life Force.

Reproduction can mean either propagation of the species, or the generation of something completely new. Alchemists know of several processes which create new substances with no trace of the original ingredients. Ancient gods, powerful with the Life Forces, often begat or bore children unlike themselves.

To the Uleria philosophers, even the rote reproduction of the cheapest clay pot is a manifestation of Love, where water, clay, heat, and the hands of itinerant potters come together for a moment of creation.

Uleria is worshiped every day, in some temple somewhere in the world. Her special festivals fall on the second week of each season, and last all week long.

III. THE CULT IN THE WORLD

Everywhere that Uleria's cult exists, it is primarily concerned with its own survival, and the spreading of Uleria's benefits to anyone who needs them, no matter what their cult or affilia-

Here is a quote from the Common Talk of Lay Membership, *which is found in every temple in some version or another (often abbreviated).*

THE WAYS OF LOVE

We recommend three ways to know love:

1. Through the Body: This is courtship and carnal sex, both of which communicate the Life Forces of Love through participants.

2. Through Company: Social integrity comes from the brotherly love of people for their community. Sharing and caring are routes to experience love.

3. Through Propagation: Incarnation of the Life Force can be accomplished by everything which seeks to reproduce itself. Responsible child rearing increases the Love and lovers in the world. Aiding orphans, mothers, herds, and gardens increases the Life Force of the world.

All three methods seek the same end: To experience the Oneness of Love, the Eternal Moment of Allness which lies beyond harmony.

tions. It possesses little or no social power, but any attempt to suppress the cult would be heavily opposed by the majority of the people.

There are a few Uleria worshipers in nearly every culture in the world. It is likeliest to be an outright cult with formal temples in civilized areas. It is nowhere the dominant religion of the land, except in the four cities named Zoria.

The three aspects of Uleria are often worshiped separately, sometimes at neighboring shrines whose worshipers have no knowledge that the two shrines are for one deity. Thus each of the three cult spells can appear at different shrines. Shrines are often enclosed buildings larger than the number of initiates might warrant—the itinerant nature of the lay membership makes the size useful. Though all three aspects of the goddess may be worshiped at a shrine, only one of the specialty spells is renewable.

Minor temples are hard to find. Only regions of dense population and indolent peace can afford the number of initiates willing to put their primary belief into the Love Goddess. All in existence are in large cities or similar centers of population.

Many minor temples of Uleria are constructed similarly, even in different parts of the world. They are square or rectangular, with a different ornately carved door in each side. One entry is restricted to use by the priestesses and their servants, and is covered with warnings to stay away. Each other entry is devoted to one of the goddess' aspects, so that the priestess there will know what duty to perform for each person who enters. One entry opens on a sacred brothel, whose setting and variety of on-duty initiates varies with the wealth and popularity of the temple. The second door opens on a comfortable meeting room where strangers can engage in social conversation, play games, and eat together, stimulated by the temple personnel. The last door leads into a quiet and still region, where spells and rites to guarantee fertility are performed.

IV. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP

An initiate into Uleria's secrets need meet no requirements except that she must not be chaotic. She must pay 10% of her income to her priestess and devote 10% of her time working for the cult as the priestess sees fit.

Most initiates simultaneously belong to another cult besides Uleria. This is encouraged.

Initiates of Uleria's cult can sacrifice for Uleria's divine magic, and receive priority over non-members when Rune spells are cast by the priestesses.

V. ACOLYTE MEMBERSHIP

A potential acolyte of Uleria must have served as an initiate for two years. She must succeed in an APPx5% roll. There must be a need for a new acolyte in the temple.

Acolytes work at the Uleria temples, performing fertility rituals, providing convivial company, and administering the arts of love as needed. They are in turn supported by the temple. They are given room and board and, when possible, clothing and luxuries.

Acolytes must give at least 50% of their income and 50% of their time to the temple. The temple will take care of the initiate's needs during the weeks she works for the cult. At other times, she is on her own. An initiate can spend more than half her time at the temple, and most do.

Acolytes can preside over worship ceremonies when a priestess is not present. They are also able to sacrifice for Uleria's Rune spells reusably, just like a priestess.

Finally, acolytes will be taught a new skill:

Craft (Courtesan): Courtesans are skilled and professional craftspersons whose tools and products are the human body. The skills of love are multiple, but all are contained under this *RuneQuest* skill. It includes the fine points of verbal enticement, coercive seduction, titilating entertainment, tasteful foreplay, subtle manipulation, erotic carnality, exuberant climax, and satisfying afterplay. Increased competency in the skill indicates increased finesse.

VI. RUNE PRIESTESS MEMBERSHIP

Priestesses of Uleria administer the blessings of their goddess to the world. They must be willing to devote themselves exclusively to the arts of the goddess.

A candidate for priestesshood must have been an acolyte in good standing for at least two years. She must succeed in a APPx1% roll. There must also be a need for a new priestess. If the candidate fails, she can try again in a year.

Uleria priestesses must give 90% of their income to the cult, and devote 90% of their time to serving their goddess and their goddess' devotees.

A priestess of Uleria checks for Divine Intervention on 1D10, rather than 1D100.

Uleria provides only four Rune spells to her priestesses: Community, Erotocomatose Lucidity, Reproduce, and Worship Uleria. The priestesses cast these spells for hire for anybody except creatures or worshipers of chaos. Spellcasting is an important source of cult income.

Community

2 points
ranged, temporal, nonstackable, reusable

When cast upon members of a community this spell guarantees rapid and easy communication of ideas, and facilitates the sharing of new or troubled thoughts. It does not aid in spell-teaching, and doesn't help in mind-reading or other mind-affecting effects.

The spell affects every individual within the spell's range. All attempts at communication skill rolls are automatically effective when made to other individuals under the effect of the spell.

Erotocomatose Lucidity

3 points
touch, special duration, nonstackable, reusable

This spell works when both participants are engaged in sex with each other. Both the recipient and caster experience, and remember to his and her best ability, an ecstatic Oneness during the moment of climax. The memory lasts a number of minutes equal to the magic points expended. After the spell wears off both participants lose Fatigue Points equal to the minutes of duration x 10.

Reproduce

3 points
touch, instant, nonstackable, reuseable

This spell is cast upon a single living thing of any sort, and permits it to recreate itself through the natural processes of the Life Force. Next time the being attempts procreation it will succeed. If a corn shoot were blessed, the full-grown plant would be heavily laden with ears, and all kernels in each ear would be large, fertile, and capable of growing a new plant. A human would give birth to a healthy baby, possibly even twins or triplets.

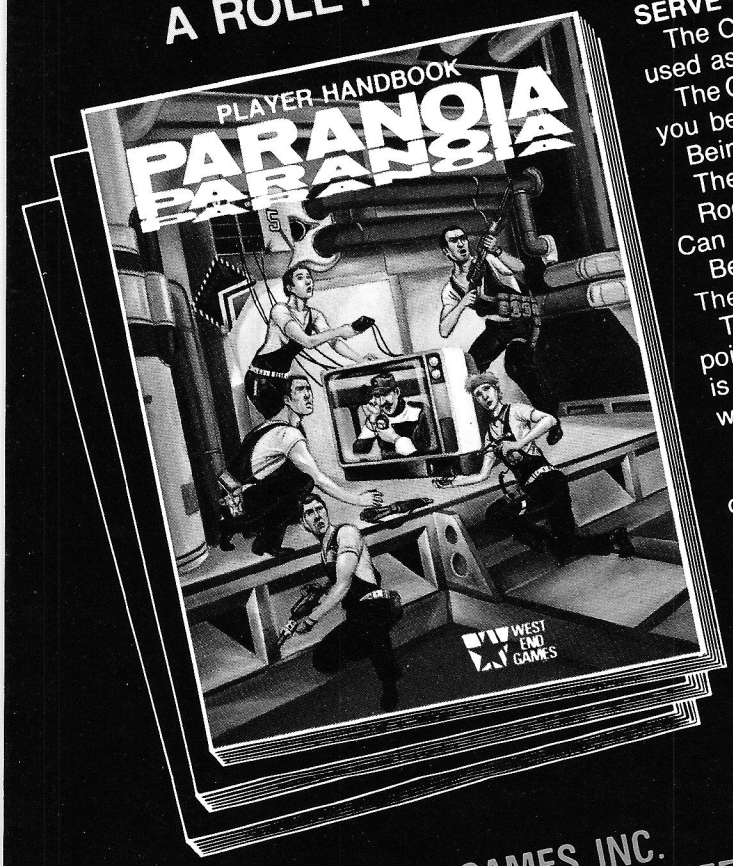
VII. SUBCULTS

Spirit of Retribution: Uleria has no spirit of retribution. However, any member of the cult who subsequently becomes a worshiper of chaos or who commits murder forgets all Uleria Rune spells. An individual who persecutes the cults, razing shrines and killing priestesses, is often cursed. This curse can take one of three forms, depending on the personality of the criminal: the cursed might never again find joy in sexual commerce; he may forever after feel lonely, even in the midst of companions; or he may become infertile. □



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Rooting out traitors will make you happy. The Computer tells you so. Can you doubt The Computer?

Being a Troubleshooter is fun. The Computer tells you so. Of course The Computer is right.

Troubleshooters get shot at, stabbed, incinerated, stapled, mangled, poisoned, blown to bits, and occasionally accidentally executed. This is so much fun that many Troubleshooters go crazy. You will be working with many Troubleshooters. All of them carry lasers.

Aren't you glad you have a laser? Won't this be fun?

There are many traitors in Alpha Complex. There are many happy citizens in Alpha Complex. Most of the happy citizens are crazy. It is hard to say which is more dangerous — traitors or happy citizens. Watch out for both of them.

The life of a Troubleshooter is full of surprises.

Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

Paranoia is an adventure role-playing game set in a darkly humorous future. A well-meaning but deranged computer desperately protects the citizens of an underground warren from all sorts of real and imagined traitors and enemies.

You will play the part of one of The Computer's elite agents. Your job is to search out, reveal and destroy the enemies of The Computer. Your worst fear is that The Computer will discover that you are one of these enemies.

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V.W.P.B.N.L.

The abbreviation stands for
"Void Where Prohibited By Natural Law."
A discussion of superpowers in superhero role-playing games.

How to REALLY Do unto others

By Quentin Long

The Advantage called "Usable on Others" is quite useful, in ways you might not expect. The rule of thumb is that if the Power's real owner is paying the END for the power, he gets to control its use, while if the guy who is presently using the power pays the END, it's he who's in charge.

So how about Flight, Usable on Others? Surely the bloke who suddenly finds himself able to fly like a bird will be so grateful to you that he'll hardly mind when he finds himself power diving straight into the ground. . . An interesting variation is FTL Flight with UonO, if you can get your target outside the atmosphere.

Regeneration with UonO has been noted earlier, but *Champions III* has a new power called "Heal" which makes it quite unnecessary, sigh. Luck with UonO makes a character very popular . . . other powers to help your character win popularity contests are UonO Armor (or PD, or Force Field, or . . .), Lack of Weakness, Ego Defense (or Flash Defense, or . . .), or Life Support.

Just to be strange, how do you like the Acme Martial Artist Maker? This marvelous gadget is Martial Arts with UonO bought through a focus.

Teleport with UonO is a truly wondrous power to have. Especially since *Champions II* came out, complete with its definition of the effects of teleporting into a solid object. . . Or if you don't feel that evil, just let a non-flier pop up a few game-scale inches and see how well he can land.

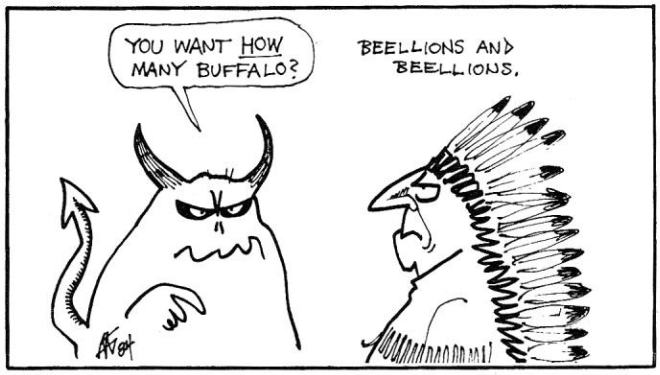
Shrink with UonO is another way to irritate people who can't fly, what with the immense reduction in ground speed. . .

If you thought UonO Flight was a trifle subtle, why not try UonO Superleap? Rather a pity about a Leaper's DCV being zero while leaping, of course.

A digression: It should be clear that adding the Range advantage to any of the combinations in this article makes it twice as obnoxious as it was before.

UonO Desolidification is one of the most vile things that can ever happen to focus users (Iron Man or any of that crowd); what good does your nine-zillion-point gadget do you when you can't even touch it? If you happen to be going up against a villain whose main power(s) is (are) fed by some kind of Absorption, you might want to think about UonO Reflection. Plug in Always On as well, if you like.

I shall close with what is, point for point, the most absolutest totally grotesque power in existence: Instant Change with Usable on Others at Range. Just imagine the horrified looks you'll get from people who bought all their powers with "only in Hero ID," not to mention the Iron Man clones in their tin suits or the endless legions of heroes with Secret Identities or . . . □



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Books & Gaming

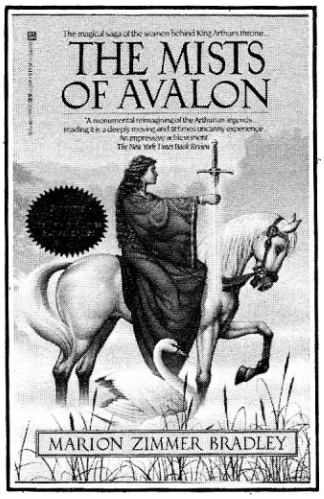
Reviews of books with interesting world settings useful for creating imaginative role-playing campaigns.

THE MISTS OF AVALON

By Marion Zimmer Bradley
(Ballantine, $8.95)

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

The story of King Arthur continues to fascinate us with both the power of the tragedy and the magic of the forces in conflict. This is why we have had modern authors try their hand at retelling the story in a new way, often from a different point of view. Marion Zimmer Bradley has a growing reputation as a writer of sensitivity in dealing with the emotional forces that shape the actions of her characters. With *Avalon*, she adds new lustre to that reputation. Buy the hardcover edition for rereading and passing it on to your children—this is going to be a classic.



Arthur and Avalon are the antagonists, ultimately, in this novel. This is the autobiography of Morgan le Fay, for whom Arthur was a critical factor in her career, both personally and politically. Instead of being the story of King Arthur, this is the Matter of Britain as seen by the British, with the Lady of the Lake as their religious leader instead of Merlin. I do not think it necessary for me to outline the plotline of the novel, but it is worth warning the reader not to operate on preconceptions of who is going to do what. The Arthurian Mythos is old and has grown into different versions, each of which is valid in its own way. Bradley has done a great deal of research into the subject, and has selected factors that suit her needs in molding the Great Tale in her own vision. Judge the novel on its own terms.

Avalon will have as great an influence on the Arthurian Mythos as J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* had on our perception of adult fantasy. Arthur will never be the same again. I say that because our perception of Arthur is as told by Christian writers who saw King Arthur as a shining light of hope and faith representing Christian values in an approaching dark age between the fall of Christian Rome and the rise of Christian states in the later Middle Ages. Arthur as a doomed saintly king is the usual image, a tragic vision that greatly appealed to the romantic writers. The major versions we have of the story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table transformed the original story of a war leader who held the Saxons at bay for a generation into a story of a later culture for whom the dominance of Christianity was both inevitable and the whole point to the story.

Avalon tells the story of the rise to dominance of militant Christianity in Arthur's court, as seen by the pagans in general and the worshippers of the Great Goddess in particular. Christianity is seen in their eyes as a perversion of the mysteries lying behind all religions. The major Christian priest is shown as a one-dimensional fanatic. One of the king's knights, brother to a pagan knight but fostered to a Christian family, goes mad because his Christian beliefs cannot tolerate other points of view. And Queen Guinevere embraces Christianity and attacks the old religion out of purely personal needs, in the hope somehow that her actions will win divine aid to give her the son and heir she has been unable to have.

This will inevitably create controversy and criticism from Christian readers. The best answer to that is to point out that this is a work of fiction that attempts to portray events as seen by the non-Christians. The protagonists are the pagans, people of another age who thought and lived differently from ourselves. It is the genius of the book that it succeeds as well as it does in allowing the reader to change perspective while reading, and to reconsider well-known tales in a new light. The pagan explanations for magical events such as the gradual disappearance of the Isle of Avalon, or the effect on the knights of the Holy Grail, are so beautifully thought out as to leave the reader wondering for a while whether they might have been right all along. This permits the author to wrap up the story, which is in many respects a tragedy from the point of view of Morgan just as much as that of Arthur, in a calculated ambiguity that is emotionally satisfying.

We all search the books we read for ideas to use in our gaming, from new magical tricks, spells, or gadgets to new kinds of monsters. What you will find in this novel is more subtle than that, and thus more difficult to search but more valuable after you understand its nature. For example, the relationship between this world and Avalon, and that between Faery and the other two, offers many applications in explaining how things magically appear and disappear in your campaign world. Another example is the mystical power of Sight possessed by the priestesses and some few others, which allows them to view events of the past, present, or future—but without the control to know which is which for sure. A whole system of dream magic could be based on this, as a means for the gamemaster to pass on clues and misdirections to the players.

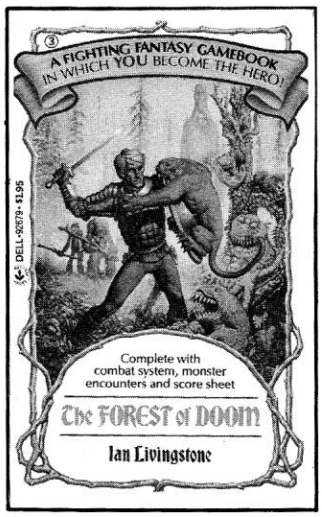
The greatest gaming aid provided by *The Mists of Avalon*, however, lies in its treatment of religion as a prime motivation in the lives of the characters. I do not know how accurately the author has depicted the Triple Goddess mythology or practices, although it seemed a reasonable version from my own limited knowledge of the subject. It is enough, I think, that it works for the purposes of giving meaning to the lives of the characters of the novel. And for giving some vivid contrasts to beliefs we take for granted in our own lives. It is very difficult for someone raised in a monotheistic religion to comprehend what it was like to believe in many different spirits and powers comprising nature. This novel is a major help in that, and this will be the principal use it has in gaming. By gaining new insight into the nature of pagan religion, the reader will be better able to give characters depth of character through their religious beliefs and observances during the game. □

THE FOREST OF DOOM

By Ian Livingstone
(Dell, $1.95)

Reviewed by Tony Watson

In the last few years, a number of book publishers have produced series of books that combine certain aspects of role-playing with juvenile fiction. These books are aimed at the young readers' market and appear under such names as "Choose Your Own Adventure" or "Which Way?" books. The format of the book consists of a body of numbered paragraphs. The player reads a paragraph, which describes some sort of action or scene and then is offered a choice of two or three options. The selection of option will determine what paragraph to go to next. Thus the reader is involved with an adventure story in which he has an important part in structuring the plot.



TSR has gotten into the picture with a set of books tied in with their role-playing games. Although these books have the *Dungeons & Dragons* or *Star Frontiers* names on them, and deal with adventures in those milieus, they don't take advantage of those games' systems to enhance the play of the game. The format is just the same as in the other books: read a paragraph, choose an action and then go to the new paragraph.

Some game companies have utilized similar systems for solitaire adventures for their role-playing games. Both Flying Buffalo (*Tunnels & Trolls*) and Metagaming (*The Fantasy Trip*) have used the idea with considerable success.

Dell Books has recently teamed up with some independent designers (including Steve Jackson of Games Workshop, and, in the case in question, Ian Livingstone) to create a new series of books that combines the simplified plotting of the "Choose Your Own Adventure" books with a simple, but serviceable role-playing game system. The result is something better than the TSR or Ballantine series, and not nearly as involved as solitaire books for existing role-playing games. It is a nice balance. One can have a decent adventure with no more investment in material than the two-dollar book, a pair of dice, and pencil, or investment in time beyond that needed to read through half-a-dozen pages of simple rules.

The role-playing system is minimal, but workable. Players create a character by rolling for skill and luck (both 1 die plus 6) and stamina (2 dice plus 12). In combat situations, the player makes a dice throw and adds this to his skill level and does the same for the creature he's fighting (monster skill and stamina are listed in each paragraph). Low man takes a hit and loses two stamina points. The player can opt to change things by appealing to his luck; successfully rolling his luck value or less results in either the player taking less damage if he has been hit, or the creature taking more. In a clever touch, each use of luck reduces the luck value by one, so one finds he cannot continually rely on fortune to get out of a tight spot. The loss of all stamina points results in death, although the player can sometimes retreat to escape imminent demise. Stamina points can be replenished by eating provisions or drinking potions. The rules for magic are similarly uncomplicated, but succeed on a lesser degree. There are no spells, just magical items, which can be used only once. It is a limitation of the format that these magic items can only be used in situations where the paragraph specifically asks the player if he has a certain item and refers him to a specific paragraph if he does.

The plotting of *The Forest of Doom* is very familiar for a fantasy adventure, almost hackneyed, but that lends it a bit of charm, actually. The player runs across a dying dwarf who gives him some gold and sets him on a quest to find the missing pieces of a dwarven warhammer needed to rally the dwarves against the trolls. The player is first steered to a wizard's tower, where magic goodies can be purchased.

The player then embarks on his journey through the forest, choosing paths and resolving encounters with the people and creatures that live there. Most encounters can be resolved by fighting, although quite a few can be handled more peaceably, albeit not always to the player's benefit. Successfully resolving an encounter often results in the player gaining a magic item or some treasure. The incidents are, for the most part, imaginative and interesting, and many benefit from Malcolm Barter's fine illustrations. Finding the missing pieces to the warhammer is no easy task; the player must follow just the right sequence of actions and have the necessary items on hand.

There are a number of limitations to this sort of game. The most obvious is the fact that it gets repetitive after a while. One can probably play through the adventure three or four times without continually running into the same encounters. More noticeable to veteran role-players will be the limitation on actions available in a given situation. Players may find that they can only fight or run in a circumstance where they would prefer to negotiate. I found it frustrating on several occasions not to be able to use a piece of magic that seemed to be quite applicable at the time.

On the whole, I found *The Forest of Doom* a diverting, if simple, solo adventure. While it certainly won't replace solitaire adventures for the various fantasy role-playing games on the market, the simple system provided in the booklet works very well and raises the Dell line above the rest of these sort of books. *The Forest of Doom* and the other books in the series might be just the right gift for someone interested in role-playing but a bit hesitant about the rules that usually accompany most role-playing games. □

THE MAN OF GOLD

By M.A.R. Barker
(DAW, $3.50)

Reviewed by David R. Dunham



The Man of Gold is the second book I know of to be based directly on a role-playing campaign (Raymond Feist's *Magician*, reviewed in *DW 32*, is the other; I don't count Andre Norton's *Quag Keep*). It's set in Professor M.A.R. Barker's intricate world of Tekumel (*Empire of the Petal Throne* and the *Swords & Glory* series, published by Gamescience). This made it of interest to me, since usually it's role playing that derives from literature.

The Man of Gold is set in Tekumel, a world with a long history, peopled with a variety of intelligent species, including humans. The action occurs in the reign of Tsolyanu's 61st Seal Emperor, the same time period detailed in the *Tekumel Source Book* (*Swords & Glory: Vol. I*). (*The Man of Gold* is supposedly set in the year 2358, mentioned as the current year in the *Source Book*, but it actually takes place a few years earlier.) Some of the events of the book are mentioned there, but most are not, for *The Man of Gold* concerns itself with a young priest of Thumis named Harsan. Harsan is a minor priest of the knowledge god, but is called on to translate the inscription of an ancient artifact. This refers to the "Man of Gold," apparently a long-lost magic device of the ancients, and Harsan is detailed to study other relics found at the same time in order to learn its whereabouts.

It turns out that a lot of other people are interested in the Man of Gold; it's a central piece in the political manipulations of temples, the contestants for the soon-to-be vacant Petal Throne, and foreign governments. Harsan gets caught in the middle of these power struggles, and ends up crossing much of the Tsolyanu Empire.

The story, while not a literary masterpiece, is a good one. It's overly descriptive in parts, but the action almost imperceptibly builds throughout. There were some interesting non-human characters, though some suffered the common problem of aliens: being humans in funny outfits. One of the things that bothered me about the book was that Harsan is just a pawn (or a white piece on the *den-den* board, to use the Tsolyani phrase), played by many sides. I guess I prefer heroes who are a bit more in control of their destinies, although Harsan's insignificance is quite appropriate for Tekumel's structured society. I did appreciate the ending, which shows how a world-saving quest can fit into an ongoing campaign.

The world of Tekumel is known for its baroque detailing (and "unpronounceable" names, though I had no trouble reading them, since they're phonetically spelled). This is one of the strong points of the book. Prof. Barker knows everything about Tekumel, and manages to convey much of its fascinating culture. Sometimes the culture is too complex for my taste (I don't think I'd enjoy speaking a language with 34 forms of the pronoun "you," depending on social status), but that doesn't keep it from being interestingly different. For example, the high-ranking members of the Omnipotent Azure Legion, elite military unit of the Emperor, are deaf-mutes to prevent their spilling secrets. They raise some Imperial heirs in secret, to be revealed when the the political timing is right. Metal is scarce, the tanned hide of the *chlen* beast being used for most implements. The favorite drink of the Tsolyani is *chumetl*, watered and salted buttermilk. The only modes of transportation are the ponderously slow *chlen*-carts, slave-carried palanquins if you're rich, or your feet. Luckily there is the network of *sakbe* roads, which resemble the Great Wall of China. I think one of the nicest features is the way women are treated. Normally women are the social inferiors of men, destined to be married in their clan's best interests, but they can declare themselves *aridani*, which makes them independent and the equal of men in all regards. In fact, the only significant warrior in the book is a woman. In addition, the book is laced with Tsolyanu proverbs and idioms.

Deities play a large role in Tekumel, and there are twenty major ones, ten each of the sides of Stability and Change. The theologies of a few of these are well-presented. The deities have agreed not to fight each other directly, but this doesn't extend to maneuvering for influence, or when their followers meet while delving into the labyrinths beneath the great cities.

The Man of Gold was a good read, and whetted my interest in learning more about the cultures of Tekumel. I'll confess I occasionally consulted the *Source Book* on a few points, but if I had kept reading, they would have soon been clarified. Prof. Barker told me that he has planned four more Tekumel novels (though the last may not be published until after his death, since it reveals the answers to many secrets). I'm looking forward to these books, even though I don't think I'll ever

continued page 37

I suspect that the Brethren of the Rosy Cross are a fiction.
–Leibniz

Know the mysterious world within you! Attune yourself to the wisdom of the ages! Grasp the inner power of your mind!
–from a Rosicrucian advertisement

The ROSIcrucians • Secret Societies Part 2

By E. S. Erkes

Some secret societies are more successful than others at keeping their existence unknown: One of the most famous such societies of the 17th century in Europe was so secretive that we still do not know if it ever existed for the first hundred years of its supposed existence! If you find that statement a little confusing, welcome to the world of the Rosicrucians, the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross.

Their existence was officially announced to the world in the year 1614. At that time in the German city of Kassel there appeared a volume called the *Fama Fraternitatis*, detailing the life history of one Christian Rosenkreuz. The anonymous manuscript of the *Fama* had been circulating for years among the learned men of the German-speaking world, but it did not yet achieve continent-wide publicity until the official publication.

Christian Rosenkreuz ("Rosy Cross"), according to the *Fama*, was born to noble but impoverished parents in 1378. Raised in a monastery in the Austrian Tyrol, he later pilgrimaged to the Middle East. He settled in Damascus and became a medical practitioner there; he later journeyed to an unmapped city called Damcar somewhere in the Arabian peninsula. There, he studied with unspecified "wise men" who had anticipated his coming and who knew all the secrets of Nature. They taught him physics, mathematics, and Arabic; more important, they showed him the wisdom of the mysterious *Book M*, which was said to contain all the secrets of the Universe. Rosenkreuz was said to have translated this work into Latin; but the *Book M* has never been seen by scholars (or any other reliable source) in any form. Rosenkreuz then moved to Egypt, where he studied the natural sciences, and then to Fez in what is today Morocco. At Fez he studied "magic" and the Hebrew Cabala. Eventually, he returned to the Tyrolean monastery where he had been raised. He and seven resident monks began to write a book to supposedly contain all possible knowledge. After finishing the book–also unknown to history–Rosenkreuz and the monks agreed to disperse, each into different countries. They would meet once a year in Germany thereafter. They also agreed to use their hidden knowledge to cure the sick without remuneration, and to use the initials R.C. as a seal, to dress inconspicuously, to nominate individual successors before dying, and to keep their organization–such as it was–secret for one-hundred years. Thus began, said the *Fama*, the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross.


Allgemeine vnd General
REFORMATION,
der gantzen weiten Welt.
Beneben der
FAMA FRA-
TERNITATIS,
Deß Löblichen Ordens des
Rosenkreutzes / an alle Gelehrte
vnd Häupter Europæ geschrie-
ben:
Auch einer kurtzen RESPONSION,
von dem Herrn Haselmeyer gestellet / welcher
deßwegen von den Jesuiterin ist gefänglich ein-
gezogen / vnd auff eine Galleren ge-
schmidet:
Jtzo öffentlich in Druck verfertiget /
vnd allen trewen Hertzen communiciret
worden.
Gedruckt zu Cassel / durch Wilhelm Wessel /
ANNO M. DC. XIV.

The title page to the first edition of the *Fama Fraternatis* (Cassel, 1614).

Rosenkreuz, continued the *Fama*, died in 1484 at the age of 106. The Fraternity buried him in a secret tomb in an unknown location, in a seven-sided vault illuminated by unstated means. The *Fama* claims that its author(s) came upon this tomb in 1604; inside it they found Rosenkreuz's undecayed body. With the corpse they also noted many magical devices and parchments, among which was the previously-unmentioned *Book T*, whose properties were not revealed. The tomb's whereabouts remained secret.

The *Fama*'s effect on intellectual Europe was uncanny and immediate. Learned men by the score, including the great philosopher-mathematician Descartes, made inquiries–fruitlessly–as to how to join this Fraternity. In the years thereafter, the book's influence grew, particularly during the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), when the intellectuals were searching for "hidden wisdom" that could explain the horrors around them.

However, much of the popularity of the order derived from a misguided popular belief. The public, from the very beginning until the present day, has identified the Rosicrucians with the pseudoscience of alchemy. Many automatically assumed that the order's secret knowledge pertained to the transmutation of base metals into gold. The Rosicrucian attitude toward alchemy has always been marked by ambiguity, even to the present day. The *Fama* directly promised its followers "more gold than both the Indies bring to the King of Spain," but surrounded the statement with language indicating that the wealth to be acquired was spiritual. Rosicrucian literature has never claimed the power to transmute base metals, but neither has it ever disclaimed the possibility. The author of the *Fama* disparaged gold-making as an activity beneath the dignity of the true Rosicrucian; yet among the documents claimed to exist in the tomb of Rosenkreuz was a "dictionary," mentioned nowhere else, compiled by the famous alchemist Paracelsus.

Paracelsus (born Theophrastus von Hohenheim, in Switzerland) claimed to have understood the "vital properties" of ordinary rocks and plants. He is known to have had success as a doctor in Basel, and at the time was believed to have achieved the transmutation of matter. How any book by Paracelsus (who was born nine years after Rosenkreuz's death) found its way

into Rosenkreuz's tomb is a matter the *Fama* does not bother to explain.

Almost immediately the Rosicrucian movement, whatever it was, caught the imagination of Europe. There are three clear identifiable reasons for this: First, the prospect of alchemy. The *Fama*'s appeal to the spiritual impulses, if it was genuine, does not seem to have taken into account the universality of greed. The noble intellectual purposes of the *Fama* are not shared by many. Rosicrucian literature commanded a large immediate audience; but the huge majority of that audience was only interested in immediate riches. In this respect the *Fama* creators seem to have been, even for their day, quite naive. And this manifestation of greed must have dismayed them.

Secondly, there was the movement's great shrine, the legendary Rosenkreuz tomb. That crypt seems an almost perfect symbol for the Rosicrucians, since no one has ever reliably been known to have seen it, and almost no one believes that it ever existed. But at the time, it piqued the interests of Europeans, who were thirsting for new mysteries to investigate. No one ever mounted any expeditions to seek out the "lost tomb," though, as many did for the legendary Court of Prester John; this is probably due to the complete lack of clues to its whereabouts, in the *Fama* and elsewhere.

Thirdly, and of the most lasting significance, is the concept of the secret society. For the Rosicrucians, whether they existed or not, were the prototypical modern secret society. Almost all the basic tenets of Freemasonry, for example, come from Rosicrucianism: A tiny, select group of wise men using their "hidden knowledge" for the betterment of all humanity; members handpicking their successors; different groups (or "lodges") existing as a brotherhood in several nations at the same time, all in absolute secrecy. The concept intrigued the Western world for centuries, and it intrigues it now. The Masons and the other Western secret societies would look very different, or might not exist at all, were it not for the influence of the Rosicrucians.

Speculation began immediately as to the identity of the *Fama*'s author. That the author was a German Lutheran was fairly obvious from some of the passages—readers were entreated to give up their "false teachers" Aristotle, Galen, and the Pope; one rumor alleged that Martin Luther himself had written it. But its true authorship has never been determined, though many scholars believe that no single person wrote it.

Two other anonymous Rosicrucian books appeared in the *Fama*'s wake. The first, the *Confessio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*, appeared in 1615. This volume gave little new information about the order, and devoted most of its pages to noting how open the order was to any man from any social class; the book also made pointed reference to the vast riches of "gold and silver" in the possession of the order. The second book, *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz* (1616), is a strange work bearing little resemblance to the *Fama* or the *Confessio*. It consists of an intricate narrative about Rosenkreuz's attendance at a wedding of a mythical king and queen. It supplies no information at all about the order, but it does have (in its title) yet another reference to alchemy.

Eventually, though, the interest in the Rosicrucian movement waned largely because no one could seem to find any genuine Rosicrucians to join with. Common parlance called them "the invisibles," and they certainly lived up to that name. A number of con artists enriched themselves while posing as genuine Rosicrucians and charging enormous "initiation fees." By the end of the 17th century, the order was seen as an historical curiosity.

The 18th century saw an unprecedented event in the history of Rosicrucianism: The founding of actual lodges that could be joined. Chapters of the order sprang up in Germany, France, England, and even Russia until Catherine the Great suppressed it there. The French and English Rosicrucians were directly influencing the budding Masonic movement. And in Germany the order published two detailed sets of rules. These rules were heavily ceremonial (much like the Mason's), with specific oaths and degrees of initiation. Also beginning at this time was the tendency among Rosicrucians to back-



Secrets entrusted to a few

The Unpublished Facts of Life

THERE are some things that cannot be generally told—*things you ought to know.* Great truths are dangerous to some—but factors for *personal power* and *accomplishment* in the hands of those who understand them. Behind the tales of the miracles and mysteries of the ancients, lie centuries of their secret probing into nature's laws—their amazing discoveries of *the hidden processes of man's mind,* and *the mastery of life's problems.* Once shrouded in mystery to avoid their destruction by mass fear and ignorance, these facts remain a useful heritage for the thousands of men and women who privately use them in their homes today.

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San Jose, California 95114
Please send me the *free* book, *The Mastery of Life,* which explains how I may learn to use my faculties and powers of mind.

Name_____
Address_____
City_____ Zip Code_____
PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE

The Rosicrucians (AMORC) SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95114, U.S.A.

Rosicrucian ad in *Worlds Of If* (July, 1969), note the alchemical motif.

date the true beginnings of organized Rosicrucianism as far as possible, to give the order an air of antiquity. With this came claims to Rosicrucian membership for any number of historical celebrities; today the movement claims, for example, Isaac Newton, Benjamin Franklin, and Francis Bacon as members (the other side of the coin with secret societies is that the public-at-large doesn't know who isn't a member, so that the group can claim anyone without having to produce evidence).

In the 19th century the order became more oriented toward the occult. An English Rosicrucian group founded in 1865, the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*, called its leader the Supreme Magus. Part of its program was the extensive study of the Hebrew Cabala and the works of the legendary Egyptian prophet Hermes Trismegistus, different systems of magic that, among other things, discussed the possibility of bringing statues to life. SRA members studied "the curative effects of colored light" and similar methods. The growing occultism in the order owed something to the reaction against the heavy industrialization or that era.

It was also in that century that the term "Rosicrucian" became an ordinary term meaning "one with access to privileged information," owing to the growing visibility of the order. In Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's 1963 novel *The First Circle*, one of the characters, a dimwitted industrial boss, uses the name "Rosicrucians" to describe the mathematicians under his supervision.

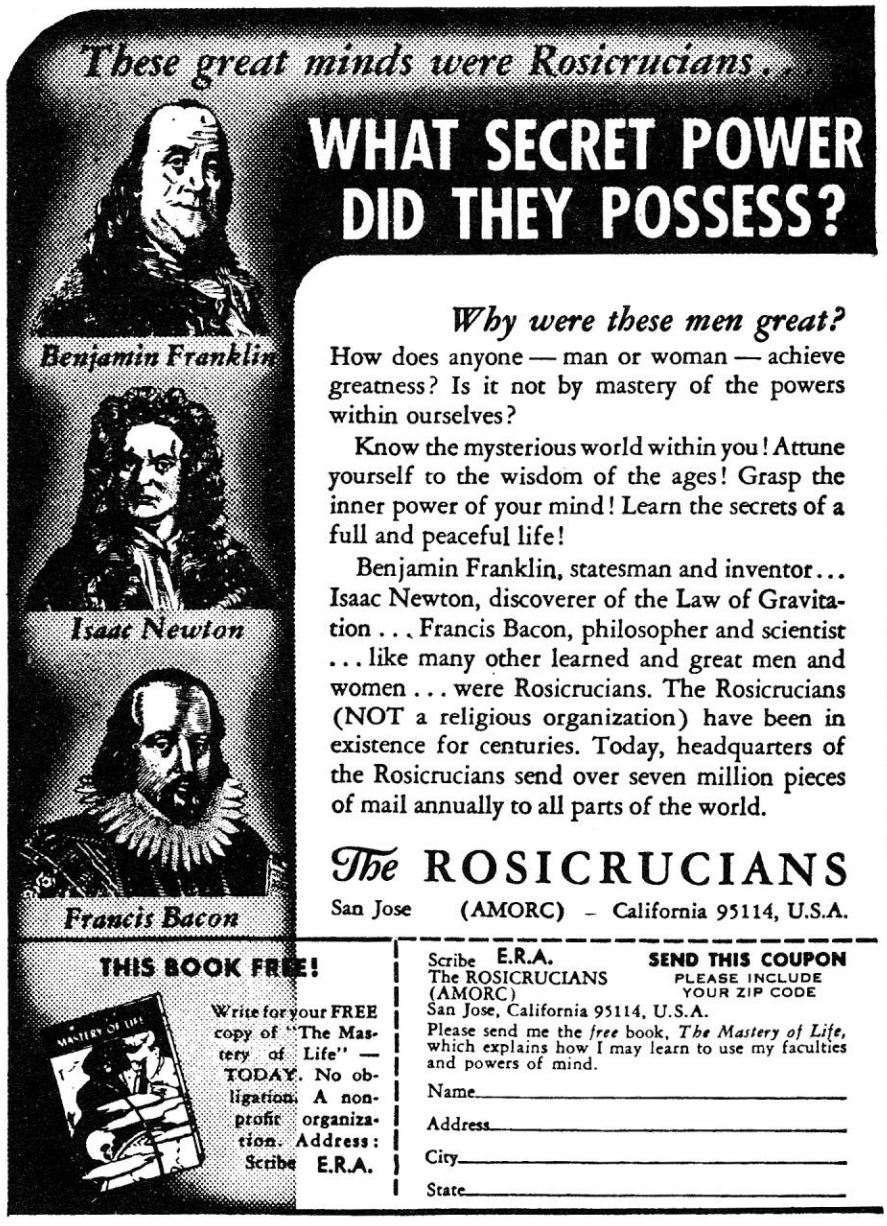
Also in the 19th century, more Rosicrucian-influenced societies were born. Dr. Wynn Wescott, the third Supreme Magus of the SRA, left to form his new organization, The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The Dawn's members included the famous poet W. B. Yeats, the horror-story writer Algernon Blackwood, and the future Satanist Aleister Crowley. This group, whose name is parodied in *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*, a campaign for Chaosium's *Call Of Cthulhu* game, as "The Hermetic Order of the Silver Twilight," devoted itself heavily to magic and eventually burned itself out in sectarian disputes in the early part of this century. These disputes sometimes led to alleged "magical warfare" involving spells, invocations, and indentured vampires.

As the Rosicrucian movement approaches our own time, it loses more and more of its mystery—along with its original principles. Various affiliated groups have long admitted Catholics and women, acts which would have horrified the authors of the *Fama*. Perhaps the most direct violation of the original Rosicrucian principles has come from an American: The turning of the modern world's original secret society into a mass movement.

In 1915, an American advertising man named H. Spencer Lewis founded the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC). Lewis had become a Rosicrucian in France, but returned to his native country to set up his own order. Eventually he located his group's Supreme Temple at San Jose, California, where it remains to this day. There AMORC conducts courses and seminars in Rosicrucianism in person and through the mail. AMORC boasts that it sends "over seven million pieces of mail annually to all parts of the world." This is a little jarring to one familiar with the beginnings of the movement.

AMORC has achieved its growth through a most unsecretive method: advertising. It has placed ads in various types of periodicals, often in science-fiction magazines. These pieces feature an intriguing headline (What strange powers did these men possess?; The unpublished facts of life) and text which presents us with the possibility of reincarnation, telepathy, precognition, the ability to psychically influence others, and other "hidden powers." The ad goes on to say that "the Rosicrucians (not a religious organization)" have the key to such powers. These ads appeared with such regularity in the fifties, sixties, and seventies that they were eventually parodied in the back of one of the *National Lampoon*'s parody magazines ("The Crustaceans [not a mutation]").

Those who respond to the ad receive



Rosicrucian ad in *Galaxy Science Fiction* (December, 1969).

a pamphlet called the *The Mastery of Life*, which invites the recipient into the order. The pamphlet gives a brief rundown of AMORC's courses of study, noting that the ceremony in which the Rosicrucian passes from Neophyte to Adept is "very similar indeed to the third (or Master Mason's) degree of Freemasonry," and promises that "anyone able to read and understand his daily newspaper" can fully understand the teachings of the order. Rosicrucianism had finally reached middle-class America.

AMORC's courses of study range from "the mysteries of time and space" to "perfecting the physical body," and in general reflect the concerns of 19th-century Rosicrucianism. However, the one great recurring motif of Rosicrucianism from the beginning—the flirtation with alchemy—is not absent from AMORC. According to AMORC literature, H. Spencer Lewis is supposed to have transmuted a piece of zinc to gold in public in June, 1916.

For role-playing game purposes, Rosicrucian lore can have a wide variety of uses. One could write a decent scenario involving the pursuit of the secret of alchemy, perhaps for TSR's *Gangbusters*. A scenario, or even a campaign, could be created involving the search for the fabled Rosenkreuz tomb. Real or fictional Rosicrucians could serve as expert advisers in the above scenarios, or could initiate a *Call Of Cthulhu* adventure, or could turn out to be the hidden benefactors in a game of *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes*. The Rosicrucians' "hidden knowledge" can apply to almost anything. The great fascination of the secret society for the outsider is the nagging possibility that "maybe they really do know something I don't." This is particularly true with the Rosicrucians—mystery about their potential knowledge has always been their great selling point. A good gamemaster can make this mystery work for him. Every unanswered question about the order is a potential scenario.



A Rosicrucian woodcut from *Secret Symbols* (Altona, 1785). It contains the date 1604, and represents the tomb of Rosenkreuz as the "philosophers' mountain"—an alchemical symbol of regeneration.

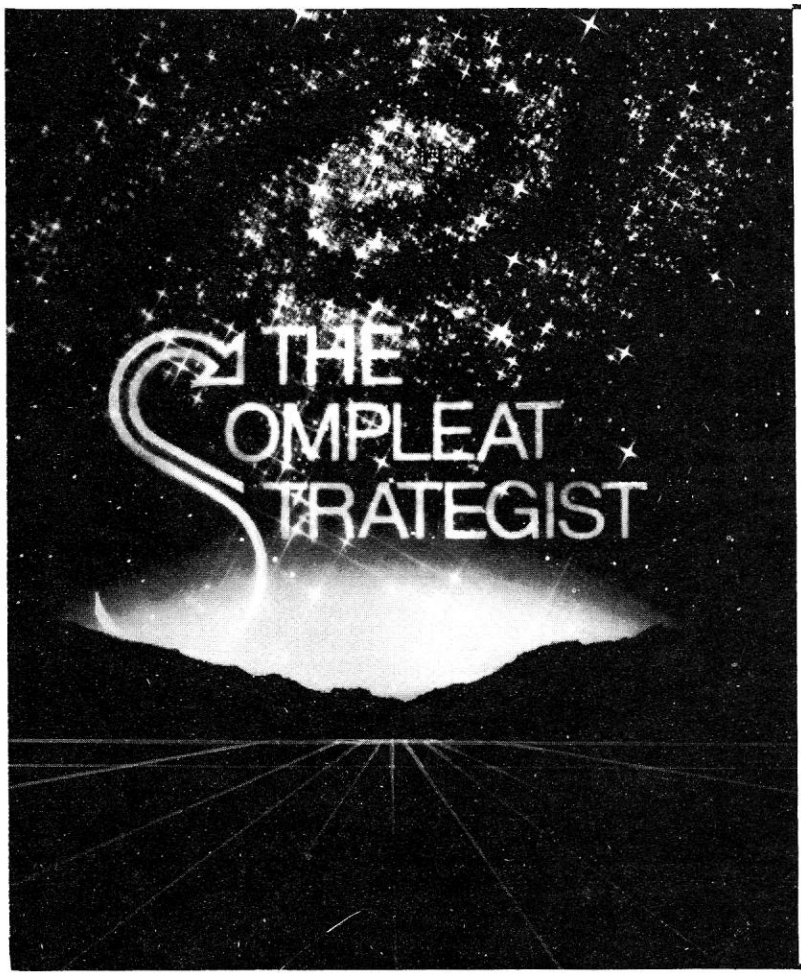
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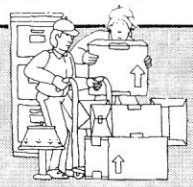
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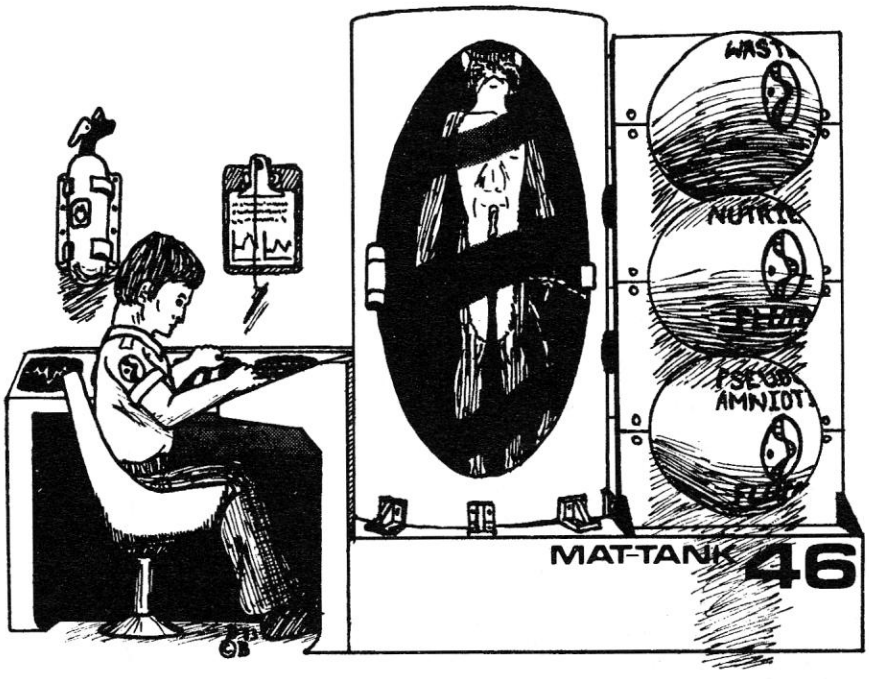
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Genetic Engineering

TRAVELLER Variant

By Dave Bryant

One of the more promising areas of today's technology is genetic engineering. Besides the medical potential—which is beyond the scope of this article—the possibilities for constructs, or androids, are enormous. (In fact, a sizable argument is shaping up regarding the legal status of such beings.)

By the time of the Imperium, genetic engineering as a technology is well-established. It has two advantages over robotics: an android can be endowed with considerably greater intellect, and most people can deal with a warm, living being more easily than with a cold metal robot; especially if the former is attractive in some fashion. Of course, creating an android may take longer and (except for the brain) can be significantly more expensive.

A design system, provided to allow consistency in creating androids, makes up the bulk of this article.

FINDING A FACILITY

Genetic engineering corporations usually deal with micro-organisms. As a result, it may be difficult to find a location capable of handling a design much larger than an amoeba. One suggestion is to inquire with one such firm for example Geria, where the nearest facilities are.

To determine if a world has a suitable engineering plant, first examine its tech level. If this is TL 8-, there are none present. Otherwise roll 2D for 11+. DMs: +1 if TL 11+, +2 if TL 13+, +3 if TL 15+, +1 if population factor is 9+; -1 if population factor is 4-, -1 per law level over 5.

The same restrictions against robots may apply to androids as well: paranoia, superstition, religion, economics, and so on.

PAYMENT

Prior to creating the android, the engineering firm will require a 30% down payment, with the remainder paid upon decanting. Bulk discounts, similar to those offered on robots, are available. Standard designs and lots of one hundred or more receive a 25% discount.

DETERMINING AN ANDROID'S FUNCTION

Once a manufacturer has been found, the design process can begin. The first factor to consider is the android's purpose. Is the android to be a bodyguard? Then it should be large (but not excessively so) and well-equipped for close combat. Is it to be a companion? Then it should be slightly smaller than the client's race, attractive, and perhaps have a gender. The android may also have a name or designation.

SIZE/MASS

The mass of the android is determined. It may be of any size, but difficulties may arise if it is much larger than an Aslan (100kg). Larger ones are recommended only for special situations. The base cost of designing and manufacturing an android is Cr30/kg. Up to 50% of the android's body may be devoted to special features.

BODY TYPE

The shape of the android's body governs its stability in movement, its manipulative capability, and its target profile. There are three basic configurations available: quadruped, humanoid, and centauroid.

Quadruped: Equipped with four legs and no other limbs, this shape cannot manipulate tools. However, there is no charge. (For a 10% charge, the front paws can be made manipulative; however, the android does not move while manipulative and vice versa.)

Humanoid: Equipped with two legs and two arms, this shape is capable of normal manipulative feats. Additional 15% cost (added to the base cost).

Centauroid: Equipped with four legs

and two arms, this shape combines the best features of quadruped and humanoid. It is also the most expensive body type, at an additional 30% cost.

Many variations on the above themes are possible, but these are the basis for almost any form imaginable. If more limbs are required, they can be added under the section "Extra Limbs and Organs."

DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

The food acceptable to an android is dependent on the type of digestion it is capable of. Three such systems are available: Herbivore, Carnivore, and Omnivore.

Herbivore: The android is only able to consume plant material, and has a relatively delicate and specialized digestion. No additional cost.

Carnivore: The android is designed to consume animal tissue, but can subsist on a vegetable diet if nothing else is available. Additional 10% cost.

Omnivore: The android can eat either meat or plant foodstuffs freely, but should have a balance of both for proper health. Additional 20% cost.

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

Though most natural beings have a reasonably simple respiration, there are methods of improving this to allow the android to function in normally hostile atmospheres. Several alternatives, ranging from a simple filtration organ to a complex set of lungs and gills, are available.

Standard: As for humans, a simple set of paired lungs and a tube leading to an orifice (usualy a nose and/or mouth). Allows breathing of types 5, 6, and 8 atmospheres. No additional cost.

Filter: A small mesh grid just below the larynx that traps and removes impurities before they enter the lungs. Allows breathing of types 4, 7, and 9 atmospheres. Additional 5% cost.

Compressor: An organ that raises the pressure of low density air as it passes into the lungs. Allows breathing of type 3 atmosphere. Additional 10% cost; requires 25% of the android's body.

Combined Filter/Compressor: Contains both organs listed above. Allows breathing of types 2 through 9 atmospheres. Additional 15% cost; requires 2% of the body.

Gills: Instead of lungs, a set of organs that process water for oxygen is present. Atmosphere over the body of water must be of types 4 through 9. Additional 10% cost.

Combined Gills/Lungs: Contains both sets of breathing apparatus, that for gas atmospheres and that for liquid environments. The android can freely switch from one to the other. Additional 15% cost; requires 5% of the body

Long-Duration Lungs: Allows long periods to elapse between breaths by storing oxygen. Per hour of storage: additional 10% cost; requires 1% of the body. *Note:* A compressor is required to allow use of this feature.

ENVIRONMENT

Besides land surface, there are two other areas the android can be designed to live in: liquid and air. Various combinations of these three are listed below

Standard: As for humans, a dry-land existence with limited exposure to the other two environments. No additional cost.

Aquatic: A strictly liquid environment with no contact with the other two. Locomotory limbs are fins instead of legs. Additional 5% cost. *Note:* Gills or Long Duration Lungs are required to allow use of this feature.

Aerial: Allows flight and limited contact with liquid and/or land. Additional 15% cost; requires 20% of the body.

Amphibian: Allows existence on land and in liquid. Additional 10% cost. *Note:* Combination Gills/Lungs or Long Duration Lungs are required to allow use of this feature.

Triphibian: Allows existence in all three habitats. Additional 20% cost; requires 30% of the body. *Note:* See note under Amphibian.

EPIDERMAL SYSTEM

The skin of the android can be designed to withstand varying types of stresses. There are five options available: standard, fur/feather covering, fatty, scaled, and plated.

Standard: As for humans, a moderately thick layer of dead cells overlaying living skin and fat cells. No armor modification. No additional cost.

Fur/Feather Covering: A thick padding of hair or quills. Functions as cold weather clothing; no armor modification. Additional 10% cost; requires 1% of the body. *Note:* May not be purchased with Scaled or Plated skin types.

Fatty: Like standard skin, but rubbery-textured and substantially thicker in fat cells. Functions as cold-weather clothing and Jack armor. Additional 20% cost; requires 5% of the body. *Note:* May be purchased with any other skin type.

Scaled: Similar to snake skin; small, interlocking platelets of a stiffly flexible material. Functions as mesh armor. Additional 30% cost; requires 5% of the body.

Plated: Similar to Virushi hide; plates of a rigid material articulated with thick leathery skin. Functions as cloth armor. Additional 40% cost; requires 10% of the body. *Note:* May not be purchased with Scaled skin or Aerial or Triphibian environment types.

WEAPONRY

For various reasons, it may be desireable for the android to be capable of combat or defense. Humanoid and centauroid body types automatically have hands for weapons; quadrupeds are not allowed to use hands as weapons.

Teeth: Larger and/or sharper teeth in a stronger jaw. Additional 5% cost. Poison sacs cost another 5% and requires 2% of the body.

Claws: May be put on hands and/or feet. Additional 5% cost. Retractile claws cost 10% (not 5%); require 1% of the body. *Note:* May not be purchased with Hooves.

Thrasher: A strong, heavy tail used as a blunt instrument. Additional 10% cost; requires 10% of the body. *Note:* A combined thrasher/prehensile tail costs 15% and requires 10% of the body.

Stinger: A sharp projection at the tip of the tail. Additional 10% cost. Poison sacs cost another 5% and require 2% of the body. *Note:* Any tail type may contain a stinger, but a tail is required to allow use of this feature.

Horns: Seasonally grown projections on the android's head. Additional 10% cost; requires 5% of the body. Yearround horns cost 15% and require 5% of the body.

Hooves: The toenails are greatly enlarged and usually substitute as a ground contact point. Additional 20% cost.

SENSORY SYSTEMS

The ways in which the android gathers information on its environs are quite diverse. Standard sensory capabilities

cost nothing. An enhanced sense costs 5%; a substandard sense is worth a 5% discount. (Even a substandard sense is better than none, though.) A special sense, such as Infrared Sight, may also be standard, enhanced, or substandard.

Normal Sight: The wavelengths visible to a human can be seen, with normal light levels. No cost.

Night Sight: Functions as intrinsic light intensifiers. Additional 15% cost.

Infrared Sight: Functions as intrinsic thermal imagers or IR goggles. Additional 10% cost.

Ultraviolet Sight: Vision extends deep into the violet end of the spectrum, beyond normal human bounds. Rudimentary night vision outdoors is possible. Additional 10% cost.

Telescopic Sight: Functions as intrinsic binoculars or field glasses. Additional 15% cost.

Normal Hearing: The standard human parameters of sound apply. No cost.

Subsonic Hearing: Extremely low-pitched sounds are audible. Additional 10% cost.

Ultrasonic Hearing: Extremely high-pitched sounds are audible. Additional 10% cost.

Directional Hearing: The android can tell approximately from which direction a sound originated. Additional 15% cost.

Selective Hearing: The android can focus its attention on one sound or set of sounds to the exclusion of others. However, this does not protect against sonic attacks. Additional 15% cost.

SONAR: Allows the android to sense obstacles and objects by reflected sound waves. Passive costs 15%. Active costs 20%, and requires a pharynx or larynx to allow use of the feature. Note that Active is more efficient than Passive, but can be detected by Ultrasonic Hearing.

Low-Decibel Hearing: Extremely quiet or subtle sounds are audible. Additional 10% cost.

High-Decibel Hearing: Extremely loud sounds can be heard without injury. Additional 15% cost.

Normal Smell: Human olfactory limits apply. No cost.

Tracking Smell: The android can detect and identify odors left by objects or beings, and can follow trails left by scent. Additional 10% cost.

The senses of taste and touch may also be enhanced or lessened.

GENDER

Though androids are frequently designed as neuter beings, male or female androids are not unknown.

Neuter: The android has no sex or genitalia, though male secondary sex characteristics may be present. No cost.

Sterile: The android has a sex and functional genitalia, but is incapable of reproduction. Additional 20% cost; requires 5% of the body.

Fertile: The android has a sex and functional genitalia, and is capable of breeding with others of similar design, of opposite sex. Additional 50% cost; requires 10% of the body. Note that the great cost is due to the manufacturer's realization that such an android may be bred, and thus potential future profits would be lost.

EXTRA LIMBS AND ORGANS

Some times an android may require more than the usual array of limbs and organs. A number of additional such body parts are available to modify a basic body type.

Pharynx: Arudimentary sound-producing organ. Additional 5% cost; requires 1% of the body. *Note:* If no sound-production means is purchased, the android is mute, and incapable of sound or speech.

Larynx: A sophisticated sound-producing organ capable of speech. Additional 10% cost; requires 1% of the body. *Note:* The android must have an intelligence and education of 2+ each to make proper use of this feature.

Prehensile Tail: A marginally manipulative limb which functions at one-half the android's normal strength and dexterity. Additional 10% cost; requires 5% of the body.

Arm/Hand: An extra manipulative limb. Additional 15% cost; requires 10% of the body.

Pair of Legs: An extra pair of locomotory limbs. Additional 40% cost; requires 25% of the body.

CHARACTERISTICS

A UPP, just like those of characters, must be generated for the android. Given the capabilities of the technologies involved, these can be manipulated with fair accuracy.

Strength and Endurance: One point of each per 12kg of the android's mass, rounded off to the nearest whole number, at no cost. To add a point costs 5%, to subtract a point allows a 5% discount. *Note:* These stats cannot be greater than 1 point/6kg.

Dexterity: Standard dexterity is 7, at no cost. To add a point costs 10%. To subtract a point allows a 5% discount.

Intelligence: Standard intelligence is 5, at no cost. To add a point costs 10%. To subtract a point allows a 5% discount.

Education: Standard education is zero. To add a point costs 15%. The android is allowed one skill level per education point upon decanting. *Note:* The maximum education allowed is found by subtracting 6 from the local tech level.

PSI Rating: The android is allowed 1D points, at no cost. To add a point costs 20%. Points may not be subtracted.

Social Level: Standard social level is 4. One is added if the client's social level is 8+, 2 if the client's is B+. One is subtracted if the client's social level is 5-, 2 if the client's is 3-. Actual social level may be dependant on local attitudes toward androids.

FINAL TOTALS

Once the design process is completed, the costs and space used are computed. The percentages are totalled; then, the cost-by-percentage is figured and added to the base cost. If the total percentage of body required exceeds 50%, too much is being used, and items must be dropped until the percentage is fifty or less.

Tech levels affect total cost according to the following table:

Tech Level	*Multiplier*
15	x1
14	x1.5
13	x2
12	x3
11	x4
10	x6
9	x8

"Multiplier" is the number that must be multiplied by the total cost to find actual cost.

GESTATION AND DECANTING

Generation of a design takes three weeks. Once a design is completed, gestation of the android in a matrix or maturation tank begins. The rate of growth is equivalent to twice the rate of medical slow drug: one year's worth of growth occurs in slightly more than six days. Normal gestation periods are figured at 1 day/kg of the android's final mass. The android is equivalent to a human of sixteen years of age upon decanting. The table below contains information on an android's aging processes.

Mass in kg	*Age*	*Term Length*
5-	1	1 year
6-10	2	1 year
11-15	4	2 years
16-20	8	2 years
21-30	12	3 years
31-50	14	3 years
51-80	16	4 years
81-150	18	4 years
150+	20	5 years

"Age" is the time after decanting, in years, that the first aging die roll is made. "Term Length" is how often aging rolls are made.

Once an android has been released from its mat-tank (decanted), it cannot be returned to it. A note of minor interest: the android, requiring an umbilical cord, will possess a navel.

EQUIPMENT

Essentially, a mat-tank is identical to a low berth, save that it performs the opposite function. Of course, nutrients and pseudo-amniotic fluid are pumped into the tank, so another half-tonne of equipment is necessary in addition to the tank itself. A standard mat-tank displaces one tonne, masses 750kg, and costs around kCr100 at TL 9. A large mat-tank for bigger androids displaces 1.5t, masses 1.1t, and costs about kCr150. The mat-tank must be connected to a computer of a model number at least equal to the android's education. (For example, an android with an education of four must have been interfaced with at least a computer Model/4.) A bis model counts as a computer of one number higher.

EDUCATION

Learning is accomplished through implanted memories, an expensive process. Since the memories are *ersatz*, psychological problems (usually schizophrenia) may result. The gamemaster rolls a 10+ for this to occur. However, it is even more expensive in terms of time as well as money to educate an android conventionally, so implanting is used almost exclusively.

STATUS

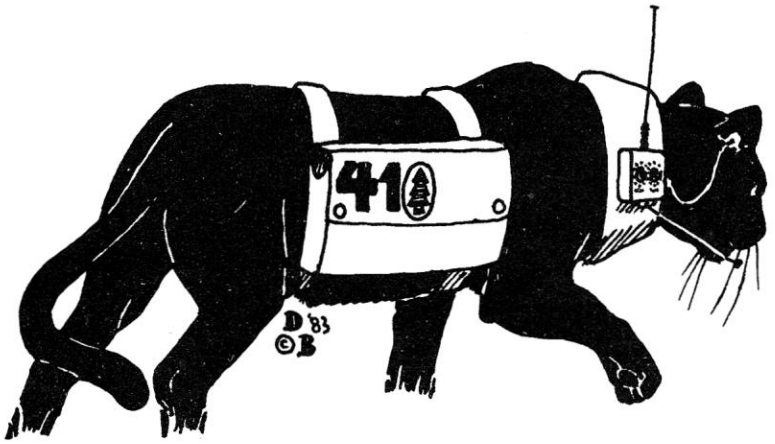
If the android has an intelligence of 3-, it is legally classified as a pet or animal, and may be owned outright. However, if its intelligence is 4+, things become more complicated. In mainstream Imperial society, slavery is frowned upon, and so an intelligent android cannot be legally considered property. Lax enforcement, convenient interpretations of the law, and secrecy, though, can force such a status on an android.

EXAMPLES

Two examples of genetically engineered androids follow, to illustrate use of the design system. The first is intended as a spy/assassin, the second as a wilderness scout/ranger. □



WYVERN
UPP: ACAA64
PSI: 6 (275%)
TL 12, 60kg
BODY: Humanoid (15%)
DIGESTION: Omnivore (20%)
RESPIRATION: Filter (5%)
ENVIRONMENT: Standard
SKIN: Fatty + Scaled (50%; 10%)
WEAPONRY: Hands, Poison Teeth, Claws, Thrasher/Prehensile Tail (30%; 12%)
SENSES: *Enhanced:* Normal Sight, Night Sight, Normal Hearing, Touch, Normal Smell; *Standard:* Infrared Sight, Telescopic Sight, Low-Decibel Hearing, Tracking Smell, Taste; *Substandard:* Directional Hearing, Selective Hearing, High-Decibel Hearing, Passive SONAR (Total: 125%)
GENDER: Sterile Female (20%; 5%)
EXTRAS: Larynx (10%; 1%)
BASE COST: kCr1.8
TOTAL PERCENTAGES: (cost) 550%; (body) 28%
COST-BY-PERCENTAGE: kCr9.9
TOTAL COST: kCr11.7
TECH LEVEL MULTIPLIER: x3
ACTUAL COST: kCr35.1
(Psionic die roll was 3; client's social level was 7; second percentage, where listed, is body volume.)



NEOPARD
UPP: 9A9A36
PSI: 2 (165%)
TL 9, 55kg
BODY: Quadruped with hands (10%)
DIGESTION: Carnivore (10%)
RESPIRATION: Standard
ENVIRONMENT: Standard
SKIN: Fur Covering (10%; 1%)
WEAPONRY: Teeth, Retractile Claws (15%; 3%)
SENSES: *Enhanced:* Normal Hearing, Normal Smell, Tracking Smell, Taste; *Standard:* Normal Sight, Night Sight. Touch; *Substandard:* Infrared Sight, Ultrasonic Hearing (Total: 55%)
GENDER: Fertile Male (50%; 10%)
EXTRAS: Larynx (10%; 1%)
BASE COST: kCr1.65
TOTAL PERCENTAGES: (cost) 325%; (body) 15%
COST-BY-PERCENTAGE: kCr5.3625
TOTAL COST: kCr7.0125
TECH LEVEL MULTIPLIER: x8
ACTUAL COST: kCr56.1
(psionic die roll was 2; client's social level was C.)

Commentary

Women & Gaming

By Lewis Pulsipher

You don't need to be a statistician to notice that there are vitually no female players of historical "simulations," and that a much larger (but still small) proportion of role-players are women. Why is there a difference between men and women, and why are female role-players so much more common than female board wargamers? I'd like to make a stab at some explanations.

Part of the reason, apart from simple disinterest in the subject matter, is male hostility. Some males seem to feel threatened by female gamers. It is hard for the average male to avoid ego-involvement in competitive wargames, and an undercurrent of hostility may result when a woman joins the group. Nobody wants to lose to a girl, they think. But most men can put aside this ego fear when role-playing, because there are no winners and losers. Because the men are less hostile, women are willing to try this kind of game.

Younger males in particular are prone to the kind of "men's club" attitude which can put off women. Forget sex for a moment and imagine how you (if you're a man) would feel when you encountered a group of women who play some strange game which they treated as their own preserve. Imagine them ignoring your opinions, and don an air of superiority—this game is for women, not men (or this game is for our gang, not for outsiders). You wouldn't be likely to play and enjoy the game in spite of these attitudes. In the same way, women can be offended by condescending males, by males who categorize them as foreigners (if the males are very young) or as potential dates. Why bother? Some males carry their cliquishness into role-playing. For example, their characters may act in a most male-chauvinist-pig manner to irritate the female players, and perhaps dissuade them from playing in the future. Whether they do this consciously or subconsciously, the result is the same.

Perhaps expectations of men have something to do with the paucity of female gamers. Some men won't take a woman seriously when she wants to learn a war or role-playing game. Others hope that women will become gamers, but they don't believe it can happen. When I went to Britain in 1976, I was told that (unfortunately) British women didn't play *Dungeons & Dragons*. Imagine my surprise when I met a group of college students who wanted to learn—two men and two women. (Another male expectation is that women will participate only if their boyfriends/husbands do. No doubt there is some truth in this insofar as "attached" women inevitably feel more comfortable than unattached women when much outnumbered by men, but in the example there were no such attachments among the four.) In the next couple of years I encountered several other British women who learned the game (also unattached). The point is that women are willing to learn (and to gamemaster) if they're given a chance and reasonably friendly and comfortable circumstances.

Role-playing games, unlike board wargames, do not encourage playing "for blood," with all that implies in arguments about rules, pressure to perform, pressure to conform, and isolation. Instead these games encourage cooperation and a feeling of companionship. They also encourage a more or less personal interaction, in role-playing among characters, not found in competitive "simulations." Women are less inclined than men to play for blood, that is, they get their fun in the playing, not in the winning. Wargamers, particularly the highly competitive high-school-age type, who have fun only when they win, naturally put off female players. In role-playing games this competitive type, if he plays at all, cannot so easily ruin the game for the less competitive. In fact, the latter may be glad to have a comrade who concentrates on the minutiae of strategy and tactics, so that they can enjoy the more entertaining aspects of adventure.

On the other hand, board wargames are often played most competitively. The epitome of competitive games is *Diplomacy*. Though there is an element of cooperation in the game, in the end it is every man for himself, one against six. Not surprisingly, no more than 2% or 3% of postal *Diplomacy* players are females, and convention tournaments reflect similar or lower percentages. No one can claim that women aren't up to the game intellectually; most just aren't interested in this kind of cutthroat business.

Moreover, though it is less true every day, generally women have been taught to take a passive rather than active role in any work or activity in which men are involved. In gaming, this translates into a desire to have fun without having to strain to attain it. Insofar as many board wargames demand a considerable commitment of effort from the participants, a woman who tends to prefer the passive to the active may not care for them, though she may enjoy parlor games or role-playing.

Some women who do play team games such as *D&D* are inhibited by the feeling that the men ought to know tactics better than women; consequently they let the men make many of the battle decisions, even if the men turn out to be none too good at this. Others don't care for the hours-long battle that take place in role-playing as well as board wargames. I don't know many science-fiction role-players, but I suspect that fantasy is much preferred by women because it seems less military.

Among fantasy role-players, I suspect that women make up an increasing proportion of players as the average age rises. I've never met a woman younger than 17 who played wargames of any kind, though there certainly must be some in the many high school clubs. Younger players are more likely to engage in "hack & slash" games or power-seeking ego trips which tend to put off women; perhaps younger players indulge more in cutthroat competition (in which every player must guard his own back, and the devil take the hindmost). I've heard of women who were expert "evil" players, but most of the women fantasy role-players I know tend to be "good" and lawful or neutral—though there are a couple of delightful (and exasperating) chaotics.

In general, then, we might suspect that the highly competitive nature of wargaming discourage women, that male attitudes deter them, and that the less military and less competitive a game feels, the more women are likely to become interested. This is only a generalization; the point is that if you are one of those unfortunate souls to whom female gamers are only legends, a change in your attitude, or a change from "simulations" to role-playing, might make a big difference. There's no "natural" reason why women should be any less interested in complex games than men. □

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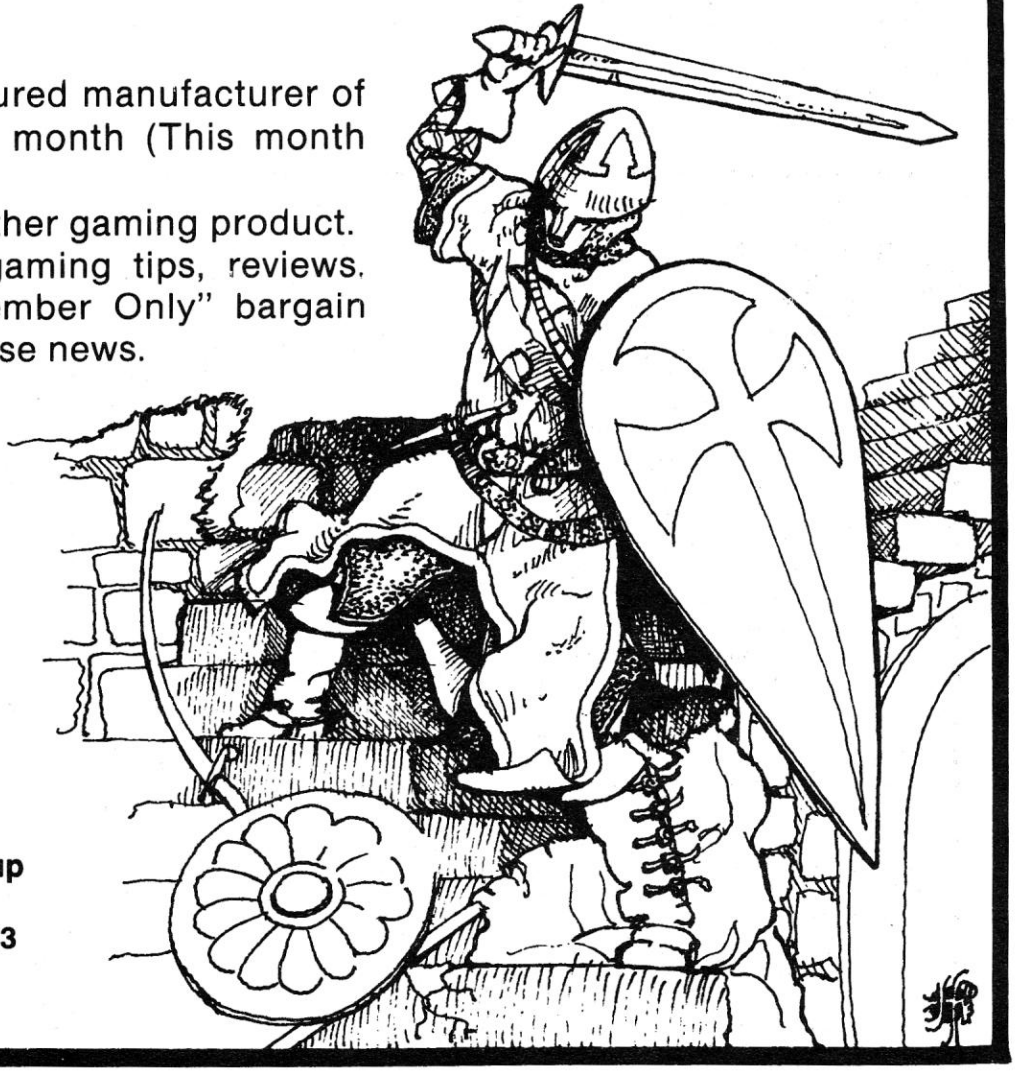
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COLLECTORS' CORNER

As a faithful reader of your mag, I have a suggestion. No one, hear me, no one seems to have any form of exchange for collectors to make their wares available to the public, and no single person or company can possibly keep all back issues and out-of-print games. Don't make it sound like I am trying to glorify the relentless collector, for I am one and would be the first to admit we are a hard-bitten mercenary group. But we are the only hope for the neophyte players. We are the last ones who still have that extra mint-condition back issue of *The Dragon*, or of *Cults Of Prax* tucked away in the recesses of our collections. I must admit that the majority of us probably wouldn't part with our treasures for a price, and a steep price at that! For example, consult issue 83 of *The Dragon*, page 72, for an ad of an back-issue collector offering to sell old *Dragons* for as much as $70-75! Although we aren't cheap, I feel a variation of the deceased notice board should be reincarnated, as a part of the "Game Reviews" column, listing collectors and products available (and condition) for prospective players. It's a shame when you buy a terrific game for its reputed quality of back-up material and source packs and find it's all out of print. I cite one current example: *RuneQuest* has a major absence of material, except for (*voila!*) the collector's copy of *Big Rubble* just dying to be claimed.

The Materialistic Mercenary
Lewes DE

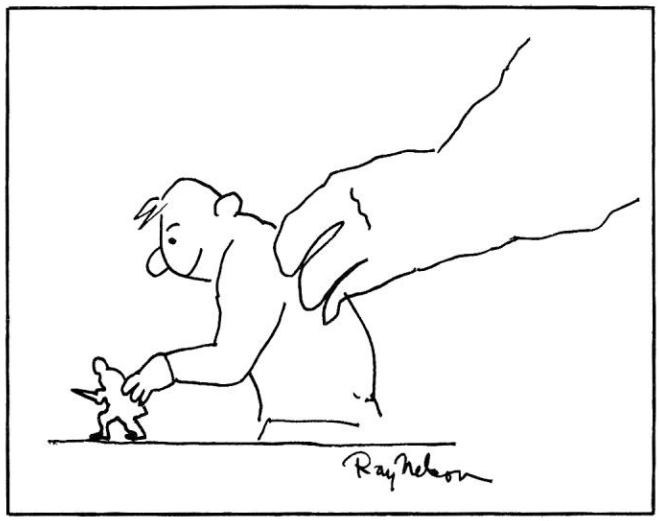
ROCK VIDEO

I had to write after reading Larry DiTillio's "Sword Of Hollywood," specifically the item on the animated feature *Rock & Rule* (*DW 37*).

I was lucky enough to see *Rock & Rule* when it appeared in the Boston area. Having seen Nelvana productions before on television, I thought it would be worth seeing. I was not disappointed! The animation and music were the best. The action and humor flowed perfectly, always holding my enjoyment. All in all, I wold see it over and over again. As a matter of fact, I went back a week later but the show was gone. I tried to get the soundtrack but it never came to the stores. To this day, I've waited for the video to appear, yet there has been nothing.

There was very little advance notice for the movie and a black hole couldn't make it vanish better. Thanks for proving *Rock & Rule* actually existed. I also hope someone will have the sense to bring it back, and soon! □

Thomas Helms
Skippack PA



The Year is 100 Million B.C.

FIRST WORLD

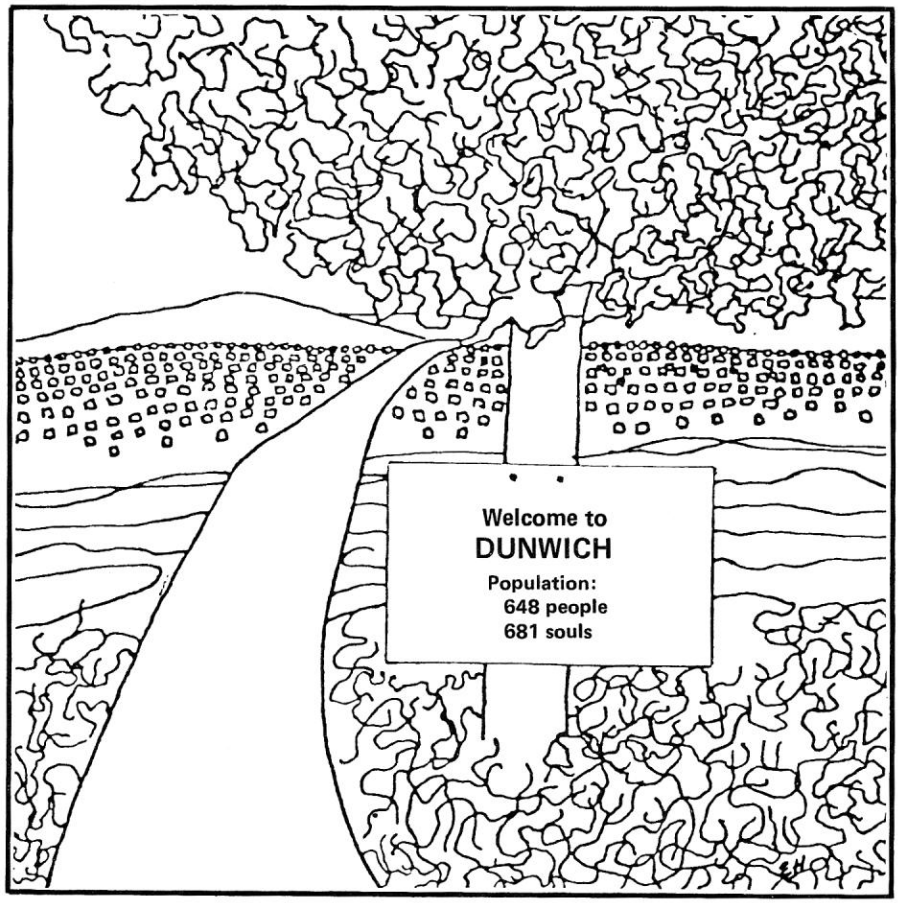


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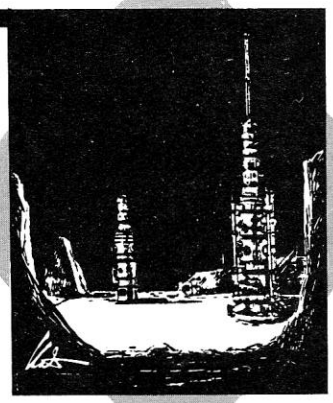


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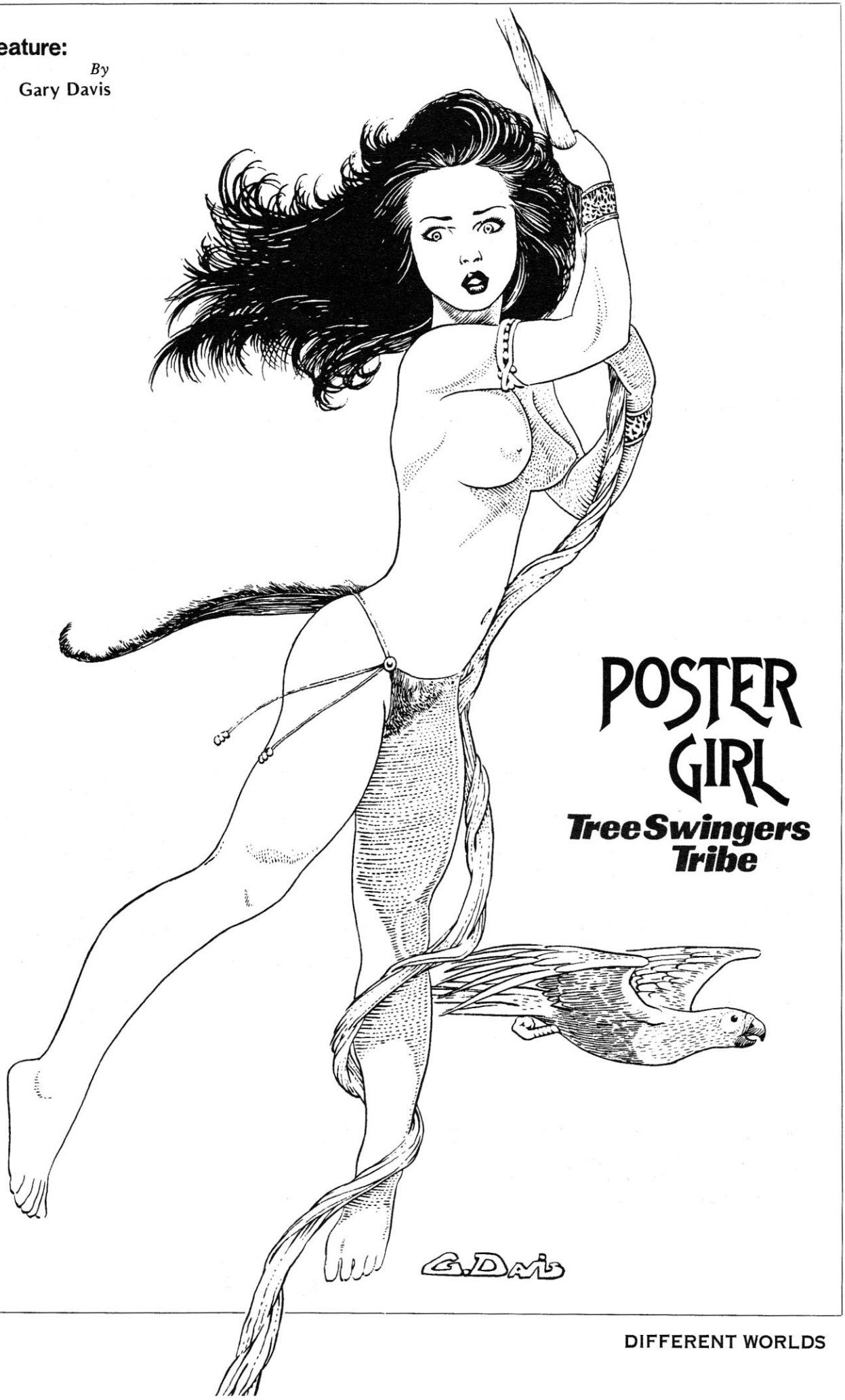
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San Francisco

The Eye of Sitar

Search for a valuable African ruby leads the investigators to a diabolical plot to raise the dead.

By Darren Tschida

CALL of CTHULHU ADVENTURE

Illustrated by Steve Purcell

INTRODUCTION

The Eye of Sitar, an extremely famous and valuable African ruby has been stolen from San Francisco's de Young Museum during the famed gem's U.S. tour. The current owner, Mr. W. Sprangstein is offering a $5000 return for its safe return. The investigators have been contacted in secret by the museum's curator who has heard of the investigators and wants them to try to recover the gem. He believes it was stolen by a strange cult. The museum will pay $200 a day for their services. The gem is reputed to have some sort of occult power, but all sources on the Eye of Sitar are vague as to what this may be. Due to the nature of the misfortune, the museum requires that the investigation be kept in absolute secrecy.

HISTORY OF THE GEM

The 78 carat Eye of Sitar is the world's largest known ruby and has an estimated value of $750,000. The gem originally came out of Africa in the 1850's. Its discoverer, Col. "Buck" Shott, stole it from a tribe of head-hunters who worshipped the gem. Col. Shott was found dead in Cairo a week after he left Central Africa with the cut stone. The stone was gone. An English jeweler obtained the gem in 1874. It had been sent to him anonymously. The jeweler was found dead soon thereafter, an axe planted firmly in his skull. Again, the gem had been taken.

The stone turned up again in 1910, in the possession of Mr. W. Sprangstein. Mr. Sprangstein comes from an illustrious German family with a long history of nobility and wealth. W. Sprangstein is the last of his family, is independently wealthy, and very eccentric. He always goes by just "W." He keeps a private lifestyle, and is believed to be about thirty years old. He has not yet made public the source from which he obtained the gem. German peasants insist that Sprangstein is a warlock or some sort of evil wizard and avoid him at all costs. This suits Sprangstein fine.

Sprangstein has taken the gem on three world tours—this is the first time any attempt has been made to steal the gem. Police are trying their best to find the ruby.

W. SPRANGSTEIN

The Sprangstein family have been worshippers of Azathoth for centuries. The Eye of Sitar has potent magical potential. Only recently has the proper incantation to activate the gem been discovered. Azathoth worshippers killed Col. "Buck" Shott, the unknown gem supplier, and the jeweler. The Sprangstein family had the jeweler killed and hid the stone until it was safe to reveal it to the public. W. takes the stone on the world tour so other worshipers of Azathoth may discuss with him the ruby's possible uses. A San Francisco group, the Sons of Chaos, discovered the incantation. W. arranged for the gem to be stolen by the Sons of Chaos when he got to San Francisco.

If the investigators talk with Sprangstein they will find him loath to speak. He is staying in one of the finest hotels in the city and it is doubtful they will even be able to get in to see him. They may be able to bait him into talking by sending a message saying they have information on the gem. Sprangstein is a loathesome man with slicked-back hair, beady little eyes, and an insincere grin. He speaks glibly, as if he has rehearsed every word he speaks thousands of times.

Sprangstein stays indoors most of the day. Every night, however, he sneaks out of the hotel through the service entrance. On the street corner he meets another person in a car and together they drive off. This second person is Vince Wydon, leader of the Sons of Chaos. They drive to Golden Gate Park, park the car, and sneak into a dense grove of trees. In a clear spot in the grove is an altar. Here, Vince and Sprangstein kneel and pray to Azathoth. After an hour of prayer they return to town without saying a word. If the investigators examine the altar, a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll lets them discover it to be holy to Azathoth.

W. SPRANGSTEIN

W. Sprangstein is somewhat of a wimp. His main power lies in his smooth talking way of handling people. He has taken to carrying a .22 revolver and a pocketknife around with him, although he is not very proficient in either.

STR 12	CON 11	SIZ 11	INT 16	POW 10
DEX 9	CHA 16	EDU 17	SAN 0	HP 11


©84

SKILLS: .22 Revolver 30%, Fist 50%, Pocketknife 30%, Occult 30%, Listening 25%, Drive Automobile 25%, Credit Rating 85%, Debate 40%, Fast Talk 45%, Oratory 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 46%.

WEAPONS: .22 Revolver (1D6 damage), Pocketknife (1D3 damage).

SPELLS: Call Azathoth, Contact Ghoul, Summon Byakhee, Dread Curse of Azathoth.

THE ROBBERY

Sprangstein has keys to the door of the museum (he always demands keys to the place the gem is kept). He gave the key to the Sons of Chaos to help them to take the stone. The three guards stationed to watch the gem were easily surprised and killed. The crime occured on the night of December 3, 1922. The investigators should arrive by the 13th at the latest.

THE SONS OF CHAOS

The San Francisco area is the gathering site for a group of Azathoth worshippers known as the Sons of Chaos. They number over one hundred members, both men and women, but seldom do all gather at once. They maintain contact with each other through correspondence and secret message drop sites.

The group is led by a complete lunatic–Vince Wydon. Vince's family has worshipped Azathoth for decades, and Vince is totally dedicated to the god's cause. When he's not out killing, preaching, or carousing, Vince is a police officer. When the investigators begin nosing around, he will send a couple of assassins to shut them up, permanently. Vince is not about to jeopardize his life's work.

For years, Azathoth's subjects have sought the secret purpose of the Eye of Sitar. At last the Sons of Chaos have found it. One cultist has a day job in a bookstore. A few months ago he came across a diary in a box of old books. It was the diary of Col. "Buck" Shott, the man who brought the gem out of the jungles of Africa. He had decided to sell the gem. His diary somehow made the journey to California and wound up in the wrong hands. The passage that particularly interested the Sons of Chaos was the following:

"I have been able to learn the purpose of the ruby from the leader of the tribe. At midnight on the night of either the spring or fall equinox, take the gem to a clearing and place it upon an altar. Next you must sacrifice ten big, strong men, or an amount of men equal to this. You then take the blood of the dead men and put it in a bowl, and then place the ruby in the bowl. You must then say the chant which I have listed after this entry. If all is done right, the dead will rise from the ground and devour the living! Only those whom Azathoth favors will survive the holocaust! I don't know if any of this is to be believed, but the chance can't be taken. In my travels I have learned too much about the Old Ones to take this lightly. I shall have to steal the gem and destroy it."

We know the story from there. Vince was elated with this discovery.

The Sons of Chaos plan to carry out the gem's ritual function on December 23, 1922–the fall equinox. Vince is extremely anxious to see the plan succeed and will kill without hesitation to protect it.

On the 23rd, about fifty Sons of Chaos will meet in Golden Park to perform the ceremony. Thirteen members have volunteered to be sacrificed to ensure the ritual's success. W. Sprangstein will be there to help the festivities. Vince will be the master of ceremonies. He will recite the chant. The entire ceremony takes about a half-hour to complete, after which the ground will be violently ripped asunder as the dead rise. With luck, the investigators won't let things get this far, but the investigators may wish to have a reversal spell ready just in case.

Once risen, the dead will eat all living flesh they can find. They have the characteristics of zombies. There may be millions of zombies about, but it could be an interesting adventure to have the investigators try to find a way to reverse what has happened. The exact extent of the spell's effect is up to the Keeper–it may raise all the dead of all the world, or just the dead of the San Francisco area.

When the characters begin work they will notice a constant tension in the air. Everyone in San Francisco is affected by it. Tempers are short, and the crime rate has gone sky high. Many people are plagued with nightmares which they can't remember the next day. The investigators should get the idea that something big is about to happen.

VINCE WYDON

Vince Wydon is the leader of the Sons of Chaos. He is also a police officer, which has made him quite a good street fighter. He is always armed with either his .45 or a nightstick.

STR 17	CON 17	SIZ 17	INT 15	POW 16
DEX 14	CHA 15	EDU 11	SAN 0	HP 17

SKILLS: Fist 90%, .45 Revolver 60%, Nightstick 50%, 20-Gauge Shotgun 45%, Listening 45%, Spot Hidden Object 45%, Drive Automobile 50%, Move Quietly 25%, Jump 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Law 60%.

WEAPONS: .45 Revolver (1D10+2 damage), Nightstick (1D6 damage).

SPELLS: Contact Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua, Call Azathoth, Summon Hunting Horror, Bind Hunting Horror, Dread Curse of Azathoth.

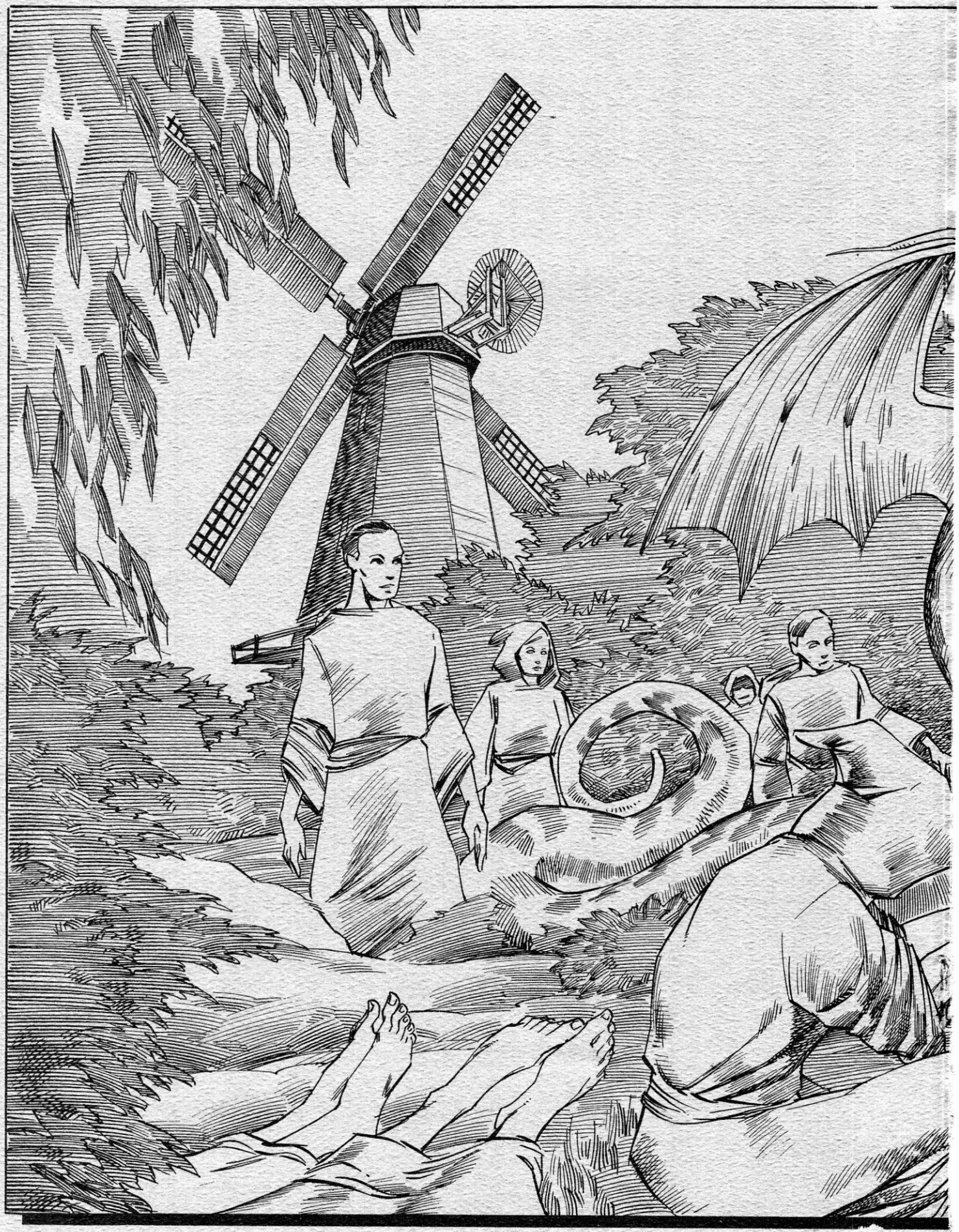
INVESTIGATORS' INFORMATION

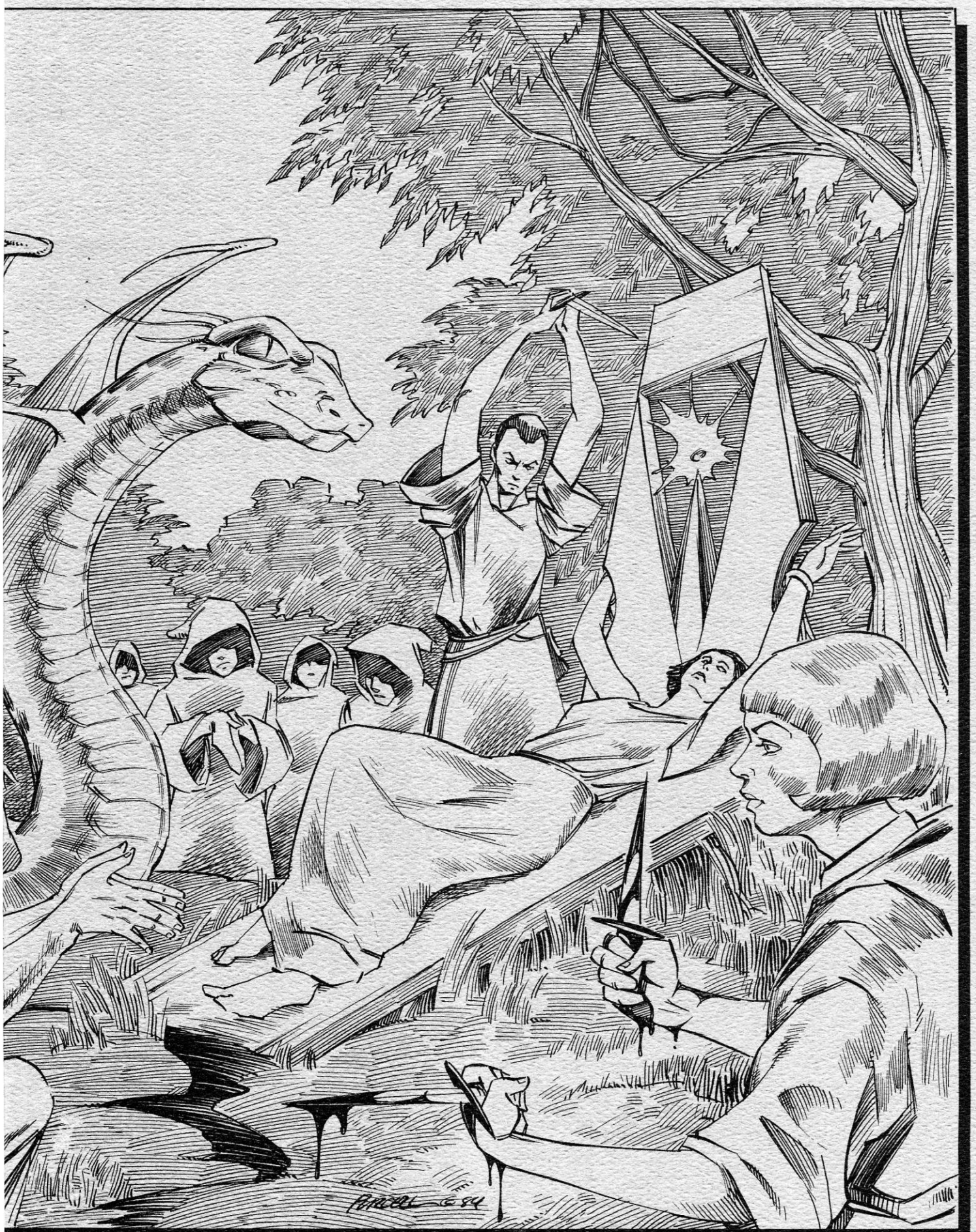
The papers of a few weeks back carried a lot of stories on the gem–most are just information on museum hours. If the investigators search very hard they may find a few interesting bits of information. The letters section of the *San Francisco Bulletin* about three months back has some letters asking the museum to refuse W. Sprangstein and his evil stone access to the city. Each of the letters says that Sprangstein is evil, the ruby is evil, and if allowed into the city, the consequences will be evil. All the letters were signed Friends of Humanity.

An editorial two months ago talks about superstition and the Eye of Sitar's supposed evil powers. The staff writer tells some stories about the ruby. Most are the typical owner's curse type, but one legend states the gem has the power to open the world up to an unnamed menace. The author then goes on to attack superstitions everywhere in the world. If the investigators try to talk to the author about his article they will be told at the newspaper office that he vanished a month ago. He was in reality murdered by the Sons of Chaos because they thought he was a menace to their plan. All books with anything on the ruby are currently checked out of the libraries.

ENCOUNTERING THE SONS OF CHAOS

Vince does not take kindly to interlopers messing up his





plans for world destruction. When he finds out that the investigators are asking about the ruby, he will dispatch two cultists to dispose of them. Vince does not know that the investigators are seasoned Cthulhu fighters and he will only send out lightweight assassins. They will fight to the death because should they flee Vince just may decide to have 15 sacrifices on the 23rd. The killers will sneak into the investigators' rooming house and wait to surprise them. If the investigators win the battle, they may search the attackers' corpses. In one's wallet is his address as well as a pocket calendar with the 23rd of December circled in red. This same assassin has a ring of keys in his pocket. On the ring are the keys to his apartment and his car, which is parked on the street downstairs. The other killer left all his personal belongings at home.

The killer's apartment is in a seedier part of the city down by the wharf. He lived alone. The place has not been cleaned in weeks, and has a rank stink. There is a bookshelf with a bunch of mundane occult tomes, all available in any bookstore. Hanging on one wall is a watercolor of the San Francisco Bay. On the back of the picture is the name Vince Wydon. Each investigator may attempt an INTx1% roll to see if he recognizes the name. Success indicates that the investigator remembers Vince Wydon as the police officer heading the investigation for the stolen ruby. They may use this information in any way they wish. On a desk in the apartment is a note hastily scribbled as a reminder. It says "Green Street Meeting Hall, tomorrow at 5:30."

The Sons of Chaos are having a group meeting tomorrow to prepare for their plan. They rented the hall under the name "Royal Brotherhood Against the Dark Menace." If the investigators go snooping tomorrow at 5:30 they won't be able to get inside, but they can see Vince Wydon and W. Sprangstein go in, and hear someone yell "Hail Azathoth and the Sons of Chaos!" They they will be discovered by a couple of police officers and escorted down to the station under suspicion for everything. By the time the investigators get everything straightened out, the meeting will be over. Any accusations made by the investigators will earn them a night in jail. Vince has all his fellow cops believing he is fine fellow.

THE ASSASSINS

Both assassins will fight to the death. Since one of the cultists does not carry any identification with him, the investigators may never know who he is.

Assassin 1

STR 15	CON 15	SIZ 13	INT 11	POW 9
DEX 11	CHA 10	EDU 9	SAN 0	HP 14

SKILLS: Fist 70%; Bowie Knife 40%, .32 Revolver 40%.

WEAPONS: Bowie Knife (1D4+2 damage), .32 Revolver (1D8 damage).

Assassin 2

STR 13	CON 16	SIZ 12	INT 9	POW 8
DEX 12	CHA 12	EDU 10	SAN 0	HP 14

SKILLS: Fist 60%, Baseball Bat 40%, .38 Revolver 50%.

WEAPONS: Baseball Bat (1D8 damage), .38 Revolver (1D8+2 damage).

THE FRIENDS OF HUMANITY

A group exists in San Francisco whose main purpose is to combat the Old Ones. They too felt the tension in the air and are trying to get to the bottom of what is going on. They have planted a spy in the Sons of Chaos. Unfortunately, Vince Wydon is pretty tight-lipped about the plan, so the spy, Tom Walker, knows nothing. The Friends of Humanity is a pitifully small group, having only ten members. Only six members are currently in the city, the others are in various places around the world battling the minions of Cthulhu and their ilk. The group keeps an incredibly low profile to avoid being sought after by their enemies. They know about the investigators and what they are here for, but they will not blow Tom Walker's cover or contact the investigators except in an extreme emergency.

VINCE'S DEAL

After the investigators foil the first attempt to kill them, on December 20th they will receive a message saying, "Meet me on Pier 32 tonight at 11:00. You've got something I want, and I've got something you want. I propose we make a trade." It is signed V.W. Vince will be waiting for them at Pier 32 all right, but not alone. Hiding in the water under the dock is a Formless Spawn of Tsathogghua which will attack the group at Vince's command. Vince himself will run off to make his nightly rendevous with Sprangstein. Near an outcropping of buildings on Pier 32 are some tar barrels. A clever investigator may take advantage of the fact that tar burns quite nicely and may use it on the Formless Spawn. The next day Vince won't show up for work, and nobody will know the whereabouts of Sprangstein, either. The two are in hiding to protect themselves and the ruby. They will still go to Golden Gate Park at midnight for their religious services.

Over the next couple of days the tension in the air increases to an almost unbearable point. Suicides are a regular feature in the papers and everyone in the city is crabby and depressed. Newspapers blame it on Prohibition and the unusually unfestive Christmas season. All members of the Sons of Chaos are reporting to their posts. Those who aren't staying for the ceremony on the 23rd are going to other states, where they have each been promised their own kingdoms to rule. They won't get much of a kingdom, however, since everyone will be dead.

If the group does not know exactly what is going to happen on the 23rd, they will be caught up in the depression the city is going through and will lose 1 point of SAN daily until they understand the truth.

THE FORMLESS SPAWN OF TSATHOGGHUA

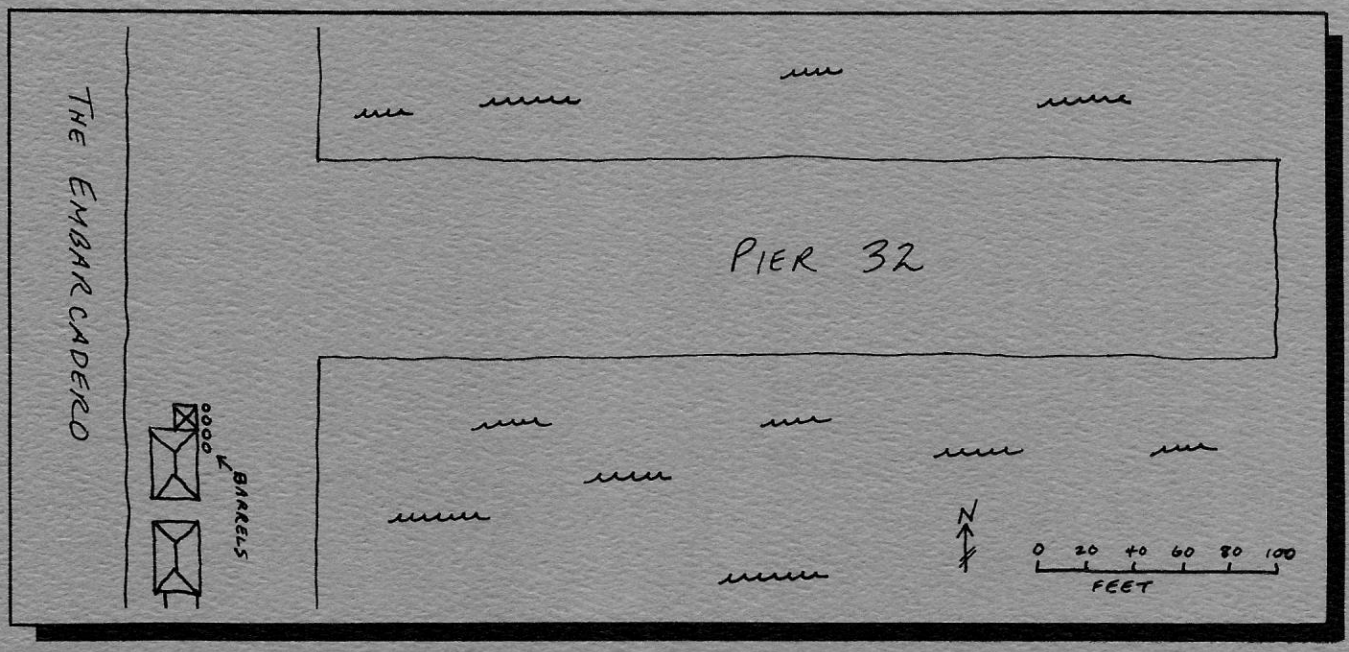
The Formless Spawn has no armor, but all physical weapons have no effect on them. Spells, fire, chemicals and other items may harm them. Seeing a Formless Spawn costs 1D10 SAN points unless a save is made, in which case it still costs 1 point. If the creature is successful with a bite attack, the opponent bitten is swallowed if his SIZ is equal or less than that of the Formless Spawn. The being swallowed will take 1 point of damage the round after he is swallowed, 2 points the round after that, and so on. The swallowed being can take no actions and must wait for the Formless Spawn to be slain before he can get out. The Formless Spawn cannot move from its site while digesting a victim.

STR 22	CON 13	SIZ 25	INT 12	POW 13
DEX 17		HP 19		Move 12

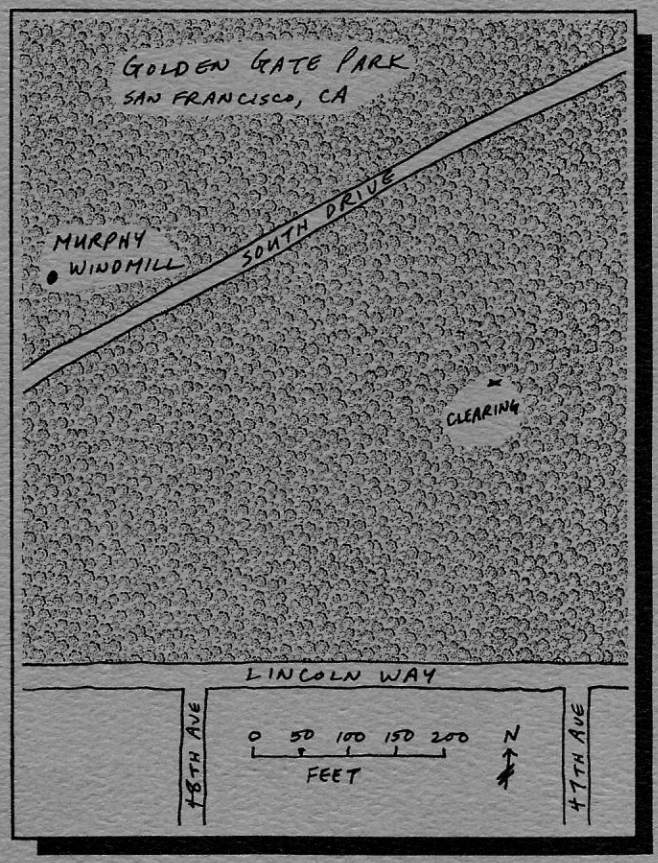
WEAPONS: Whip 75% (1D6 damage), Tentacle 50% (1D6-3D6 damage), Bite 25% (special damage), Bludgeon 5% (2D6-6D6 damage).

FOILING THE PLAN

The best way to stop the Sons of Chaos is to recover the Eye of Sitar. Interrupting the ceremony would cause it to



be ruined until the next equinox. If Vince or Sprangstein is killed or otherwise apprehended, another cultist can take his place and cast the spell. If the investigators just can't seem to figure out what is going on, have them encounter a hysterical young man about 11:45 am on the 23rd. This young man is Tom Walker, a member of the Friends of Humanity. Tom infiltrated the Sons of Chaos to learn what they were up to. Tom has only now found out what their plan was. He tells the investigators that he went to Golden Gate Park with some other members of the cult. From there they went to a clearing where an altar was set up for Azathoth. Vince Wydon and W. Sprangstein (if something has happened to either one of them, replace them with someone else) began to sacrifice some the cultists, and some sort of creature came out of the woods to help them. He goes on to say he was upset at the sight of the monster and fled, stole a car and drove here as soon as he could. The Friends of Humanity know of the investigators, but did not approach them to protect Tom's cover. If group does not act now, get new players. If they race there at top speed, have them get there just before the spell is about to be finished. At the clearing are forty living cultists, thirteen dead cultists, Vince Wydon, W. Sprangstein, and a Hunting Horror of Nyarlathotep. Breaking Vince's concentration will stop the ritual, but then the group will have one very angry monster to deal with.



HUNTING HORROR OF NYARLATHOTEP

To see the Hunting Horror costs 1D10 SAN points unless a save is made, and then it costs no SAN points. The Horror has 9-point armor, and bullets may not impale it. If an attack with the tail succeeds, the victim is grappled and may not attack until he escapes. To escape, the victim must make a successful STR vs. STR roll. The Horror may bite grappled victims at +20%.

STR 32	CON 11	SIZ 27	INT 13	POW 15
DEX 13		HP 19	Move 7/11 flying	

WEAPONS: Bite 65% (1D6+3D6 damage), Tail 90% (grapple).

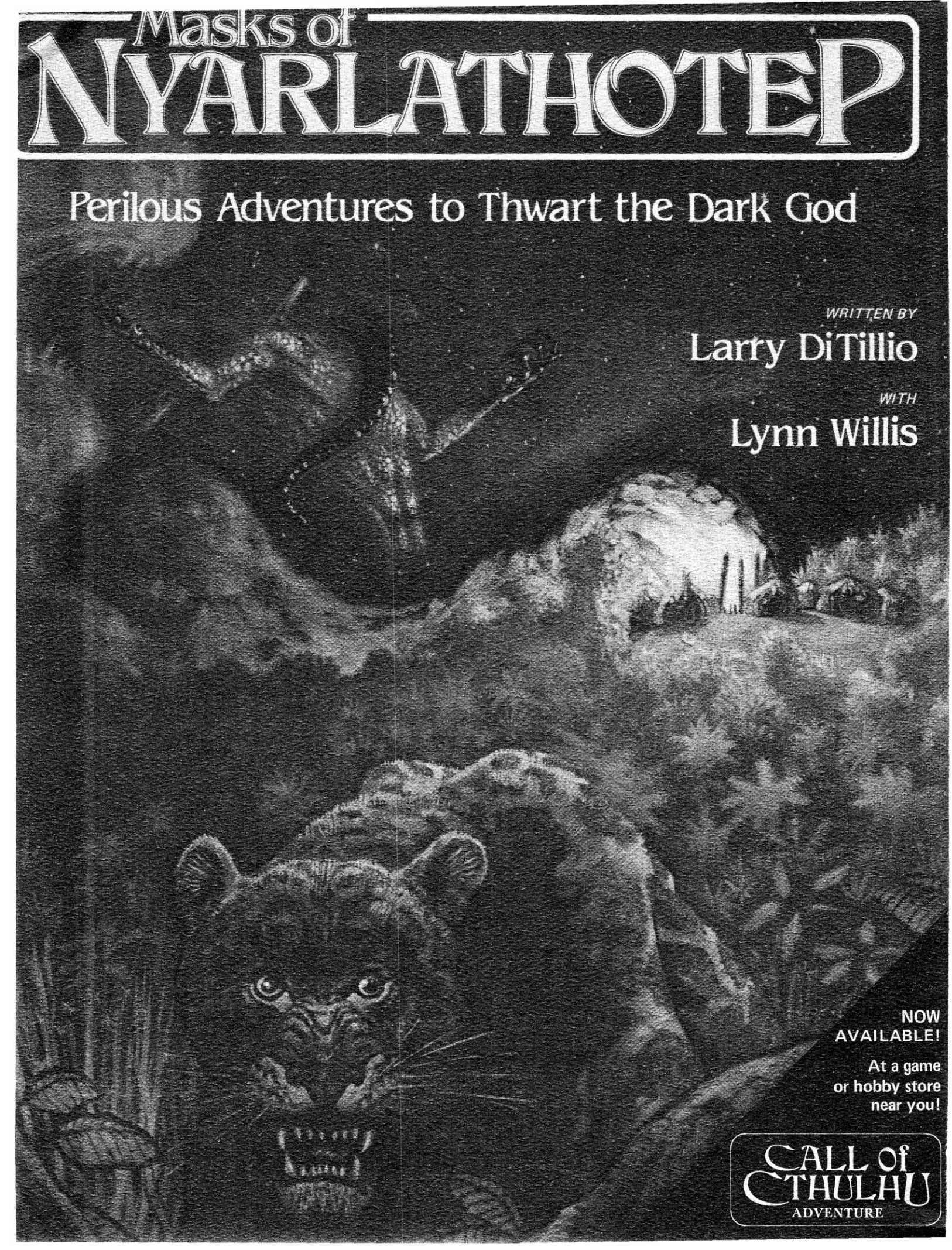
CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Each surviving investigator should get 1D10 SAN points if the plan is stopped and the Eye of Sitar is recovered. Killing Sprangstein or Vince Wydon is worth 1D4 SAN points each. If the plan is carried out, each investigator should lose 1D20 SAN points. Can you imagine the psychological impact of watching the dead rise from the ground and begin devouring people, who in turn become zombies wanting to eat other people? The investigators may collect the $5000 reward if they wish, but stress that the destruction of the ruby may be more desirable. The Sons of Chaos can be exposed, and sent to serve jail sentences for their sacrifices and other crimes.

–THE END–

Masks of NYARLATHOTEP

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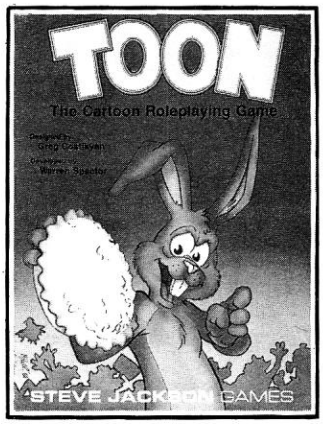
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(Steve Jackson Games, $8)

Reviewed by Larry DiTillio



Toon is a role-playing system which simulates the fast-moving craziness in the world of animated cartoons. Craziness is the applicable word for this game for unlike most role-playing games in which characters are meant to be cautious and use good judgment in order to survive, ***Toon*** characters are meant to leap blindly into action, causing outrageous mayhem and utter silliness at every turn. Dying is impossible in ***Toon***. Characters can be electrocuted, disintegrated, sliced, diced, chopped, riddled with bullets, crushed, mashed, stomped, and french-fried. No problem, they're back within minutes, ready for the next unbelievable gag. Little wonder, that designer Greg Costikyan's special message to experienced role-players is simply "Forget everything you know and act before you think."

Toon's 64-page rulebook begins with a brief welcome to the game, then moves on quickly to a definition of game terms. The game uses only six-sided dice, rolled normally or in pairs to generate numbers from 11 to 66 (this is mainly for rolling on the various charts in ***Toon***). Characters have four main attributes: Muscle, Zip, Smarts, and Chutzpah (a Yiddish word for nerve or pushiness). These attributes govern the skills of ***Toon***; for example, skills like Break Down Door are determined by Muscle. Jump by Zip, Identify Dangerous Thing by Smarts, and Fast Talk by Chutzpah. There are 23 skills in all, all very straightforward. In addition, players can acquire shticks, which are special skills like Changing Shape, Teleporting, or Hypnosis.

The character generation rules are dirt-simple. To wit: players roll one die for each attribute. The result of this die roll is also the beginning skill level for each skill governed by the attribute, thus if one were to roll a 4 for Chutzpah, all Chutzpah skills would begin at a level of 4. Players then get 30 skill points with which they can improve selected skills or buy special shticks. The maximum level for a skill is 9. Shticks begin at skill level 5, but have varying costs and a limitation—a character may never have more than two shticks and the second costs an extra 5 skill points over and above the normal cost of the shtick. Attributes cannot be improved except by special fiat of the Animator (***Toon***'s name for the ever-popular gamemaster). Shticks and skills can be improved by the expenditure of plot points, which are awarded to players by the Animator after each adventure. Improving a skill costs 2 plot points for one level of skill; improving a shtick costs 4 plot points per level.

To round out your ***Toon*** adventurer, character generation also involves choosing a species (you can be anything you like, but to speed things up, ***Toon*** provides an optional species chart); deciding whether your character has natural enemies (e.g., a dog character might choose cats as his natural enemy, a cat character might choose birds; picking such enemies is not required, it is strictly at the player's option); establishing your character's beliefs and goals (this is required and constitutes two separate categories, beliefs being how the character thinks and goals being what the character will be after in any given situation); and finally, choosing your character's starting possessions (characters start with 8 possessions, 4 of which must be "normal" things like string or matches or a gun, the others can be anything, e.g., an anvil, a bear trap, a ray gun, subject to the Animator's discretion). ***Toon*** also has a number of optional rules spread throughout the book, known as "Superstar" rules. These constitute slight changes in mechanics and are easily employable.

Using the skills of ***Toon*** is even easier than generating characters. You need merely roll your skill level or less on 2 dice. A roll of 2 is an automatic success, anything over a 9 is an automatic failure. Animators can adjust this roll for ease or difficulty of situation by simply adding or subtracting to the roll. For situations not clearly definable by the rules or to judge reactions of gamemaster characters, Designer Costikyan provides the "Fifty Percent Rule." This rule involves categorizing the situation into a yes or no question and then rolling a die: 1-3 is yes; 4-6 is no. If all this gives you the idea that ***Toon*** is very basic and very simple, you're right. This is exemplified by the fact that before ever getting to the full details of the system, the ***Toon*** reader is urged to collect a few buddies and immediately play a scenario using pre-set characters in the rulebook. These characters are given the most-used skills and the scenario "The Cartoon Olympics" gives a grasp of how the game moves. "The Cartoon Olympics" has so few twists that it is a good teaching scenario for player and Animator alike. On the other hand, experienced role-players would probably find one of the other scenarios presented in the book (more on this later) a bit more satisfying. For complete novices to the field, "Cartoon Olympics" is very worthwhile in starting out.

Chapter Five of ***Toon***, "How to do Everything," goes into more detail on ***Toon***'s 23 skills and 10 shticks. The skills cover just about everything you could possibly want to try in ***Toon*** and are explained in a manner both clear and funny. As for shticks, ***Toon*** urges players to come up with their own in addition to the offered ten (subject of course to Animator approval). Shticks do make a character more capable (though in this game, that's a highly relative statement) and add quite a bit to the silliness, so it's a good idea to spend some of your initial skill points on a shtick or two. One of the optional "Superstar" rules in ***Toon*** does allow characters to purchase temporary shticks over and above the maximum two by use of plot points, but such shticks last only until the end of the adventure being played.

Chapter Six, "Fine TOONing," is the Animator section of the rules. Here, Designer Costikyan goes into all the intricately silly points necessary to be a good ***Toon*** Animator. He provides cartoon noises, discusses cartoon geography and logic, and offers many guidelines to running a ***Toon*** adventure. This chapter is the most delightful of the book, chock full of examples and great fun to browse even if you don't want to be an Animator.

The final chapter of ***Toon*** gives the prospective Animator four scenarios to start his career as a zany. The first, "The Cartoon Olympics Strike Back" is really just a short page with suggestions on how to expand the "Cartoon Olympics" teaching scenario presented earlier in the book. Though not truly a scenario in itself, it offers a few good notions. The next three scenarios consist of two "Short Subjects" and one "Feature Film." The difference boils down to time, "Short Subjects" are supposed to be played for 20 minutes per player involved, "Features" for 30 minutes per player. (Oddly enough, ***Toon*** suggests that this time limit be played strictly, with the Animator watching the clock and ending the adventure exactly at the pre-ordained time whether or not the players have reached the end. This seems like something of an inconsistency in a game as free-wheeling as ***Toon*** and I chose to ignore it.) The short subjects are "I Foogled You" by Kyle Miller and "Spaced Out Saps" by Warren Spector. The first is for up to three players and an Animator and involves a hunt in Darkest Africa for the legendary Foogle Bird. The second is for up to four players and finds the characters sent off to the Moon to confront a little green Martian and his outer-space guard dog. The feature film, also written by Warren Spector, is called "The Better House Trap" and finds up to three players trying to sneak into an automated house to escape the winter cold. Naturally the house is chock full of all sorts of cartoony mechanical perils designed to keep the characters hopping. Of these three scenarios, "Spaced Out Saps"

☆☆☆☆ Superb
☆☆☆ Mighty Fine
☆☆ Good
☆ Flop

seemed the one with most potential for fun. "The Better House Trap" suffers from a sameness of encounter and a lack of player-gamemaster interaction that might make for tedium. On the other hand, ***Toon*** scenarios are quite unpredictable and one can never tell from a reading what will and won't delight the players. As is obvious, the number of scenarios provided is more than usual in a game system and this speaks well for the play-value of the rules.

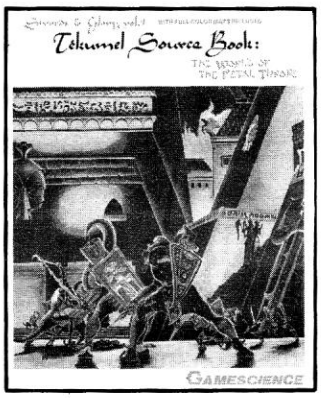
Now that we've covered what ***Toon*** offers, let's plunge ahead to whether it's worth buying. Right off the bat, ***Toon*** scores a big plus in the writing department. Costikyan has clarity, wit, and the good sense to be brief, as well as an obvious love for cartoons. The rulebook not only reads quickly and easily, it makes you eager to play the game. Art-wise, Kyle Miller's funny animal illustrations add much to the flavor of ***Toon***, though I found them more adequate than great. As to the actual playing of the game, well here I must throw in a caution. ***Toon*** is dedicated to the playing out of bombastic sight gags and ridiculous lines and requires a talent for humorous improvisation on both the part of the players and Animator. Role-players of a basically serious nature and gamemasters who prefer rigid detail are advised to stay away. On the other hand, for a few hours of silliness, ***Toon*** can't be beat and is a refreshing change from the ofttimes leaden pace of other role-playing games. It's fast, it's fun, it's simple. Most of the time you don't need the rulebook, or even a scenario, for ***Toon*** lends itself to sudden inspiration from players. It's not something you'd want to play all the time, but it's well worth playing. So to paraphrase Mr. Costikyan: Forget everything you know, act before you think and plunk down your cash for ***Toon***. Th-Th-Th-That's all folks! □

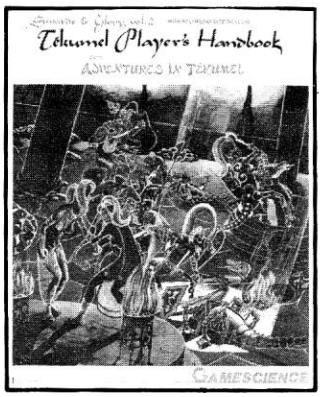
Swords & Glory: ☆½

TEKUMEL SOURCE BOOK
TEKUMEL PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

By M.A.R. Barker
(Gamescience, $25 and $20 respectively)

Reviewed by John Dark





This review is almost superfluous. If you are a Tekumel junkie (as I am), you will buy the *Swords & Glory* material no matter what I say. If you are not a Tekumel fan, you are unlikely to purchase it, especially at the stiff price you will need to shell out.

In 1975, the game *Empire of the Petal Throne* appeared from TSR. It had ***Dungeons & Dragons***-ish rules with very different magic spells and a peculiar world you were supposed to play in. This world was very different from the pseudo-Tolkien/pseudo-medieval universe of ***D&D*** and had an eerie charm. The game produced a small but fanatical band of devotees and has had fans to the current day. ***Swords & Glory*** is the resurrection of this ancient game. It costs much more, but contains much more Tekumel background.

The *Tekumel Source Book* package contains only a single, 136-page book, and a map, aside from some advertisements and similar junk. The *Tekumel Player's Handbook* contains a 240-page book, two 20-sided dice, plus a Sorcery Summary, a Combat Summary, a character sheet, and some more advertising. Both these books are needed to play easily, though strictly speaking, one could purchase the *Player's Handbook* alone and play the game.

The *Source Book* contains no game rules. It is full of pages and pages of dense, unrelieved, small print explaining details of Tekumel and the life there. Apparently the typesetter used by Gamescience contains no accent mark, and all the accent marks were done by hand—sadly for the hapless lackey who did this, the languages of Tekumel are rife with necessary accent marks. It is rather difficult to find a desired subject in this book, and the very nature of the book demands browsing, so it cannot be said to fulfill its function very well. When a particular subject must be looked up, it takes some time to find—the book is poorly-organized. But it contains reams of fascinating material about the life of humans belonging to a very different culture than the one we know. And about the life of some alien races whose thought processes only coincide with those of humans at a few points. There is also information on the language of Tekumel and the alphabets of several different Tekumel peoples. There is even a briefing on the currently quite volatile Tekumel political situation.

The second box, the *Player's Handbook*, contains a great deal of Tekumel background information squeezed in between the rules. These rules are quite complicated and not particularly realistic. There is a plethora of charts and tables—over 240, by my count! These range from such important tables as those which determine one's chances to hit to such trivial tables as that one which determines the number of rivals a character will have for a particular office. Unfortunately, there are far more such useless tables than the reverse.

It is a lengthy process to create a character for ***Swords & Glory***. 1D100 must be rolled for each stat, and many are modified by previous rolls. One must also determine one's native clan, home city, languages known (of course), skills and skill levels with each skill. It is almost impossible to make up a bunch of enemies for the player-character to fight—each character, if fully done, takes at least a half-hour to an hour to make even for an experienced gamer. This game is blessed with the lengthiest character record I have ever heard of—8 full pages! This alone should tell you something about the game.

The only dice needed are the quite excellent D20s included. These dice stand in for D20s, D100s, D10s, and D5s. They are rolled a lot. Let's look at the combat system for an example. To fight, you need to know your Height-Build-Strength factor, the skill levels you possess in your weapon, your Stamina and Body Damage Points, and, of course, your armament and armor. Your Height-Build-Strength factor is modified by various other factors, such as your skill, to obtain a Combat Value. This Combat Value is compared to the defender's Combat Value to obtain a D100 range on the combat table. 1D100 is then rolled, and if the result is within the range given, a hit is scored. If a 00 is rolled, the result is a fumble, with various disastrous results. The chance to hit is generally quite low—if both participants in the combat have equal Combat Levels, the chance to hit is only 25%. If you do manage to hit, the type of weapon used is checked to see what Damage Table it rolls on. The Damage Tables are each lettered. Table A is for very puny weapons, such as a human's fist, or a dagger. Table F is for hefty two-handed weapons, and the larger tables, going all the way up to Table L, are for colossal monsters and seige engines. A die roll of 20 (or less, for the heftier Damage Tables) is a Critical Hit. If a Critical Hit is received, yet another chart must be rolled on, and various results, all deleterious to the target, ensue. Unless Critical Hits are obtained, it will take several blows to kill a human. A typical human has 30 to 50 Damage Points, and a sword, which rolls on Damage Table C, does 2 to 10 points of damage. If the defender wears armor, one or more points may be subtracted directly from this damage done. This damage subtraction is not especially large—a full suit of chainmail only subtracts 3 points of damage from that done. Wounds not only eventually lead to death, but Combat Values can decrease when hit, and thus some of this may have to be recalculated for the next round of battle. A ***Swords & Glory*** skirmish is neither quick nor easy to calculate. This short overview of combat has been oversimplified. I have ignored such features as morale, shield parries, and initiative order and modifiers. You get the idea.

The game system is skill-based. There is quite a wide range of skills, varying from Baker or Farmer to the more interesting possibilities of Sorcerer or Warrior. At the start of the game, a number of points are given the character to divide up among his skills. After this, a character must obtain "skill points" through play to increase in level. Some skills are more difficult than others to increase in level. Reaching ten or more in level indicates high skill, and levels over fifteen exhibit extremely high skill. Skills, further, have sub-skills. For instance, a character with the Warrior skill is not really able to do anything combative until he has attained some levels in the sub-skills of particular weapons. Each level

one rises in a skill gives him 4 sub-skill Competence Units to spread among his sub-skills. A sorcerer uses these to learn more and better spells, a fighter to learn more and better weapons, a baker to learn to bake better cakes, presumably.

The magic system is very complex, but only one system is used. It resembles the skill system just described, but a priest receives 25 spell purchase points per level, rather than 4 Competence Units. These spell purchase points are used to buy levels of individual spells. These spells vary in cost depending on which of three classes they fall into. The casting of a spell requires a D100 roll. Extremely low rolls lead to failure, or catastrophe, if the spell was very dangerous. In practice, spells usually work. Casting a spell costs Psychic Power Points, which do not increase by experience and which are usually 200 or so for a trained magician. The number of Psychic Power Points it costs to cast a spell decreases with experience and increases with the level of the spell one is casting.

Each spell has its own specific levels, and different levels of a spell often have quite different results. For instance, level 3 of "The Viaticum of the Yellow Robe" simply destroys undead beings within its circle of effect if they fail a Magical Resistance factor roll. But level 9 of the ostensibly same spell is used upon a willing individual (usually) to prevent that individual from ever being turned into an undead monster in the future, even after death.

There are 194 different spells included, most of them not available to any one player-character. The spells are classified by deity. A worshiper of one deity knows spells that worshipers of other gods cannot know. Some spells are known by more than one deity, and there are even spells known by all deities together. These spells are often surprisingly lethal. Every deity knows several spells whose effect is, simply, to kill dead the target. Somewhat mitigating this is the fact that any particular magician must be quite experienced before he can know any but a modicum of spells.

Swords & Glory is not a good game. It is clumsy, hard to play, and of a colossal complexity. Myriads of tables are required to determine simple actions, and there is no index to assist a helpless gamemaster in finding the tables he needs. The rules are incomplete, as well. It is not possible to create a monster to fight, because no rules are given for anything but the intelligent races. It is not even very possible to simply fight a member of one of these races, because of the toil entailed in creating even a random specimen. The combat system is tedious but deadly—it may take thirty die rolls (literally), but deaths are likely to ensue in quantity, both from Critical Hits and the awesomely deadly magic spells, most of which are available to both sides of any conflict. There are errors of logic—why can one worshiper of Hrsh (a foreign god) learn the spells of Sarku, Ksarul, and Hru'u, while another learns the spells of Gruganu, Vimuhla, and Dlamelish (these weird names are all different deities)? Why is it possible to recover from a "Fatal" wound? Why would anyone ever wear light chainmail, since it blocks zero points of damage? Why are there no rules on military magic?

All the way through the rules, easier ways of doing things sprang to my mind. Instead of having special Damage Tables for weapons, why not a simple die roll range? Instead of having the cost of casting spells decrease with experience, why not just boost the character's Psychic Power Points with increased level?

Swords & Glory is a classic example of wasted potential. Based on one of the greatest fantasy worlds ever dreamed up, but shackled by truly horrendous rules, it is an anomaly. I'll still buy all the Tekumel stuff I can get my hands on—the charm of Tekumel enthralls me still. But I cannot recommend any non-fanatic purchase these lengthy, incomplete rules. At the price, one could purchase the other great fantasy-gaming world of Glorantha, and have some scenarios to play with as well. □

JUSTICE INC. ☆☆½

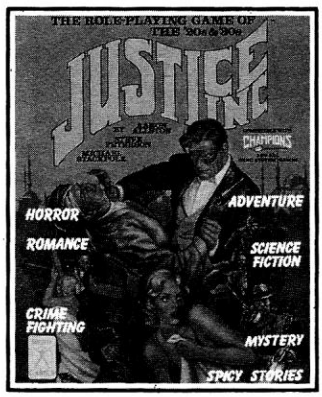
By Aaron Allston, et al
(Hero Games, $15)

Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

Justice Inc. is the third game from Hero Games to use the same basic system. It is a game of the famous pulps of the twenties and thirties, ranging from adventure like Indiana Jones through crimefighting like the Shadow and Doc Savage and space opera like Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers to horror stories out of Lovecraft.

People who play either *Champions* or *Espionage!* will know how to play *Justice Inc.*, especially the latter. The characteristics are the same and they have the same upper limits as in *Espionage!* that you can only exceed at double cost. Characters can be built on either 50 or 75 (or possibly 100) points plus disadvantages, which are valued as in *Espionage!* as well. There are over sixty skills to choose from, ranging from the ones repeated from previous games, such as Disguise and Stealth, to ones unique to the period or genre in question, such as Radio Operator or Animal Trainer. It is obvious that some things have evolved from their appearances in previous games, such as the Languages Skill rule which gives pluses for learning similar languages (and minuses for greatly different languages), a nice touch. In addition, there are 11 Psychic Powers and 15 Weird Talents for duplicating various abilities of characters in the pulps which don't fall into the category of skills. The individual gamemaster can decide to use these sections or not depending on the background of his campaign. I feel that Luck should have not been placed among the Weird Talents because characters who don't exist in a background with Weird Talents can still be lucky (and usually are).

Combat is also the same as in previous games, although Martial Arts have been omitted and Boxing and Brawling skills have been



added. This fits the usual background of the times, but I can think of pulp heroes who were trained in advanced fighting techniques while traveling in the orient, so I feel that Martial Arts should have been included as a Weird Talent, perhaps with a couple of the lesser Martial Arts from *Espionage!*.

The main problem with this combat system is that with Speeds being limited effectively to four or less, most combats take place in phases 3, 6, 9, and 12. Most phases are wasted and often the characters have to roll off because they all have the same DEX. While it works well for *Champions*, it doesn't work as well here.

An interesting sidenote is that it is much easier to kill people in this system than even in *Espionage!* because it is before any sort of lightweight bullet-proof vest was developed, so that guns and knives and other killing attacks bypass defenses completely. This is somewhat offset by the optional hit location charts (which I recommend using), although hitting someone in the head, for example, does extra body damage as well.

If you've never played earlier games from Hero using this system, there is a sample character and a solo adventure to take him on so that you quickly pick up the basics of the combat system, a very nice touch.

The first book also details vehicle combat, including dogfighting. I think this system is quite playable. There are also stats for a few wild animals as well as vampires and werewolves. However, the biggest disappointments in this book are the ghosts and gadgets rules. In each of these two areas, the gamemaster is directed to *Champions* when designing these things, a blatant attempt to force the gamemaster to purchase another of their games to complete this one. It wouldn't have taken much space to include point costs of the powers that ghosts generally use, if not details. I also feel that the gadget rules could have been supplemented with a number of examples. Also, since characters do not have to pay points for their standard gear, it doesn't seem right to make them pay points for gadgets they've developed which are just as easy for the villains to take and are often more likely to break.

The second book features a wraparound cover replete with images of famous pulp characters from at least three media. Inside it contains details on running a *JI* campaign, including five rules of successful gamemastering that are appropriate to any system and recommended reading for anyone who wants to gamemaster, no matter what system he uses. There are short descriptions of the main pulp types of adventures, a sourcebook including a timeline detailing important events of the era (which unfortunately needs editing for redundancy) and a dictionary of slang that's useful if you want to establish the feel of the era. There are also two-and-a-half scenarios (not counting the solo scenario that's more of an introduction to the game).

Both of the full scenarios would be appropriate to a crimefighting campaign. One would also fit a horror campaign (and the other could be a western with a few minor changes). The first can be

played at least three different ways, depending on the gamemaster's preference. The second has one possible solution. Of course, the outcome depends on what the players decide to do (in one of the adventures I ran, only one of the players was present at the climax because the other characters had remained guarding the next likely victims as he went to confront one of the suspects (who was, of course, guilty). The half scenario sets up a situation and details the characters (although it doesn't include their stats) and gives some suggestions about possible outcomes, leaving the gamemaster to decide what the truth is and fill in the details. The scenarios are rather good, but both scenarios suggest that the characters should have a reputation for fighting crime or solving mysteries so that the gamemaster characters will have a reason to call them in, a reputation that they cannot have earned if they are just starting out (to be fair, though, both scenarios suggest alternate ways to get the characters involved).

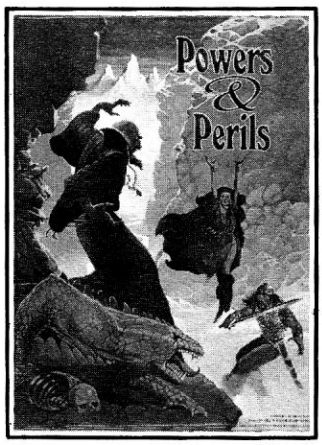
In conclusion, this game is pretty good, although it is marred by a few typos and suffers from incompleteness if you plan to play a campaign filled with odd gadgets or a wide variety of ghosts and other monsters (although if someone you play with has *Champions*, this is no problem, and, of course, the gamemaster could design his own gadgets and monsters without worrying about how to build them in *Champions* terms at all). If all you plan to run in the era are horror tales, then *Call Of Cthulhu* might make more sense, but otherwise this game is worth it. □

☆½

POWERS & PERILS

By Richard Snyder
(The Avalon Hill Game Company, $24)

Reviewed by Troy Christensen



The Avalon Hill Game Company's role-playing game system is lost in the limbo somewhere between the complexity of *Chivalry & Sorcery* and the simplicity of *Dungeons & Dragons*. This game may find a class of role-players that have graduated above the uncomplex system of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* but who are not ready for the more realistic and detailed role-playing games.

I found several problems with the game which the designer hinges his game's success on. First, although Mr. Snyder claims that this system contains the most detailed character generation available, I found that characters in the game are no more physically or mentally detailed than in *D&D*. However the character creation takes about ten times longer than than most fantasy games. Combat in the game on the other hand is very simple and fights are easily resolved in a matter of minutes. With a combination of simplicity and complexity mixed so unequally and haphazardly the game seems ungainly and plays roughly.

The last major problem I have with the game is its mythos. This game, and many other games on the market today, seem to fall into either of two categories. Fantasy is more than Tolkien mythology and Robert E. Howard's *Conan* mythos. Many games including this one falls far too short in imagination and game basics. This game is no different in its basis of play than any other game produced in the last couple of years. *Powers & Perils* basically is dull and repetitive and copies the simple elf, dwarf, and human relationship. What is needed is more creative excitement—where are the insectoid men or dragonsteeds? This game offers nothing besides the basics that are found in every fantasy role-playing game today.

Powers & Perils is an immense game that contains the following material: one 43-page "Character Book," one 52-page "Combat and Magic Book," one 59-page "Creature Book," one 51-page "Book of Human Encounters and Treasures," an adventure module called "County Mordara," a tablet of character sheets, two 10-sided dice, and information for reordering any part of the game that may be needed.

AH's game has a character creation system that is overly complicated and defies its purpose of making each character an individual. Mr. Snyder's idea must have been to give players the ability to alter and play with his character's generated characteristics. To generate a character, a player must fill in about one-hundred entries in his sheet. Thirty-eight of these spaces are just for the characteristic scores. To derive at a character's characteristics the player rolls two 10-sided dice for each of his 10 characteristics. After this is done the player rolls two 6-sided dice, adds 4, and distributes these points in a second column next to his other generated scores. This second column is then multiplied to the first column to derive at the character's maximum score for each characteristic. Once the maximum characteristics have been determined, the player rolls two 10-sided dice again and adds his character's station (social rank) and the character's age times 2. This score gives the player a number of working points from which he can raise any of his characteristics up to his maximum score or buy experience levels, expertise points, or wealth. I found this long process of determining a character's characteristics ridiculous and overly complicated. However once the player has completed all the above he goes to a small chart and reduces all his characteristics down to a bonus modifier from -1 to +4. This I thought was outrageous, after spending thirty minutes generating my character's characteristics which range from a weak 9 to a magnificent 52 they were shrunk down to a single modifier that was -1 and +3 respectively. This was just the beginning to a whole series of long bouts with the character generation system. After practice I could whip out a well-constructed character in about forty to fifty-five minutes.

I cannot see anywhere in the rules where AH had the right to advertise "highly detailed characters that are dynamic in every way." The rules presented as I saw them were detailed but nothing compared to *RuneQuest* or *Arduin Grimoire*. The generation system although long and complicated resolved nothing more than the *AD&D* system does.

Combat in the game is far less complicated than the character generation system. Each character, gamemaster character, and monster in the game have two values that make up their total attack and defense abilities. By adding the character's combat experience level to his strength bonus and stamina bonus you derive at your character's Offensive Combat Value. By adding up your character's combat experience level and his agility and dexterity bonuses you derive his Defensive Combat Value. With these two totals combat is resolved very simply. When combat is initiated the person with the longest weapon will strike first, but missile weapons always strike before melee weapons. After determining who goes when, the person or creature with initiate subtracts his enemy's Defensive Combat Value from his Offensive Combat Value. This number is then modified by a series of experience levels in different weapons and skills. The final number is then referenced to a chart which outlines the numbers needed on percentile dice to roll a Deadly Hit, Severe Hit, Shield Hit, or Miss. Damage is then rolled on appropriate dice which is determined from the degree of the hit and subtracted from the character's Hit Point Value. A combat round continues at this rate and level until one side surrenders, dies, or flees.

Magic in the game is quite similar to *RuneQuest* wherein each spell uses up a limited number of mana points which the magic-user receives each day. In *Powers & Perils* magic is divided up into five categories in which the magic caster must pick from a specified list according to his class. There are three magic-user classes which are called Magic Paths in the game. Each class gives the character a set of laws in which he must follow and abide by.

Spells in the game are like all other games with the multitude of combat and defensive spells like: Fire Ball, Fire Resistance, Invisibility, Resurrection, and so forth. There are some unique spells which are quite ingenius but they are too few to really make the spell listings anything extraordinary.

The third book in *Powers & Perils* describes (supposedly) every creature that a gamemaster will ever want to use. The book explains about one-hundred creatures which are quite different from each other but I still found that the book missed out in some classes of creatures. For example, there are hardly any water-born creatures listed: no sharks, whales, slimy water devils, etc. . .

The book does detail thorough encounters and how each encounter may be resolved. The rules describe such things as sleeping parties, waking for battle, ambushing creatures, searching and hunting for monsters, and many other interesting but usually less described topics.

One problem which I ran up against is the immensity of abbreviations in the game. All creature stats are given in code along with many combat and defensive values. For the beginning player

and gamemaster, half the game will be spent in referring back to the long list of codes and abbreviations.

"The Book of Human Encounters and Treasure" is a mixture of average items and extraordinary objects. I found this book to be one of the most useful in the set, both for this game and other role-playing games. Things that are detailed and discussed are: human encounters, city encounters, aerial encounters, treasure generation, gems and the like, magic treasures, and a natural items table. The only problems which I found with this book was the abbreviations, which again took a considerable amount of time to learn, and the presentation of the rules which, although it follows in the steps of the other books, contains many more charts, which because of the way it was laid out, makes for uncomfortable eyestrain.

With its many detailed gamemaster characters, I found the module very useful and interesting. But I should stress that even though the adventure is detailed and original, the game system may tilt the scale to the point that no matter what kind of adventure is presented, the game may still not appeal to the players.

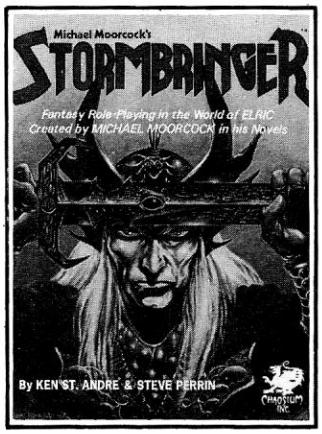
Powers & Perils to me adds nothing beyond what I have found in other more established games. I recommend this game to those players who cannot make the step from basic fantasy role-playing games like *Melee* or *AD&D* to the more detailed *RuneQuest* or *Chivalry & Sorcery*. If players can manage through the extraoridinarily long character generation system and handle the immense abbreviations, they may find the game to their taste. For me however I will keep to either the simple games or the established complicated games which have large support behind them. □

☆☆☆☆

STORMBRINGER

By Ken St. Andre and Steve Perrin (Chaosium, $20)

Reviewed by Keith Herber



In the early sixties, British novelist Michael Moorcock introduced a new face to the fantasy world of sword & sorcery: Elric, the albino prince of Melnibone. Heir to a decaying nation of slave-holders, torturers, and drug-users, Elric eventually destroys his own kingdom, betrays his friends, and is cast out into the world to become the tool and plaything of the gods of Chaos. Lacking the aid of special drugs once produced in the now-destroyed city of Imrryr, Elric will die without the life-energies transmitted to him through his great black sword, Stormbringer. Like a vampire, Elric lives on the life-force of his slain enemies and sometimes, of those he loves.

After many adventures, Elric and his companion Moonglum witness the final battle between the gods of Law and the gods of Chaos, concepts used by Moorcock to express universal forces beyond human concepts of good and evil. Elric, with his last breath, must blow the Horn of Fate which completes the destruction of his world and ushers in the next (presumably ours). This is the setting for *Stormbringer*.

First published in 1981, *Stormbringer* uses a variant of the *RuneQuest* rules system and was the first in a series of games by Chaosium to be based on their *Basic Role-Playing* system. References to *RuneQuest* are numerous and while *Stormbringer* is a complete game, the authors assume that the reader is probably a little familiar with the parent game and little time is wasted on basics. The box contains a 144-page rulebook, a map of the Young Kingdoms, a set of character silhouettes, character record sheets, six dice, and a set of reference charts reprinted from the rulebook.

Stormbringer employs a percentile system to resolve most character actions including combat, use of skills, and sorcery. Combat is quick and fierce (sorry, no resurrection), a bit simpler than *RuneQuest*, but retaining the fumbles and critical hits from its predecessor. A character fumbling during combat (a roll of 00) can drop or break his weapon, while a critical hit (1/10 of normal percentage needed) means double damage and the possibility of maiming or crippling an opponent. The list of available weapons includes the normal broadswords, spears, and others, but also has such exotic items as the Lormyrian 2-handed axe, and the Melnibonean bone bow.

Players choose their character's initial weapons during character generation along with other skills. *Stormbringer* is somewhat different from other games in that it is possible to roll up a starting character of quite formidable strength. After a character's seven basic abilities have been determined with the standard 3D6, the character's nationality and class background are rolled on separate charts. A series of "hot" rolls can find a beginning character cast as a Melnibonean warrior/noble/sorcerer/priest capable of constructing demon armor and weapons, and in line for the throne of lost Melnibone. A series of unlucky rolls could find a starting player a beggar from Nadsokor with a number of crippling and/or disgusting afflictions. Although both these possibilities are remote, the authors suggest that the gamemaster be willing to moderate these situations, particularly in regard to the beggars.

With respect to magic, *Stormbringer* is again different than most games. There are no spells designed for the blasting of opponents but only those used for the summoning of different, otherwordly, types that can be forced or persuaded to aid the character. At the lowest level are the elementals—small creatures that may be summoned and bound to a particular object and then called forth for later service. These beings are limited in power (a character dying of thirst can drink his water elemental, although this will destroy it) and can only provide real force in large numbers. While a sorcerer can bind a few elementals without problem, binding more than one of a specific type may lead the character to a confrontation with one of the extremely powerful Elemental Lords.

Next in line are the demons, powerful beings from other planes. Demons are creatures of Chaos and can appear in almost any form imaginable. To a certain degree, the summoning sorcerer can control the appearance and attributes of the demons, but some things are beyong his power and if he should fail to properly bind the demon after summoning, the result could prove fatal. At the higher levels of sorcery, the character can call upon the Elemental Lords, the Beast Lords (archetypal forms of particular animals), and even the Lords of Law and Chaos themselves. All of these are extremely powerful and the sorcerer will have to persuade (or beg) them to aid him.

Cults in the Young Kingdoms of Elric are numerous but grouped under three main churches; those of Law, Chaos, and the Four Elements. Each cult worships a particular deity within that church and, if they wish, characters may become priests or even agents of these gods. Among other advantages, these characters may obtain some magical skills, though they not be sorcerers, and performance of specific deeds will add to their Elan—used to call upon the individual's god in times of great need. Accumulation of Elan points is not easy (and in the case of Chaos, sometimes distasteful) and even if the god is successfully contacted it is under no obligation to aid the character even though, as in the case of an agent, the character has promised his soul to the god.

Magic items in the Young Kingdoms are not uncommon, but instead of enchantments, the sorcerer usually accomplishes the creation of these by binding elementals or demons to specific objects, using the being itself to power the item. Magic weapons and armor are created by summoning the proper type of demon and then forcing it to take the shape and place of the desired object. These demons can be endowed with special abilities and can appear in any form the sorcerer wishes. Suits of armor that resemble glowing slime, or luminous, crystalline swords would not be out of place in Elric's world. Characters are encouraged to be as creative as possible within the rules given and, at the gamemaster's discretion, the only real limit is the player's imagination.

Herbs and plants provide another source of magic in the game and the character skill of Plant Lore is especially important for wizards. Not only are specific plants needed for summonings, but most medicines are compounded from different types of flora. At the higher levels of skill, a character can formulate "potions"; psycho-active drugs that can alter a character's attributes for a period of time. Another skill of similar importance is Poison Lore; the ability to recognize or manufacture poisons and, maybe even more importantly, the ability to prescribe antidotes for the multitude of poisons found in the Young Kingdoms. An assassin character will begin play with a certain level of Poison Lore and, with some difficulty, may be able to increase his knowledge. Unlike other skills in which the character stands to increase in proficiency through active use, these two skills require the player

to discover a master or a book of lore to provide him or her with increased knowledge of the subject. Trial and error methods are presumed to be too risky.

The rest of the rulebook is given over to describing the people, places, and creatures of the Young Kingdoms. A short history of Moorcock's world is given along with backgrounds on the different lands and cultures to be found there and a short discussion of the Law vs. Chaos theme that underlies most of Moorcock's work is also provided. Working my way through the lengthy rulebook, I was impressed by the amount of effort the authors put into detailing the world of Elric. This product is not so much a new game system as it is a near-complete fantasy campaign with a history, gods, and mythology familiar to any fan of Moorcock's, and adapted to an existing set of rules. Having read the Elric series some years ago, I was familiar with the world described so it is difficult to judge how much of the unique flavor and atmosphere of the Young Kingdoms the game alone could give someone. On the other hand, it is unlikely that this game would draw too much attention from anyone unfamiliar with Moorcock's work. I don't think that the authors of *Stormbringer* intended the game as a first-time experience for gamers and the brief treatment of role-playing in general would support this theory. Instead, the effort has been directed toward describing and quantifying a specific world unique to fantasy literature. The authors have taken the time to dig out all sorts of small facts that lend color to the Young Kingdoms and detail many aspects of a campaign-world glossed over in other games. I thought *Stormbringer* not only an excellent adaptation of the Elric series but also found it an extremely enjoyable game. If you have ever read an Elric book (or one of Moorcock's related novels) and wished it could be a game, this is it. If you haven't read one yet do so and then consider the game. You may not find the "doomed" atmosphere to your liking, but around this neighborhood there is a growing movement for a permanent *Stormbringer* campaign. □

TO CHALLENGE TOMORROW ☆½

By David Nalle
(Ragnarok, $8)

Reviewed by Matt Stevens



To Challenge Tomorrow is the second role-playing games from Ragnarok—the same company that brought you *The Ysgarth Rule System*. The design recreates historical, modern-day, and futuristic adventures. It comes in three booklets: the basic rules, the "Worlds Of Adventure" booklet, and the adventure booklet.

Dave Nalle, the designer, tried to write a game with simple yet comprehensive mechanics; he tried to write a game that could be integrated with any type of campaign; and he tried to place more emphasis on brain work and problem solving than on combat. Of course, these are all perfectly respectable goals; however, a game needs more than format to be successful.

The first booklet, the basic rules, covers character generation, skills, and combat. The character generation system is similar to *DragonQuest*'s. There are four types of characteristics: Physical, Active, Mental, and Social. D10+20 is rolled for each of the four types; these points are split between all characteristics in the group to determine their values. So, if a player rolled 27 for the physical category, he could have a Strength of 12, a Constitution of 12, and a Size of 5.

I have one major complaint about this system: a character with a high rating in one characteristic will probably have a low rating in another characteristic of the same group. If a character has a Strength rating of 20, he will probably have to have a Size or Constitution less than 10. What's worse, there's no restriction on having a character with a Strength of 20 and a Size of 1! As it stands, the character generation system has a few loopholes in it.

Despite my reservations with the character generation system, I was very pleased with the skill system. Each character begins with a number of Training Points; these points can be spent to raise certain skill levels. The skill list is phenomenal—every skill I can think of is on this list. There's Accounting, Painting, Torture, Field Sports . . . all are covered. With such a wide range of skills, it is easy to build a character to one's own specifications. (Of course, no one has ever said that the Accounting skill will be useful to the typical adventurer.)

Combat is fairly simple . . . to my surprise (considering the complexity of *Ysgarth*). "To Hit" determination and hit location are resolved on the same die roll, something I've been waiting to see for a while now. The damage system is a bit too involved, however. For instance, each hit location has its own hit points; chest hit points are equal to 23% of the hit point total. Who is going to have the time to figure out 23% of their hit points during a game? I still don't know why the designer just didn't use 25%, or one-quarter. There is also a big problem with the action point system. Each character starts off with a certain number of action points. Each turn, the character has to decide how many action points he is going to distribute to each of the tasks he is performing. For each action point he distributes, there is a 1% chance of success; the success chance cannot exceed the character's skill. Despite this restriction, the action point system is set up so that a character's skill is pretty useless. Say there are two characters, each with 60 action points; if one of those characters had a skill rating of 100 in a skill, and the other had a skill percentage of 60, then there is effectively no difference between the two of them! I don't know how this was missed. In any case, it almost ruins the whole combat system.

After this there is a five-page gun list. I don't know why this is as long as it is. Why a player would have to know the minute details between a Colt .22 and a Colt .32 is beyond me. All together, the combat system is terrible. It is plagued with more problems than the original *Dungeons & Dragons* was. Actually, when you come right down to it, apart from the skill system, there isn't a single section of the rules that really works effectively.

The second book was much better. "Worlds Of Adventure" describes ten time periods: 1400-1600 (the age of "Swords And Statesmen"), 1600-1800 (the age of "Pirates And Swashbucklers"), 1800-1900 ("The Age of Empire"), 1900-1950 ("Society In Decline"), 2000-2100 ("Brave New Worlds"), 2100-2200 ("To The Stars"), 2200-2400 ("Federation And Trade"), 2400-3000 ("Stellar Empire"), and the year 300 and onward ("Beyond The Future"). For each time period, we're given general background, "regions of concentration" (areas that they think are good for adventures), major characters, and rule changes for playing in that period. Some selected sources are also provided; these are books that they think would be helpful source material for gamemasters.

All together, the book is fairly interesting to read, though, in many cases, the author's biases show all too clearly. For instance, the author calls our present period the "Age Of Decline"; he says that no one would want to play in a post-holocaust setting, "because a radioactive world is no fun to play in", other biases appear regularly.

Other than that, I can't really find any problems with this booklet. It has been researched fairly well, and it is reasonably interesting for a game rulebook. It does not have all of the problems that the basic rules have, so it can be used without having to go through any major changes.

Of course, the real problem is that the book probably won't be that important in play. While it gives a brief history of each time period, gamemasters will still have to know a lot of the details themselves. The only real practical information is for skill cost alterations—and that takes up about 5% of the booklet.

So the second book is not a failure, per se—it is just that it is not good enough to save the game.

The third book, the adventure booklet, supplies gamemasters with five pre-generated adventures. The first, "Fortune's Fools," places adventurers in the plot of *Romeo And Juliet*—most people would be able to write this up themselves, but still, there is nothing inherently wrong with it. The second, "Anarchy At Lugano," gets the adventurers involved in revolutionary politics. While it tends to push player-characters around a bit more than necessary, it is pretty good. The next adventure, "The Man From the Island," seems to be inspired from *Escape from New York*—it's set in an extremely sick and decadent world, where the characters have to hunt down a psionic psychopath. It is pretty interesting. Finally, the last one, "Claim Jump," is set in the far future. In it, the adventurers have to claim territory on an unsettled planet, risking aliens and possibly finding alien artifacts. This one was pretty good, though not a classic. All together, the adventures were pretty good. The situations are interesting, and enough information is given to just run the games strait from the book.

So what is the final verdict? Well, the adventures were good, as was the "Worlds Of Adventure" booklet. The only thing I have reservations about is the basic rules. The basic rules are probably the most important section of all, so it is pretty hard for me to recommend a game when the rules are terrible. While it seems that a lot of effort was put into this game, and while it does have a lot of original features, I can't really recommend it. It's unfortunate because I think this could have really worked. □

MARVEL SUPER HEROES

☆☆½

By Jeff Grubb (TSR, $16)

Reviewed by Troy Christensen



"The Heroic Role-Playing Game" is an enjoyable and fun game for beginning role-players and for those who like simple and fast systems. The game contains only one chart which handles all actions in the game from attacks to saving throws. Play is simple and fast, combat is in the style of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and character creation takes less than ten minutes.

The game comes with a 16-page introductory battle book, a 48-page campaign book, and a 16-page adventure called "Day of the Octopus." Also included in the box are a number of other helpful things: a 21½"x33" full-color, two-sided map, 25 cardboard playing pieces, and two dice.

The game is laid out in a very simple fashion with the first book detailing what a superhero is, how to understand what abilities are, and a short combat section. Throughout both books the writers of the game have used one of the Marvel superheroes to explain the rules. When you read the rules, the superhero will explain through half-witted dialogue what is going on. At first I thought this was an innovative idea and kind of cute but as I started to get interested in the system I was constantly hitting dumb and funny dialogue which distracted me from learning the rules.

The *Marvel Super Heroes* game has seven abilities, ranging from fighting to psyche. Each ability has a rank number, from 2 being the poorest to 1000 which is classified as being beyond comprehension. These abilities are derived by rolling percentile dice and comparing to a table, once you have derived at your rank number you forget about the percentile roll. This then limits a character to nine categories of power for each ability (like having a 1-9 ability score).

Besides the abilities, a character will have a number of variable abilities which include health (hit points), healing, karma, resources (money), and popularity. These are derived by adding up a number of fixed ability rank numbers.

Characters also receive talents and superpowers. Talents are mundane skills which gives the character the ability to live in a normal society with a normal job. Superhero powers are generated from one table, the player rolls the dice to find the powers category and then picks any power from that category he wants. I found this to my liking since it gave you a better ability to design your own character than if you had to roll to see what specific powers you received. A character can have up to five powers. However I did find that not all the powers were described as thoroughly as they could have been. The writers designed the system to be flexible so that any superpower could be derived from the powers listed, at the cost of this I feel some gamers may become confused with the many powers. The superpowers are ranked like the abilities, in most cases the rank will correspond to one of the ability scores.

In Book Two of the game, the writers give the player an example of ability rank scores for many of the people in the Marvel universe. Some of the examples, however do not seem well thought out. For example, they give Wonder Man the same strength rating as they give the Hulk and Thor.

Also explained in Book Two are a series of miscellaneous powers and superhero gadgets or animals. Magic in the game is powerful and characters can develop their powers up to a point where they can destroy whole planets or dimensions. However I also discovered to my dismay that the magic system is very simple and underdeveloped. Basically, the system works by the gamemaster and the player together deciding what kind of spells the character will have. Both come to a mutual agreement and draft up the spell effects and requirements. Nowhere in the rules do the designers give players a helping hand in resolving spell effects or requirements beyond a simple energy system.

The *Marvel Super Heroes* game gives excellent and easy rules for vehicles and for building new objects. The only problem I see in players building new things is that the rules do not supply the gamemaster the ability to veto wild inventions. For example, in the building rules it would be possible for a swordsman superhero to build an atomic sled with blaster rifles mounted on the side. Players that can justify these kind of inventions can ruin a good game.

Combat in the game is resolved very easily. When a character enters combat with another person or machine, the player rolls a ten-sided die and the gamemaster rolls a ten-sided die. The person who rolls the higher die wins the initiative and may attack or perform whatever action he wishes. The movement system which is integrated with the combat system is just as easy. Movement is more like a strategy game than a role-playing game. Every character is assigned to their movement rank a number of squares they can move per turn. By using the large map and following basic rules about moving through different terrain, the combatants move around and fight each other.

In combat the characters use their superpowers to "clobber" their opponent. There are no tactics or modifiers involved in combat, a player rolls against the universal chart which is cross-indexed by the number rolled and the character's fighting ability rank code. The results can vary from a miss to a kill. In most cases damage is a straight number, there is no dice rolling or random generation of damage. This I felt lost much of the role-playing flavor, I always enjoyed rolling my damage; the standard and quick system seemed to lessen the enjoyment of combat.

Characters receive a number of points of damage which is subtracted off their health score. When this score reaches zero the player makes an endurance saving throw (they call them a feat roll), the results will indicate either a number of rounds the character is out or that the character is dying.

The *Marvel Super Heroes* role-playing game overall is a basic and simple system which I would recommend for beginning and novice players. For gamers who have had experienced other similar role-playing games like *Villains And Vigilantes* or *Superworld* I would only go as far as saying that it might be worth your while to pick up the game for inspiration. This game is like what *Melee* from Metagaming has done to *Dungeons & Dragons* or *RuneQuest*. People who enjoy a fast and uncomplicated game and like a system which is conservative and to the point will like this game. □

FTL: 2448

☆

By Richard Tucholka, et al (Tri Tac, $12)

Reviewed by Michael Doolittle



FTL: 2448 is a science-fiction role-playing game of interstellar exploration and commerce. *FTL* comes in a soft plastic ring binder, with 94 pages of rules and 6 pages of pull-outs for photocopying. The interior artwork is of acceptable quality, serving to illustrate subjects in the related text.

The *FTL* rulebook is divided into roughly ten sections, with the pages for each section all the same color, making searching through the rulebook a bit easier. Misspellings occur frequently in the text, in certain cases causing some bewilderment. Other than this, production quality is acceptable.

After a brief introduction and a few pages of useful advice, you are introduced to the character generation system. *FTL* uses 14 characteristics, with 11 being rolled randomly on 4D6-4, giving a range of 0-20. Three characteristics are calculated from the others. After possible modification for having an alien character, this completes the basic character outline.

Here is where the first problems begin. There is no mention as to the effects of having a zero score in any characteristic, and none of the tables in the rulebook cover any characteristic below 1. It is not mentioned if it is possible to trade characteristic points be-

tween different characteristics, or if characteristics can be increased by training.

Next the characters are put through the skill generation system. The skills are divided into 4 categories (General, Extra-Legal, Space Training, and Advanced Space Training) with 229 skills to choose from, ranging from Shuttle Pilot to Barbering and Mortuary Science. The Medical category adds another 35 skills, with brief descriptions of the use to which each Medical skill can be put. The chance of successfully using any skill is determined by the Skill Level in that skill, with each level giving a +5% chance of success, the maximum Skill Level being 20. Characters receive one primary skill at 1D4+4, two secondary skills at 1D4+2, and, depending on intelligence, anywhere from 6 to 30 tertiary skills at 1D4. Presumably characters with zero intelligence receive no additional skills.

But the number of skills available is misleading. Many of the skills available (Mortuary Science, for example) are of only marginal utility to adventurers. Many others would seem to have the same or overlapping functions. I say seem to because the skills are simply listed in alphabetical order with no description of what they are or the uses to which they can be put. For example, under general skills there is listed both Life-saving and Emergency Medical Care. Are these the same? Are they different? If so, how?

Characters also choose the educational field that they entered such as Technical School, Higher Education, and Military Education, each choice affecting the types of skills a player may choose. One is highly unlikely to have taken Arson 101 in college, after all. Each field also takes a certain number of years to complete. Unfortunately there is no method of determining a character's initial age or background, although age is one of the entries on the sample character sheet. Presumably all characters can afford college and begin adventuring at the age of 18. The rules do not mention whether terms of education can be strung together. Also, the rules state that a character with sufficient money and time may simply purchase training in the fields of Space Training and Advanced Space Training, but there is no similar provision for general skills. Nor is there any rule to determine initial funds, so that again presumably no characters will initially have Space Training.

The damage section lists fairly complete rules for all the common methods of killing characters, with Disease, Toxins, and Blades (swords, etc.) being among the highlights, and includes rules for quite a few uncommon ones such as Asphyxiation, Electric Shock, and Starvation. An interesting note is that an average character hit in a vital area by a halberd doing maximum damage has only a 30% chance of death. Combat with guns is only slightly more deadly, so it is obvious that gun battles could be a fairly regular occurrence in the game.

The Gun Combat section includes tables of terrain/movement modifiers (a definite improvement over ***Traveller***), examples of weapons, and rules for designing your own guns.

The hit location tables are complex, with up to three die rolls being required to discover the exact location. Additional damage could result from hits to the character's bones, arteries, or spinal column. This method of determining hit location and damage is recommended for player-characters only. The Fast Hit system, where damage points are kept as a simple total, is recommended for gamemaster-characters and animals.

The next section, Psionics, lists 11 powers, chosen by random die roll, that may be acquired by characters. Good die rolls can give the player the special power of Mind Control or a power with no limit on attainable levels; most powers have a level limit of 10, with each level granting a +5% chance of success.

The next section, Starships, is the ***raison d'etre*** of the entire game, and for this reason it is the most disappointing. There is no ship design system as promised on the backcover blurb! There is a list of ships and their characteristics given, but this is not the same thing. The rules are vague and on some points completely lacking. There is no mention of the maximum acceleration of the different ship types given, nor any mention of average in-system trip times. After devoting three pages to the ship combat system, there is no mention of the effects of damage itself (apparently only ships weapons are affected). One interesting note is that ships detection systems have only a 99% chance of finding a gas giant (diameter 200,000 miles) at a range of 300 feet.

Problems of this nature continue in the Star System design section. The designers have apparently determined that the H-R diagrams of astronomers do not have any applicability to the star system creation tables; it is possible to have a G-class supergiant, for example. Also, a concept called 'gravity zones' is used for determining planetary placement, in-system travel, and life zones. The size of these gravity zones is determined by both the stellar mass and stellar temperature. Stellar temperature should have no effect whatsoever on the size of a star's gravity well, unless some new principle of physics has been found recently. Conversely a star's gravity well has no effect on whether a planet is hot or cold or somehwere in between. This is not the only problem in star system generation. The tables for creating planets call for various modifiers but it is never mentioned which tables the modifiers are to drawn from (presumably they come from the immediately preceding tables).

The last section covers a miscellany of items, such as Law, Interstellar Finance, Robots, and Prices. Again, the gamemaster is presented with charts and tables with no explanation of how to use them, and is left to try and puzzle things out or to simply ignore what is there.

Although there are several interesting ideas in ***FTL: 2448***, I can only recommend this game if you have the time to spend tinkering with the game system, or you buy game systems looking for things to add to your campaign. Otherwise, pass this one up. □

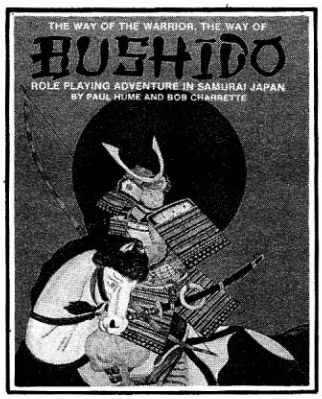
BUSHIDO ☆☆☆

By Paul Hume and
Bob Charrette (FGU, $18)

Reviewed by Scott Dollinger

If one were asked to describe FGU's rerelease of the ***Bushido*** role-playing game in a single phrase, "serious role-playing" would be it. ***Bushido*** is set during the turbulent feudal period of Japan's history, a time when competing warlords clashed in an attempt to gain the absolute power of the Shogun (military dictator) for themselves.

This period of history has long been of interest to military historians, martial artists, and of late, admirers of the popular novels of James Clavell and Eric Van Lustbader, and ***Bushido*** does a very good job of capturing the spirit of the age although some historical accuracy was necessarily given up in an attempt to introduce magic and stimulate playability. The sheer complexity of Japanese culture with its rigid rules of etiquette and hierarchical caste system make role-playing in ***Bushido*** challenging even for veteran role-players and, while it might prove to be an educational experience, younger or novice players might find it overwhelming.



The writing style used in the ***Bushido*** rules adds to the sense of being overwhelmed by being deceptively simple but the text is dry and suffers from a lack of examples. ***Bushido*** uses a board gaming approach to present its rules by introducing a topic in one paragraph and then expounding on it later in the rules. Paragraphs are numbered and cross-referenced and there are excellent tables of contents in both rulebooks but those who are not familiar with this method of presentation can become somewhat confused at first.

Character generation in ***Bushido*** is different than in many systems. Because of the importance placed on what caste one is born into, social class is determined before any other attribute. A character's choice of profession is determined by his social class and only after choosing one's profession can one generate his personal attributes. Character attributes are generated by allocating 60 points between 6 attributes with the addition or subtraction of modifier points based on the character's profession. The process of character generation seems to be very complicated on the first reading of the ***Bushido*** rules but there is an excellent summary chart with step-by-step instructions on generation and initial skills by profession included that makes the process fairly simple.

There are a large number of skills available to player-characters in ***Bushido***. Skills are broken down into two basic types: combat skills and knowledge skills. Combat skills include unarmed, armed, and strategic abilities. Knowledge skills are further divided into classical, practical, and professional based skills. Classical skills are devoted chiefly to the arts. Practical skills include everything from fishing and craft making to tracking and forgery. Professional skills are self-explanatory. How well one can use a skill

is based on his knowledge rating for that skill. This knowledge rating idea also determines the type of spells magicians and holy men can use. The acquisition of knowledge for a particular skill is based on a number of factors such as the expertise of the teacher, the time spent training, and the surrroundings and circumstances under which one is taught. This section of the rules is somewhat confusing and could have used some examples.

Combat in ***Bushido*** is simple, flexible, and comprehensive. All combat skills whether they are for a particular weapon or for unarmed or magical combat have a Base Chance of Success (BCS) which is expressed as a number from 1-19. If, after considering any modifiers such as armor, terrain, or magic resistance, the BCS or less is rolled on 1D20 the attack scores. The system is flexible because it takes into account different attack forms, i.e., bashing, entangling, disarming, etc., as well as terrain modifiers and is comprehensive because it provides for combat between individuals, groups, and even armies. Time scales are similarly comprehensive taking long-term, short-term, and combat scales into account. The combat turn or detailed turn combines movement, combat, and the ability to change weapons and armor or give orders.

Magic-using player-characters may choose between two paths of the art, that of the *shugenja* (magician) and that of the *gakusho* (priest). Both systems use the player-character's power points, which are based on personal attributes and level, to cast spells. Both the *shugenja* and *gakusho* receive their spells by studying either the Five Schools or Five Yogas respectively. The schools of the *shugenja* are based on the elements fire, water, wood, metal, and soil. The Five Yogas are will and destiny, knowledge, body, breath and purification, and the Royal Yoga of balance and control. Both the *shugenja* and the *gakusho* may use spells from more than one school/yoga but the knowledge points needed to learn spells are gained through the study of one particular school/yoga at a time and take quite a bit of time to accumulate. The higher the knowledge requirement is for a spell the more powerful a spell is likely to be. So a *shugenja* who has accumulated 55 knowledge points in the School of Fire would be better off increasing his knowledge in that school, and gain more powerful spells, than to start from scratch attempting to learn spells from the School of Water. The same principle, of course, holds true for the *gakusho*. There are literally scores of spells for the Five Schools and the spells that require high knowledge points can be truly powerful. There are less spells for the *gakusho*, but they can be equally powerful in their own way.

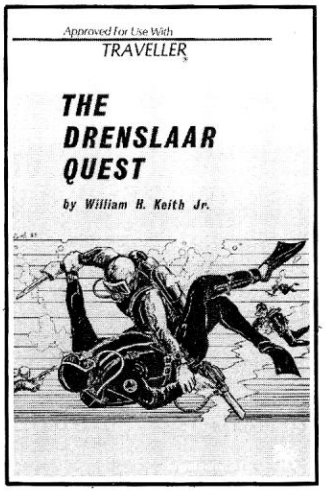
Magic combat works in much the same way as regular melee. The *shugenja* or *gakusho* has a BCS based on personal attributes and level. This BCS is expressed as a number between 1-19 and if this number or less is rolled on a 1D20 the spell worked. Modifiers to the BCS include target's magic resistance and the health of the caster. An interesting point to note is that spells may be cast at levels below the caster's level. That is to say a sixth level *shugenja* could cast a known spell at first or second level to conserve his power points.

The boxed ***Bushido*** set comes with two rulebooks, a character record sheet, a gamemaster's screen that includes all pertinent charts and tables, and a large detailed map of Japan that has random encounter tables based on terrain. All the items are printed on quality materials and the artwork and graphics in the rulebooks are quite professional. Professionalism is reflected in all aspects of ***Bushido*** and the research and design of this system combines to give players an opportunity to learn about, and to experience this fascinating culture and still have fun doing it. In this industry that's all one can ask for. □

THE DRENSLAAR QUEST ☆☆☆☆

By William H. Keith, Jr.
(Gamelords, $6.95)

Reviewed by William A. Barton



A lot of gamers have been playing *Traveller* for a number of years—which means that for most play groups all the obvious adventure ideas have probably been used and reused in various forms long before now. Even with an entire universe (or close enough to it) in which to play, there are only so many basic adventure situations—and it seems like a lot of the published *Traveller* adventures, especially GDW's, have all been cut from pretty much the same cloth, with slightly different trimmings. Not so some of Gamelord's recent approved-for-*Traveller* adventures and supplements, which seem dedicated to exploring new and different environments from the run-of-the-mill space-chase, fight-the-megacorporation type of scenarios that have been too prevalent in the past.

One such example is William H. Keith, Jr.'s ***The Drenslaar Quest***, which turns from outer-space adventure to the environs beneath the seas of the planet Yarhfahl in the Reavers' Deep sector outside the Imperium. Designed as an adventure to complement brother Andrew Keith's excellent *Traveller* supplement ***The Undersea Environment***, also from Gamelords, ***Drenslaar Quest*** attempts to plum depths of play virtually ignored thus far in *Traveller*, except for the Keith's GDW-published *Nomads of the World Ocean*, which suffered from the overworked megacorporation theme and apparently some heavy-handed development that included a name change from a classier working title to the schlockish *Nomads*. Refreshingly, this adventure is free of such "development" (thanks, Gamelords!) and is pure adventure in the best tradition—without having to rehash said same tradition to be so.

The adventure opens with a group of adventurers being hired to salvage the cargo of the starship ***Drenslaar***, a freighter that went down in Yarhfahl waters, by a man named Jeston Halik. Halik, it turns out, is a rebel leader in the rebellion on the nearby planet Ildrissar in that world's struggle for independence against the militant Carillian Assembly. The ***Drenslaar*** was carrying much-needed hi-tech arms to aid Ildrissar's fight against the Assembly. Now the world's only hope is for a group of experienced divers to locate the ship, only the general area of its crash site being known, and recover enough of the arms shipment to enable Halik to get the weapons to Ildrissar. And the adventurers are it.

Because of the specialized nature of the characters' mission, this adventure is one in which it will either be necessary for the gamemaster to assign to players the pregenerated characters included in the adventure, all of which have the necessary Swimming and Diving skills (plus some Watercraft skill) required to do the job, or to insure that the players' own characters have the requisite skills. If his players are the type who prefer to create their own characters rather than use handouts, the gamemaster who wishes to run ***Drenslaar*** would be advised to have players create new characters using the guidelines for obtaining Swimming and Diving skills in ***The Undersea Environment*** prior to running this adventure. Otherwise, he'll be forced to arbitrarily assign such skill to players—or have a group of frustrated adventurers on his hands.

Once they've accepted the job, the characters will be equipped with underwater gear—scuba, spear guns, wet suits, etc., briefly described from ***The Undersea Environment***—and sent out on a native fishing boat fitted with an underwater metal detector to find the ***Drenslaar***. Much of the actual flow of the adventure will then depend partly on what courses of action the players decide to take and what rolls come up on the encounter tables. These will range from periods of fruitless search to bucking fierce storms to deadly encounters with Yarhfahl's denizens of the deep or with Assembly Marines should the Assembly Patrol Boat encounter be rolled. Even locating the sunken freighter won't mean a milk run for the group, as there are the various underwater hazards, such as being trapped in the wreck if it shifts position or not taking sufficient time for decompression after a sustained dive—all the fun things that can happen to a diver. And then there are those denizens. . .

Practically everything a gamemaster needs to run an exciting underwater adventure is included in ***Drenslaar Quest*** (even the specific decompression tables for Yarhfahl—taken from those in ***The Undersea Environment***). Deck plans are provided for the ***Drenslaar*** itself, for the Yarhfahlan fishing boat, and the Assembly Patrol Boat, as well as keys to the various areas and compartments of each. (Curiously, the bow-view drawing of the freighter makes it look more like a Klingon vessel than a typical *Traveller* starship.) Planetary data on Yarhfahl is given, along with a planetary map and a map of the crash site. Detailed encounter tables have been devised for every aspect of the mission, from the search phase to the salvage operation, as well as animal encounter tables for the five different marine ecological zones in which adventurers may run across native

sealife. To go with these tables, Bill Keith has provided expanded descriptions of several of the more intriguing—and deadly—of the Yarhfahlan marine lifeforms. Especially nice are the illustrations of these beasties, which will go a long way in aiding a gamemaster in making such creatures more real to his players. These nice graphic touches seem to be almost a trademark of Keith *Traveller* adventures—especially those published by *Traveller* licensees (GDW's adventures being quite sparse in this department). They are most welcome, too, I might add.

The conclusion of *The Drenslaar Quest* is going to depend a lot on player action and gamemaster deviousness. It could end smoothly with a successful operation and easy cash for the adventurers, but not likely. Gamemaster-character Assembly troops and an island map are provided for a possible conclusion in which Halik and his rebels are captured at their Yarhfahlan base and the adventurers have to rescue them using the salvaged weapons from the *Drenslaar* (at least if they want access to the decompression chambers. . .). In any event, even though its price is $2 more than the average GDW adventure, this scenario—well worth the extra cost—underscores the fact that the best *Traveller* adventures are still coming from the licensees.

Definitely recommended. □

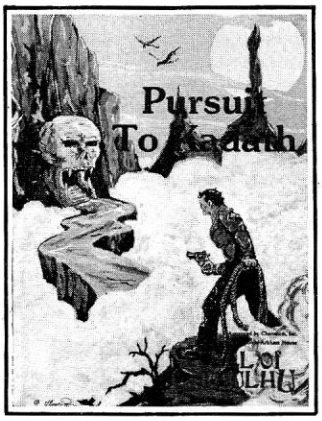
☆☆☆

PURSUIT TO KADATH

By Bob Gallagher, et al
(TOME, $10)

Reviewed by Steve List

Pursuit To Kadath is a scenario approved for use with *Call Of Cthulhu*. It is packaged as a softcover book of 76 pages. *Kadath* actually occupies only 56 pages, as there is included an extra scenario ("The All-Seeing Eye of the Alskali") which can serve as a sequel to it or as a separate entity.



Of the "Kadath" scenario, most of the first half is secret information for the Keeper. The action involves a student at Miskatonic University who becomes possessed by a servitor of the Great Old One Yig, and who embarks on a course of action intended to bring him to a permanent embodiment in the world. The player-characters are also students at Miskatonic, and are present at the time the possession takes place. The events of that evening, and of subsequent days, are given to the players as background information, with play beginning at a juncture that makes it impossible for the unfortunate possessee to continue his undergraduate career. The players are first faced with a job of detective work to determine just what has happened, and then to follow and thwart the miscreant. Successful investigation will give them an idea of what a truly daunting opponent they are pursuing, from Massachusettes to New York to Turkey. Failure to figure out all the clues will, with the intervention of the Keeper, keep them more or less on the trail but possibly fatally ignorant of what they are up against.

The material included is quite comprehensive, and written with a wryly imaginative style. The narrative of events is frequently interrupted with notes to the Keeper advising what actions by the players will produce what results. In addition to the narrative, which serves as a script for the Keeper-characters to adhere to as much as possible in light of the activities of the players, there is a wealth of other data, ranging from mythic information on Yig and his creatures to maps of Turkey, a summary of political and social conditions there, and advice on how to conduct an occult investigation in a foreign land. A section on character generation lets the player-character students determine their wealth and social status, outside income, part-time jobs available (unless one is wealthy, such will be necessary), and the repercussions on these of taking time off to go snooping about and meddling in police business. Of no real import, except for the care it shows that went into the package, is a listing, by specific course numbers, of the requirements for a BA or BS degree from good ol' MU. This is followed by a listing of courses by department, including times and days of meeting, lacking only the room numbers. Other material included consists primarily of "newspaper clippings" and similar documents that are to be shown to the players. These are unfortunately scattered throughout the text, and will have to either be read aloud by the Keeper or photocopied and cut out so players do not see information they shouldn't possess.

The number of players appropriate for the scenario is never given, nor any guide to what their skills should be, so it must be assumed that beginning characters as generated by the *Call Of Cthulhu* rules are sufficient. There is an upper limit of 23, set by the names on the guest list of the party at which it all began, but it is safe to assume only a Keeper who consistently fails his SAN rolls would try to run the scenario with so many. The material to be covered in the "Pursuit To Kadath" will definitely require several sessions of play to fully explore.

The "Alskali" scenario (credited to E.S. Erkes) is much shorter and could be played in one session. It begins in the city of Constantinople, in the fall of 1923, immediately after the time of "Pursuit." The players can thus be present recovering from the previous adventure, or the Keeper can devise some other rationale for their presence. The action once again involves dogged detective work as the players are engaged *sub rosa* by the Turkish government to find a missing English archaeologist without raising an international fuss. As is to be expected, there is far more going on than meets the eye, and completion of the ostensible assignment would be icing on the cake if the characters can manage to return with body and mind intact.

In *Pursuit To Kadath*, TOME has produced an excellent package of material for *Cthulhu* players and added some interesting lore to the "things Man was not meant to know." It is well worth acquiring. □

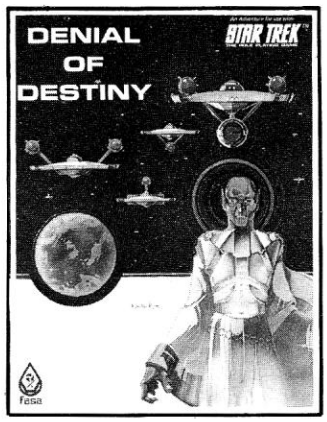
☆☆½

DENIAL OF DESTINY

By Andrew Philip Hooper
(FASA, $6)

Reviewed by William A. Barton

Denial Of Destiny is FASA's third published adventure for its popular *Star Trek: The Role-Playing Game* science-fiction system. In it, a group of Star Fleet characters must literally break the Prime Directive of noninterference in developing primitive cultures in order to save the inhabitants of the planet Aleriad. In fact they are ordered by Star Fleet to do so! Aleriad, a world that has thus far had no contact with the Federation, other than an orbital survey of the world and a covert survey by a detached Federation Scout, is in the direct path of debris from a destroyed planet in the same system. The debris is expected to hit Aleriad, resulting in the destruction of the majority of life forms on the planet and a severe alteration of the world's climate. Star Fleet has decided to suspend the Prime Directive in this particular case so that a rescue fleet can be assembled to save as many of the Alerians as possible—only about 1% in any event—from the pending disaster. The player-characters' ship is to provide security for the rescue fleet, as the area of space near Aleriad is known to be frequented by Orion pirates, and to make initial contact with the Alerians. To assist them in this second goal, they will be escorting Ambassador Robert Fox (whom series fans will remember from the episode "A Taste of Armageddon"), who will conduct negotiations with the Alerians for the evacuation of their planet.



The characters' mission is further complicated by the culture of the humanoid Alerians, who are divided into various religious/philosophical sects, most of whom have little to do with one another and all of whom believe the others heretics, even though their beliefs may differ only in minor points, such as whether to be cremated or tossed into the ocean as fish food when one dies. Major sects outlined in the book are the Jahureki, a persecuted sect who believes the Creator lives in the stars as well as in Aleriad, and will abandon the planet someday, taking his chosen with him to avoid the chaos that will accompany his departure; the Kembali, a wealthy mercantile sect, who believe that the Creator will test his people's faith with various catastrophes, transforming the world into a paradise for the sur-

vivors who keep faith in his doctrines (i.e., who stick to their daily business in Aleriad); the Kekkitau, second in importance to the Kembali, and their rivals in all but the doctrine of the Creator's testing of his people; and the Maykka Isaona, a sect of paranoids who practice murder and assassination on those who disagree with their own hodgepodge of beliefs (i.e., just about everybody—especially off-world "devils").

When the characters arrive on the planet, they will first encounter the Kembali, the closest thing to leaders of society the world has. While the top officers of the ship, along with Ambassador Fox, negotiate with the Kembali, other characters will be free to explore the exotic wares—and potentially explosive situations—of the local marketplace. Several "set" encounters in the marketplace for the characters to stumble upon should provide both amusement and frustration for the players, as they attempt to understand (partially at best) the Alerian culture —difficult, since the Alerians are highly psionic and communicate as much by telepathy as speech, leaving all but psionically sensitive Vulcans in the dark about much of what the Alerians are saying, universal translators be hanged.

The situation should become more explosive once the Kembali realize why the group is on Aleriad—a revelation that will make the characters heretics in their eyes and could force the group to abandon the Kembali in hopes of reaching someone who will listen, such as the Jahureki—probably with Mayakka Isaona assassins on their trail once word gets out. They may also find unexpected aid in the form of one Kembali merchant who may not be quite what he seems.

Should the group manage to complete their mission and evacuate a portion of the Alerian population, they may yet find that their task isn't completely over. There is still the possibility of Orion Pirates attacking the convoy. And what about the reactions of the Alerians, once they truly begin to understand that their world is destroyed and there may be no going back after all?

Denial Of Destiny is full of possibilities for exciting ***Star Trek*** adventure in the spirit of the TV series' exploration of new worlds and contact of new civilizations. The scenario provides data on the planet itself and on its various cultural quirks, as well as stats for important and typical Alerian gamemaster-characters, with guidelines on creating such. Other bits of information that might come into play, such as descriptions of Alerian diseases to which crew members might fall prey, and stats for a new ship type, the Orion ***Whaler***-class salvage cruiser, in the event of a pirate attack, are included in the book to cover various gaming possibilities. Game attributes and skill ratings for Ambassador Fox are included, too, to enable gamemasters to use the abrasive diplomat in this and other scenarios. (While the scenario is written for the crew of the ***Enterprise***, and Fox's presence will have the greatest impact on the series characters, he should be enough of a thorn in anyone's side to allow use of non-***Enterprise*** characters with little trouble.)

Denial isn't without its problems, though they are minor. Gamemasters should be advised that they will need deckplans for a ***Constitution***-class cruiser to fully play out the adventure—either those with the original game or the separate set of 15mm-scale ***Enterprise*** plans. Also the book could have been organized a bit better—the section on "Alerian Psionic Techniques and Their Applications" should have fallen in the back, after the adventure proper. Reading it, I almost despaired of being able to run the adventure, due to the sketchy guidelines given for running players through encounters with Alerians and the need to make them so nearly incomprehensible to characters. Gamemasters are best advised to skip this section until after reading the more concrete adventure guidelines that fall immediately afterward.

Overall, though, for a solid enjoyable ***Star Trek*** adventure, ***Denial Of Destiny*** is a sure bet. □

BELTSTRIKE ☆☆½

By J. Andrew Keith
(GDW, $12)

Reviewed by Tony Watson



Beltstrike is the second in a series of boxed adventure modules for ***Traveller*** from GDW. As with the first of the series, ***Tarsus***, the idea is to present an adventure venue in a fair amount of detail and then offer some scenarios to take advantage of the setting. In this instance, the location is the Bowman Belt in the Spinward Marches, and the adventures surrounding mining activity, discovery and intrigue in an asteroid belt.

Beltstrike's components list includes a 12-page reference book to the Bowman system, a 12-page belter's handbook, four 4-page scenario folders, a 17"x11" map of the asteroid settlement of Koenig's Rock and a dozen character cards. Everything is packed in a 1" thick box, the same size used for ***Starter Traveller*** and ***Tarsus***.

The reference book to the Bowman system is the most extensive description of an asteroid belt yet to appear in any ***Traveller*** related products. The Bowman system is an interstellar backwater in the Spinward Marches, that at one time was the site of a Darrian outpost, and later, a Swordworlder base until wrested away by an Imperial fleet. Now, the system lies within the District 268 subsector, which is loosely integrated with the Imperium. Along with this contexual information is a physical description of the system, including several diagrams, and data tables that provide astronomic figures on the bodies within the system, travel times and populations.

Bowman features plenty of locales for adventure; the system's single planet is a gas giant, with a network of moons and space stations orbiting it. One of the moons is Garrison, the starport for the system and a scout base. Koenig's Rock, a large, inhabited planetoid in the carbonaceous (carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen) zone of the asteroid belt, is the almost stereotypical frontier mining outpost. Virtually lawless, the Rock serves as a base for prospectors (who purchase supplies at a substantial markup) and an occasional port of call for the rowdies from the Ling Standard Products mining platforms operating in the system. Being a planetoid settlement, Koenig's Rock's facilities are located in seven levels of tunnels created by a fusion process. The module's map uses numbers and color-coding to locate the various establishments and services available; many are more fully described in the map listing in the reference book.

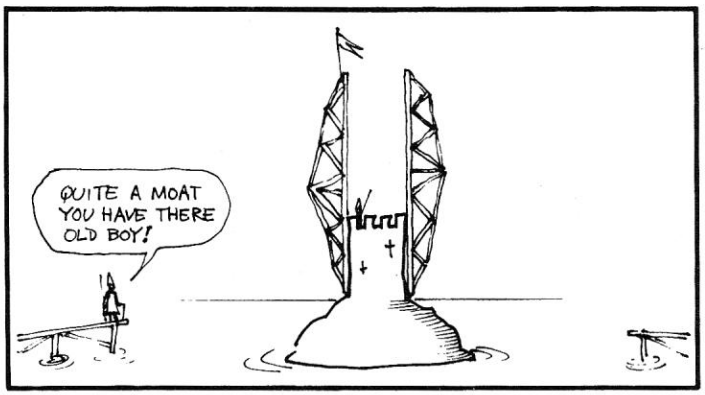
The more versatile and useful information is contained in the belter's handbook. Herein are covered rules for the creation of belter characters, which are slightly changed (for the better in my estimation) from the belter creation tables in ***Citizens of the Imperium***. The meat of the booklet is the "Mining the Asteroids" section in which financing and outfitting expedition, prospecting and mining, encounters, and the payoff, claims and profits, are explained. The rules and guidelines, supported by voluminous charts and tables, give detailed explanations of how belt mining activities are to be conducted, from the consumption of supplies to the valuation of finds and placement of claims. This is invaluable information for any campaign with belter characters who wish to pursue their vocation. The handbook is rounded out with notes on movement, combat, and other activity in zero-G and low gravity situations. These rules are pretty detailed and require a lot of die-rolling; I can't imagine that a gamemaster would choose to use them in detail in any but the type-J seeker, a converted scout ship first described in ***Traders And Gunboats***, and a new design, the 5000-ton mining platform, and brief listing of equipment, which includes some new items, such as laser drills and ore samplers.

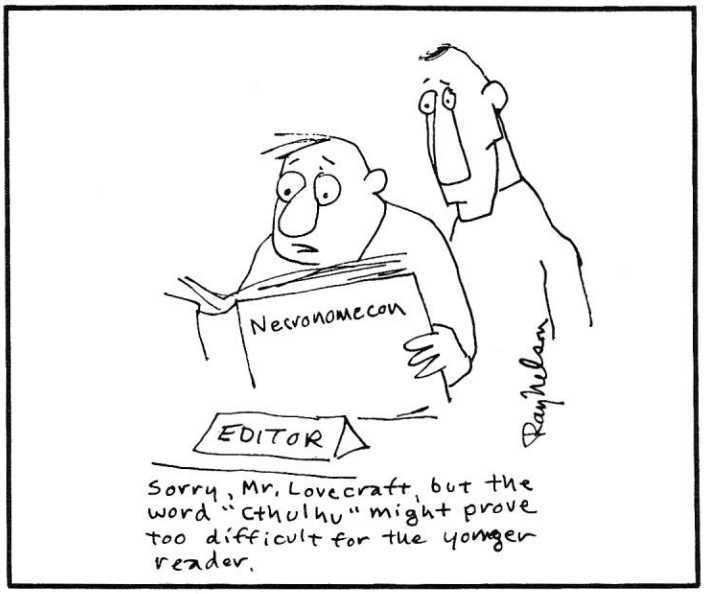
The four scenario folders complete the ***Beltstrike*** module. Each runs three pages and contains the necessary information for running the adventure. The four situations all take place in the Bowman system, though they could be moved to another asteroid belt locale with little trouble, and could be linked together to form a sort of mini-campaign, though each stands alone quite well. The first two pretty much set the scene: "Lodes of Adventure" gets the players into the system and offers some ideas for possible adventures, while "On the Rock" provides a random encounter chart and general information about the Koenig's Rock settlement. The third scenario will get the characters out into the belt on a mining expedition, while the fourth, and best of the lot, deals with an archaeological expedition in search of a lost Darrian outpost. This last scenario will afford the characters a chance to play the video game "Asteroids" for real when their ship encounters an asteroid swarm.

While I was pleased with ***Beltstrike*** and found much of the information it contained both interesting and useful, I have some reservations about the module. First and foremost is the format: I think these boxed modules are too bulky, too expensive, and too difficult to

refer back to when compared to the handier and more efficient 5½"x8"-size books. It would seem that all of the information in the belter's handbook section plus some of the scenario ideas would have neatly fit in a belters supplement with room to spare. The Bowman system description and the archaeology scenario would have made a nice half of a double-adventure book. The scenario is a very good one and suffers from its rather spare presentation; the Darrian outpost should have been provided with a floor plan and the hijackers should have been turned into full-fledged gamemaster-characters instead of being referred to simply as "the hijackers."

Beltstrike is recommended for the campaign that has belter characters eager to practice their trade or the gamemaster who simply wants some scenarios set in an asteroid belt and is willing to pay for them. As usual, GDW has produced an attractive and well-written playaid for *Traveller*; it is unfortunate that in this case that playaid is inappropriately formatted and certainly too expensive. □





BOOKS & GAMING

continued from page 11

run a Tekumel campaign, because Tekumel is a wonderful example of an exotic culture suitable for adventuring in. I recommend *The Man of Gold* to anyone interested in different cultures in general, in Tekumel in particular (it's much more accessible than the *Source Book*, which has perhaps too much information and no index), and in an entertaining book. It's a book you can read again, both to discover more about the cultures, and to understand more about the reasons for what happens. □

FILM REVIEWS

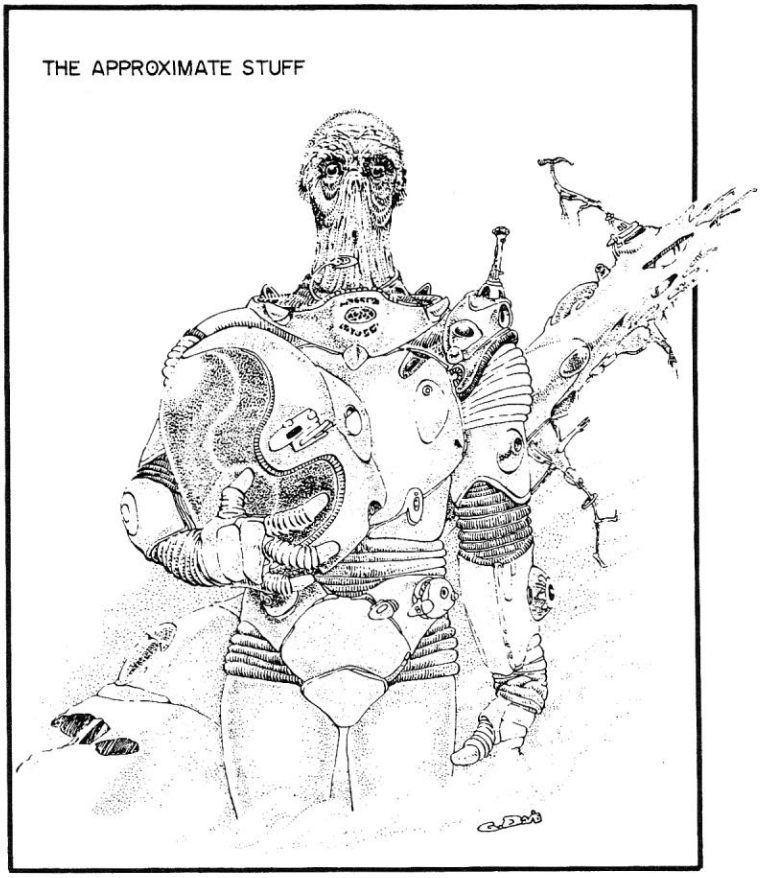
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intensely dramatic and psychological film such as *Supergirl* is doomed to catch too many people unawares. There is a delicate joy to the entire movie which is almost indescribably perfect. The entire project, said executive producer Ilya Salkind, grew out of the realization that "we'd taken Superman about as far as we could . . . for now. Supergirl gave us a new direction. But everything about the picture had to be different. We weren't making *Superman IV* in drag."

They didn't. Although the similarities between *Superman I* and *Supergirl* are striking, this is a new picture, with a new feel. It is good solid work, the kind nobody ever gets enough of, but which we haven't even been getting the usual quota of for a long time. The film has its problems; some scenes are a bit too campy (there is one moment where she meets a pair of truck drivers which is just plain terrible), some of the effects are only fair, some of the acting is a tad thick—but all in all, *Supergirl* is just the kind of boost the American theater scene needs after the dull showing of the past summer.

Supergirl, like *The Terminator*, is a fine motion picture. Crafted for something other than only the box office in mind, both movies rank heads above so much of what we have seen lately, that it makes going to the movies only a 50/50 gamble, unlike the 10/90 it has been recently. Forty years from now, when the grandfathers and grandmothers start cracking off about 'when they made good pictures,' eyesores like *Temple Of Doom* and *Electric Dreams* will be conveniently long forgotten, while works like *The Terminator* and *Supergirl* will get the 'now there was a picture's.

Trust me. □



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ADVENTURERS
ALIEN ANIMALS

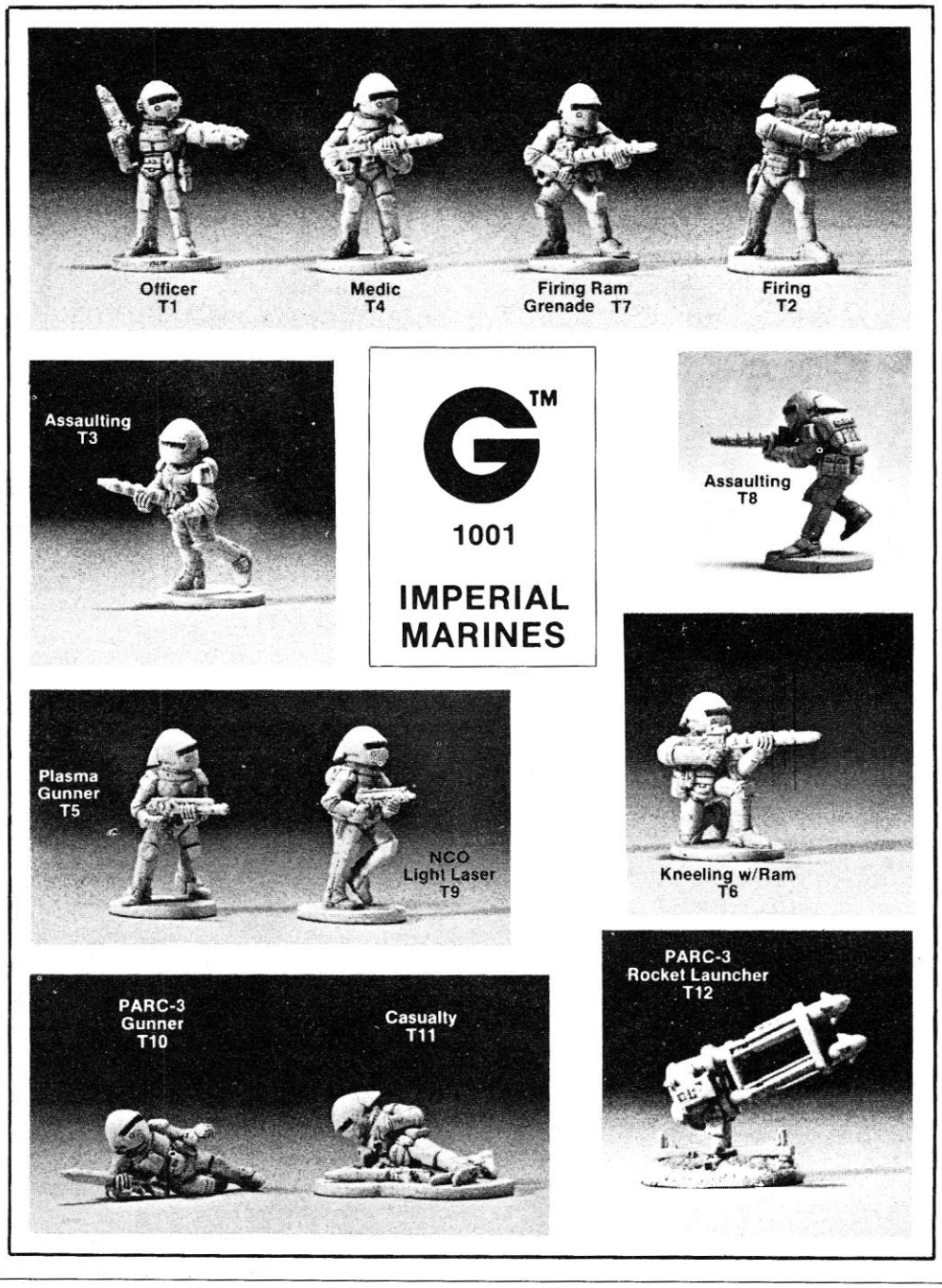
By Andrew Chernak and John Dennett
(Grenadier, $9.95 each)

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

Grenadier has gotten into the same spinoff marketing policy as many of the game companies, buying licensing rights to a popular subject and issuing products for use with it. Just as game companies are coming out with games based on popular novels or movies, Grenadier is coming out with metal figures for use with those games that have become hits. Very clever, that. DW 30 *reviewed the Grenadier* Call Of Cthulhu *line, based on the popular H.P. Lovecraft novels. Here we review their* Traveller *line for the most popular science-fiction role-playing game in the hobby. Each of these boxes comes with a short starter scenario by Gary Pilkington.*

Imperial Marines (Box 1001) comes with 12 figures. I normally describe each figure in a box, but the marines are all dressed in uniform space armor, so the only differences are in their position and their weaponry, and there is little point in describing each. The photos are adequate description in this case. But it is worth pointing out that these uniformly-dressed figures carry the pleasing degree of detail that is appropriate—for example, you can see eyes and part of the nose of the figures through their helmet face plates. And each figure is doing something, not just standing as if on parade. The weapons are also carved in detail on each. I might have preferred that the operator of the rocket launcher be seated or crouched at it, instead of lying down, but that is a minor quibble (and lying down does make you a smaller target). The figures in this box and the next were sculpted by Andrew Chernak.

Adventurers (Box 1002) is supposed to come with 12 figures, but mine turned out to have two extra, metal hatch covers to add detail to a scene. I don't think this was a mistake, as Grenadier frequently adds small extras to its boxes. These figures average 28mm from head to foot. The rogue with auto shotgun is partly crouched, ready to shoot, with shirt open movie-style. The technician wears a lab coverall and is holding an instrument showing a waveform reading. The mercenary vac suit appears to be less armored than the marine version, and both this and the belter vac suit appear to have their faceplates closed, since you cannot see faces on these two figures. The belter is carrying an electronic instrument in his left hand. The adventuress wears a standard shipboard jumpsuit, and is turning to shoot with a hand weapon. The noble government official is dressed formally, and carries a staff of office. The

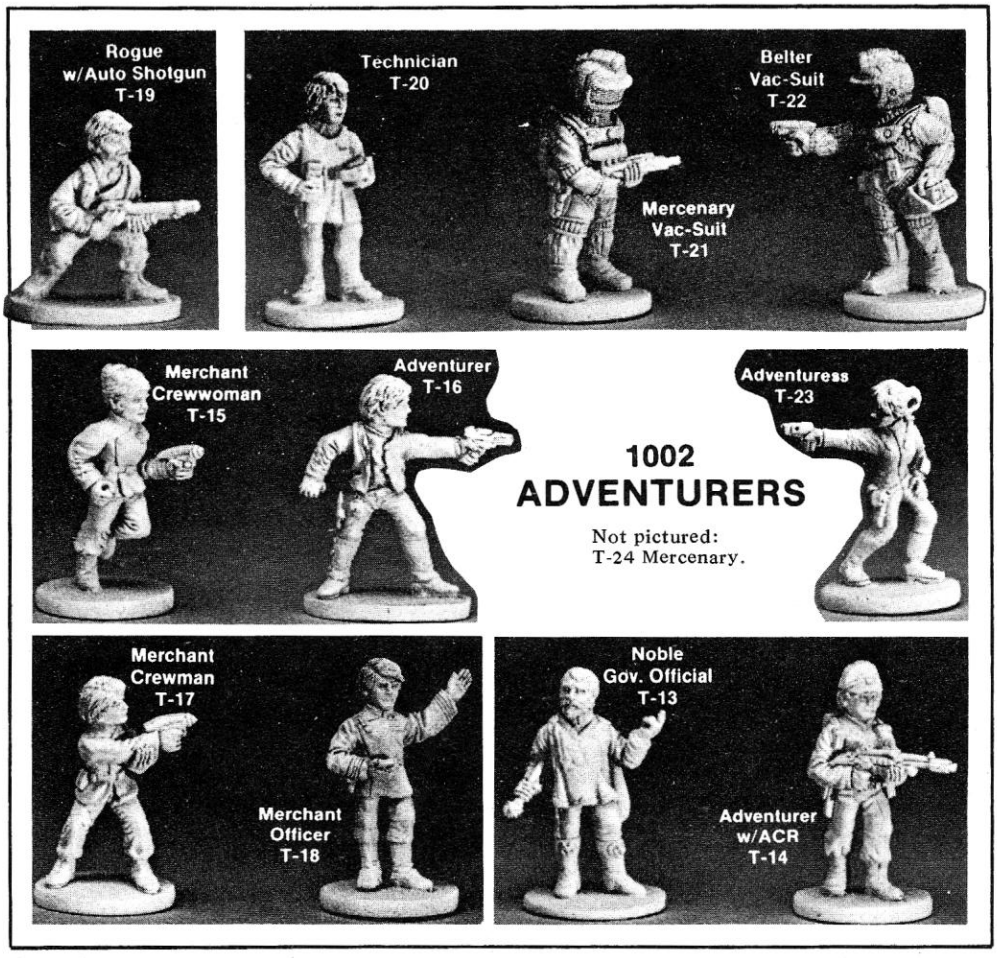


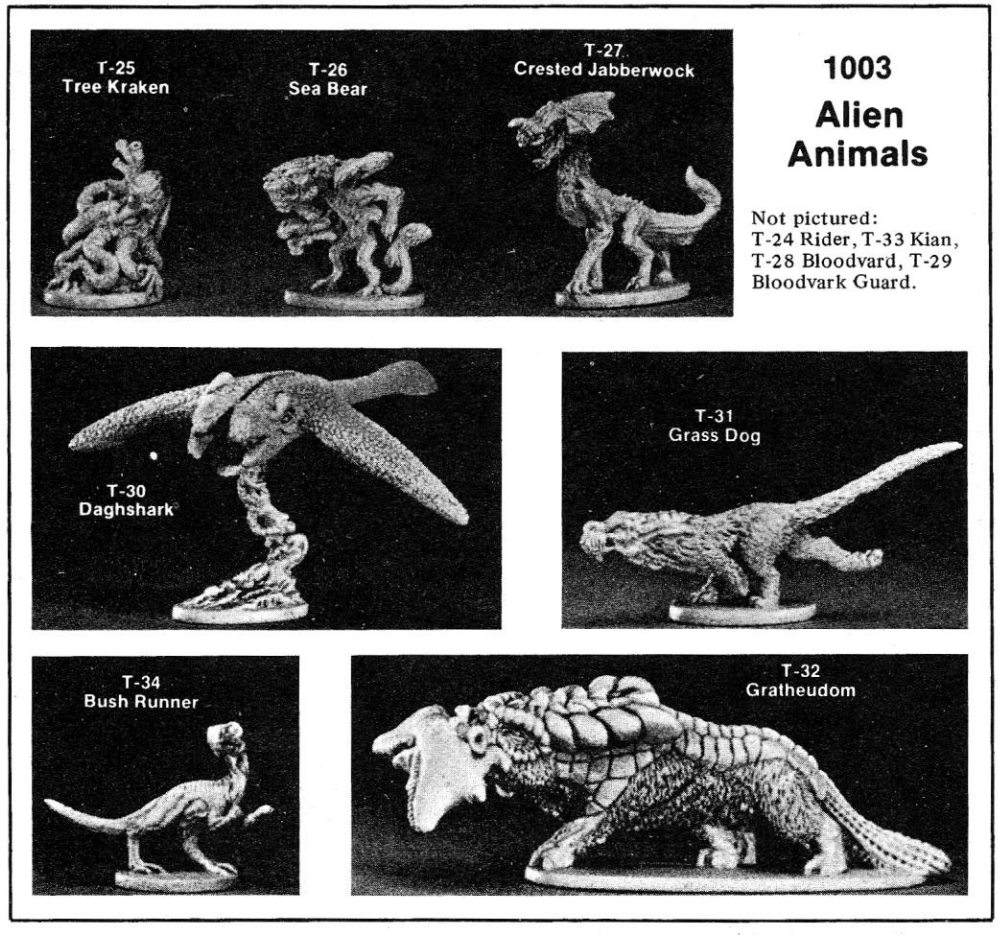
adventurer with ACR is dressed in what appears to be a scout service uniform, including field pack. The merchant crewwoman was missing from my box (I got an extra technician instead); this happens occasionally. The adventurer looks like a wild west character, except that he is holding an automatic pistol. The mercenary is kneeling while aiming an RAM and wearing a helmet similar to a marine's but no spacesuit. The merchant crewman steadies his blaster with his left hand. He is dressed in the trousers-and-tunic-style of the merchant officer, but the latter is much more formally dressed and carries a rectangular object that looks like a communicator.

Alien Animals (Box 1003) is by John Dennett, who does most of Grenadier's new monsters. I don't know whether these creatures are out of the *Traveller* books, or John's imagination, but the figures are convincingly alien. The tree kraken is an octopus-like critter. The sea bear has a bear's head on a slender body with six arms, two legs, and a long tail. The crested jabberwock seems a cross between the worst of reptile and canine features. The guard pair are a human (wearing goggles that make him look less human at first) and a bloodvark guardbeast. The daghshark is a sort of flying manta ray, and comes with a stand. The grass dog is a hunting animal with an almost skeletal head that is all teeth. The kian and rider are obviously movie-inspired. Since the rider carries the same weapon as the guard above, you could use these as standing and mounted versions of the same adventurer if you wish. The kian is a flightless bird, and is saddled and carries miscellaneous equipment. The bush runner is a hunting lizard about guarddog size. The gratheudom is a huge monster 85mm long, with four legs, furred lower body and legs but armor plates covering its top from head to tail, and with a head only a hammerhead shark would approve. Also included in this box were two extras, an alien artifact that might be a ship's instrument (or a weapon), and a large sign (23mm long) saying "KEEP OUT KASAAN G.C." A little alien humor there.

These three boxes continue the higher quality in the Grenadier line that I have remarked upon in recent columns. They are well-sculpted in action poses and well-cast with only a reasonable minimum of flash left attached (which is easily removed with modeling knife). Although these were designed for use with Traveller, *they would work nicely with most science-fiction games.*

Recommended. □





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 listed in Different Worlds, *simply supply us with the name of the event, dates, location, who to contact, the 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.*

Son Of Pandemonium
January 19, 1985
At Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Contact: Dungeon Parties, Box 67 Stn F, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 2L4, (416) 924-1989.

DunDraCon IX
February 15-18, 1985
At Oakland Airport Hyatt, Oakland CA. Contact: DunDraCon, 386 Alcatraz Ave, Oakland CA 94618.

ORCCON 1985
February 16-18, 1985
At Pasadena Hilton Hotel at Grosvenor Plz, Pasadena CA. Contact: Strategicon, Box 758, Bellflower CA 90706.

COASTCON VIII
March 8-10, 1985
At Royal d'Iberville, Biloxi MS. Contact: COASTCON, Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

TRI-CON III
March 15-17, 1985
At NCSU Campus. Send SASE to: TRI-CON III, Box 50201, Raleigh NC 27650.

FRONTIER WAR
March 16-17, 1985
At Scottish Rite Temple, Bloomington IL. Contact: Dungeon Masters' Association South, c/o Catherine Brennan, 1305 Heritage Rd E, Normal IL 61761.

NEOCON IV
March 22-24, 1985
At Gardner Student Center, University of Akron, Akron OH. Contact: NEOCON IV, Box 7411, Akron OH 44306.

CONTEST II
March 29-31, 1985
At Tulsa OK. Send SASE to: CONTEST II, Tactical Simulation Society, Box 4726, Tulsa OK 74159.

CAPCON '85
April 5-7, 1985
East Ballroom, Ohio Union, Ohio State University, Columbus OH. Contact: Paul T. Riegel, c/o War Game Designs, Box 629, Reynoldsburg OH 43068.

WIZARDCON '85
April 20, 1985
Location unannounced. Contact: Robert Horowitz, Columbia Games Club, 301 Ferris Booth Hall, Columbia University, New York NY 10027.

Game Faire '85
April 26-28, 1985
Location unannounced. Contact: Paul Wilson, Merlyn's Science Fiction /Fantasy Store, W 621 Mellon, Spokane WA 99201, (509) 325-9114.

WIZARD'S CHALLENGE '85
April 26-28, 1985
At Travel Lodge, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. Contact: Ken Ward, c/o The Wizard's Corner, 801C Broadway Ave, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7N 1B5, (306) 934-4777.

GOLD CON III
April 27-28, 1985
At Omni Auditorium, Pompano Bch FL. Contact: John Dunn, Omni Box Office—BCC North, 1000 Coconut Crk Blvd, Pompano Bch FL 33066, (305) 973-2249.

MADNESS 85
May 11, 1985
At Middletown High School, Middletown NY. Contact: MADNESS 85, 34 South St, Middletown NY 10940.

KEYCON 85
May 17-19, 1985
At Winnipeg Marlborough Inn, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Contact KEYCON, Box 1378, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 4E6.

BLOODY SUNDAY (M.I.G.S. VI)
May 26, 1985
At Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada. Contact: George M. Bawden, 11 Veevers Dr, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8K 5P6.

Hatcon 3
June 7-9, 1985
At Ramada Inn, Danbury CT. Contact: Kennedy Poyser—CT SF Society, 108 Park Ave, Danbury CT 06810, (203) 743-1872.

OZARKON I
August 3-4, 1985
At Ramada Inn, Joplin MO. Send SASE to: OZARKON I, Box 2151, Joplin MO 64803.

For further information, contact the convention organizers directly. □

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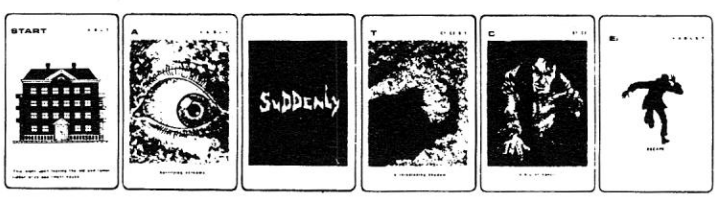
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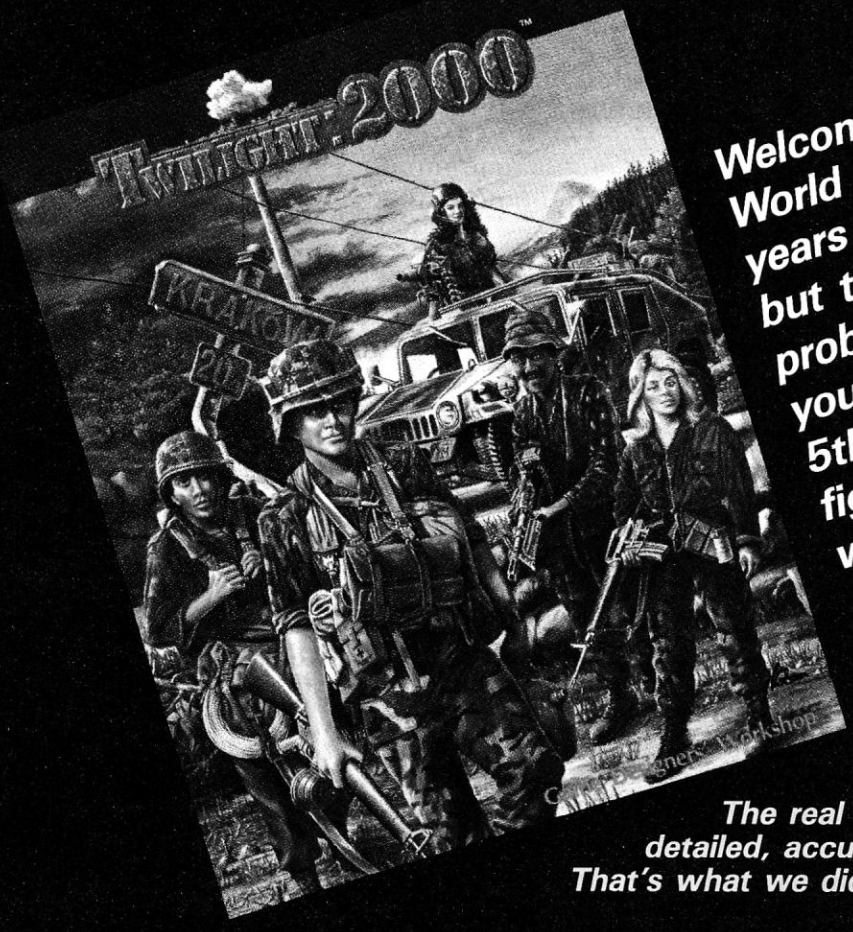
Example depicts ➧ one possible card sequence randomly created from which players would add their own imaginative interpretation in a spirit of fun



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Encounters: Immense variety of encounters results from a few die rolls: people of all kinds—enemy units, traders, bandits, refugees—plus towns and farmhouses, animals, wrecked vehicles, and more. Rules for NPC motivations quickly flesh out important NPCs with complex motives.

Equipment: All kinds of equipment—the advanced military gear of 1995 and the primitive makeshifts of 2000—are covered. Because vehicles are rare, they can be described in great detail without slowing the game.

Background: Extensive background notes are included: a lengthy chronology of the war's first five years and notes on conditions in central Europe. A beginning adventure, ***Escape from Kalisz***, forms the basis of a whole campaign, with information on enemy units, nearby towns, rumors and prisoner interrogations, and radio traffic, plus an account of the death of 5th division and the division's last issued intelligence briefing.

Modules: GDW will be issuing a series of adventure modules, with new background information for your campaigns. Watch for the first soon: ***The Free City of Krakow***. With a large city militia (once the Polish 8th Motorized Division), working factories, and—so the rumor goes—electric power, Krakow is strong enough to declare its neutrality. It's a major center for what trade remains and—like Istanbul in the 30's—is crawling with the espionage services of both sides.

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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

L'Appel de Cthulhu (Jeux Descartes, 5, Rue de la Baume, 75008, Paris, France, $?) par Sandy Petersen. "Jeu de Role Fantastique dans les mondes de H.P. Lovecraft." French edition of Chaosium's gothic-horror game.

RuneQuest Gamemaster's Box (The Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Rd, Baltimore MD 21214, $25) by Steve Perrin, et al. Comes boxed with a 48-page Gamemaster Book, a 48-page Creatures Book, a 32-page Glorantha Book, a 31½"x22" map of Fantasy Europe, and play aids.

RuneQuest Deluxe Edition (The Avalon Hill Game Company, $38) by Steve Perrin, et al. Third edition of Chaosium's fantasy role-playing game, combines the *Player's Box* and the *Gamemaster's Box*. "A Game of Action and Imagination."

Star Ace (Pacesetter, Box 451, Delavan WI 53115, $12) by Mark Acres and Gali Sanchez. "Adventures In Space." Comes boxed with a 32-page Star Team Wilderness Briefing Manual, a 64-page Star Team Basic Training Manual, a 16-page "Deuces Wild" introductory adventure, a 27"x21½" double-sided map, 140 counters, and three 10-sided dice. "Starships! Alien Worlds! Swashbuckling Action!"

Star Trek (FASA, Box 6930, Chicago IL 60680, $25) by Fantasimulations Associates. This "Deluxe Limited Edtion" contains the *Star Trek Basic Set* and the *Star Trek III Starship Combat Game*, plus three adventures and deck plans for the *Constitution*-class cruiser and the Klingon *D-7* battlecruiser.

FOR AD&D

Legends & Lore (TSR, Box 756, Lk Geneva WI 53147, $?) by James Ward and Rob Kuntz. Formerly *Deities & Demigods*. "Now you can add the grandeur of epic quests to your game. This book provides the Dungeon Master with details of heroes, gods, and monsters from myth, fiction, and legend for use in creating an *AD&D* fantasy world." A 128-page book.

CB2: Against Darkness! (TSR, $?) by Ken Rolston. For character levels 10-14. "The warrior-king of Aquilonia confronts an evil that threatens all Hyboria—the wicked might of Thoth-Amon!" A 32-page book.

DL4: Dragons of Desolation (TSR, $?) by Tracy Hickman and Michael Dobson. "Ending the First Book of Dragonlance." A 32-page book with a 32"x21" map. "The draconians have now conquered the civilized lands to the north. You have led a struggling, starving band of refugees out of slavery—but freedom and safety lies over an impassable mountain range!" For character levels 6-8.

Monsters of Myth & Legend (Mayfair, Box 5987, Chicago IL 60680, $10) by Greg Gordon and Neil Randall. A 96-page book, includes monsters from the mythologies of the American Indian, the Australian Aborigine, the Chinese, the Greek, the Irish, and the Norse.

FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

Trail Of Tsathogghua (Chaosium, Box 6302, Albany CA 94706, $10) by Keith Herber. "Tsathogghua's curse awaits the unwelcomed investigators of the occult and unknown. What grim secret lurks on the sterile Greenland icecap? What living horror grows behind the 'Big Foot' legend?" An 80-page book.

FOR CHILL

Vengeance Of Dracula (Pacesetter, $6) by Gali Sanchez. "In a Victorian London estate, Mina Harker prepares for slumber—a slumber she fears more than death itself. A wolf begins to growl beneath her window. Count Dracula, Lord of the Undead, has come to call." A 32-page book.

Isle of the Dead (Pacesetter, $6) by Jon Brunelle. ". . . adventure in a haunted amusement park where vengeful ghosts try to destroy each other and the investigators who are caught in the middle!" A 32-page book.

FOR D&D COMPANION SET

CM2: Death's Ride (TSR, $?) by Garry Spiegle. For character levels 15-20. "A King's Commission leads to danger! All communication with the barony of Twolakes Vale has ceased. King Ericall, worried about the security of his border and angered at the loss of tax revenues, has commissioned you, a delegation of powerful characters to investigate." A 32-page book.

FOR D&D EXPERT SET

X7: The War Rafts of Kron (TSR, $?) by Bruce Nesmith. For character levels 9-12. "The Ierendi princess, Corinna, has disappeared . . . The guild masters . . . offer small fortunes to any who can help them discover who is pirating their ships. But most importantly, to any who can rescue the princess." A 32-page book. "This game adventure contains special rules for underwater adventuring."

X8: Drums on Fire Mountain (TSR, $?) by Grame Morris and Tom Kirby. For 5-8 characters levels 5-8. "The trading routes are no longer safe. The attacks of the green-skinned 'Orcs-of-the-Sea' and the mysterious 'Ship-bane' now go unchecked. Once their raids were random, but the influence of some unseen master has made them into an organized menace." A 32-page book.

POUR L'APPEL DE CTHULHU

Les Fungi de Yuggoth (Jeux Descartes, $?) par Keith Herber. "Adventures desperees contre la confrerie." French edition of Chaosium's *The Fungi from Yuggoth*.

La Malediction des Chthoniens (Jeux Descartes, $?) par William A. Barton, et al. "Quartre odysees aux intrigues mortelles." French edition of Chaosium's *Curse of the Chthonians*.

FOR LOREMASTER

The Iron Wind (ICE, Box 1605, Charlottesville VA 22902, $8) by Peter C. Fenlon, Terry K. Amthor. A new 56-page expanded edition.

FOR LOST WORLDS

Lizard Man with Scimitar and Buckler (Nova, Box 1178, Manchester CT 06040, $?) by Mike Vitale. A 32-page booklet with a playaid.

FOR MARVEL SUPER HEROES

MH-4: Lone Wolves (TSR, $?) by Bruce Nesmith. A 16-page book with a 33"x21" map. "Danger lurks in the concrete jungles of New York City. Can a lone wolf survive?"

MHSP-1: Secret Wars (TSR, $?) by Jeff Grubb. "Special Campaign Adventure." Comes with a 16-page Adventure Book, a 16-page Roster Book, and a 33"x21" double-sided map. "Summoned by a being of ultimate power, Earth's mightiest heroes and villains fight the ultimate battle . . . the Secret Wars."

FOR STAR ACE

Goodbye, Kankee (Pacesetter, $6) by A.L. Hayday. "On a routine combat patrol, members of the Star Team inadvertently kidnap the daughter of the ICE commander—how do they return her and escape with their lives?" A 32-page book.

FOR STAR FRONTIERS

2001: A Space Oddyssey (TSR, $?) by Frank Mentzer. A 32-page book with a 33"x21" map. An adventure based on the movie of the same name.

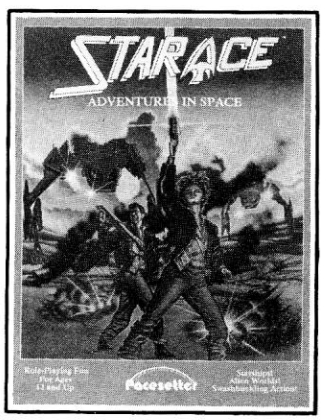
FOR STAR TREK

The Romulans (FASA, $10) by Fantasimulations Associates. Comes in two books: a 32-page "The Romulans: Star Fleet Intelligence Manual" containing the latest intelligence on the Romulan people, the Romulan Star Empire, and the Romulan Imperial Navy; and a 48-page "The Romulan Way: Game Operations Manual" containing all the information necessary for designing and running games that feature the Romulans.

Margin Of Profit (FASA, $7) by J. Andrew Keith. "Your adventure group assumes the roles of Trader Captains working for . . . a trading company recently allowed to trade with new colony worlds. There is one small problem to be taken care of and that means finding out who has been raiding shipping in the area before the Federation closes the trade traffic to all." A 48-page acventure.

FOR TIMEMASTER

Partisans from the Shadows (Pacesetter, $6) by Gali Sanchez. "The beautiful woman is as mysterious as she is dangerous. Is she a traitor to the French Underground? A Gestapo infiltrator? A Demorean agent? Or merely a loyal Partisan,



suspicious of your terrible accent?" A 32-page book.

The Cleopatra Gambit (Pacesetter, $6) by Ethan Sharp & Garry Spiegle. "Time Corps Agents stop an assassination attempt on Cleopatra, only to discover a more sinister force at work." A 32-page book.

FOR TRAVELLER

The Best of the Jounal of the Travellers' Aid Society, Volume 4 (GDW, Box 1646, Bloomington IL 61702-1646, $5) edited by Loren K. Wiseman. A 48-page booklet, includes selected articles from issues 13-16.

The Atlas of the Imperium (GDW, $6) by Marc W. Miller. "The Imperial Interstellar Scout Service's famed Second Survey of the Imperium . . . now is available in a condensed commercial edition mapping (35) sectors in and around the Third Imperium." A 40-page book.

Alien Module 3: Vargr (GDW, $6) by J. Andrew Keith, et al. "Terran canines, genetically manipulated to intelligence and transferred to another world by the mysterious and enigmatic civilization called the Ancients. These are the Vargr, interstellar neighbors of the Imperium." A 48-page book. "Freebooting Encounter with the Wolves of Space."

JUST ARRIVED: *Time & Time Again* (Timeline) and *Masks of Nyarlathotep* (Chaosium). See next issue!

FOR ANY SYSTEM

Encyclopedia Harnica 8 (Columbia Games, Box 8006, Blaine WA 98230, $6) by N. Robin Crossby, et al. A 24-page book containing "Kaldor: History, politics and clans," "Atlas Harnica: Minarsas region in the Kingdom of Kaldor," and "Astrology II: Prophesy and destiny in the night sky."

Encyclopedia Harnica 9 (Columbia Games, $6) by N. Robin Crossby, et al. A 20-page book containing "Bejist: Ancient Sindarin fortress and prison," "Herblore: Plants and potions formulas and uses, " and "The Pagaelin: A cruel and utterly unpredictable people."

MAGAZINES

Stardate 1 (FASA, $3) edited by Dale L. Kemper. "A Magazine of Science Fiction and Gaming." A 48-page "Special Star Trek III Issue."

FANTASY FOREST BOOKS

The following are 80-page pocketbooks (TSR, $1.95 each). "Pick a Path to Adventure."

Book 9: Jason's First Quest by Roger E. Moore. "You and your centaur friend, Syrix, are on a quest to rescue one of three golden eggs stolen from a pegasus. You must be careful, though for no matter which egg you go after, you must face a terrible monster!"

Book 10: The Lost Wizard by Michael Gray. "Shrunk to the size of a fly, you are on quest with your new pixie friend in search of the Lost Wizard. As a wizard's apprentice, you can use your magic powers to get you out of jams—but not always!"

OTHER GAMES

Battlestar Galactica (FASA, $12) by Jordan Weisman. "A Game of Starfighter Combat." Comes boxed with a 24-page rulebook, three 22"x16½" maps, a pad of game sheets, 78 counters, and two 6-sided dice. For 2 or more players, based on the TV series of the same name.

Mekton (R. Talsorian, $15) by Mike Pondsmith. "The Battlesuit Combat Game." Comes boxed with a 32-page rulebook, a 21"x 17" map, a sheet of cut-out counters, a play aid, a 6-sided die, and a 20-sided die. ". . . a strategic roleplaying game for 2 or more players, based on the popular cyborg combat TV shows of Japan."

Spies! (TSR, $?) by John Prados & Lenny Glynn. "Multi-Player Game of 1930's Espionage." Comes boxed with a 4-page Standard Game rules, a 4-page Long Game rules, 250 counters, a 34"x 22" map, a counter tray, and game display. For 2-5 players representing five major European nations.

The Twilight War (TSR, $?) by Mark Acres. "Game of French Resistance: 1944." Comes boxed with a 12-page rulebook, 300 counters, a 34"x22" map, a counter tray, and two 6-sided dice. For 2-4 players representing German occupation forces, French partisans, and Allied invasion forces.

Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective (Sleuth, 689 Florida St, San Francisco CA 94110, $17.95) by Gary Grady, et al. New paperback edition. "The fog is rolling in, murder is in the air, and you, as one of the Baker Street Irregulars, are out to solve the crime."

FOR SHERLOCK HOLMES CONSULTING DETECTIVE

The Queen's Park Affair (Sleuth, $12) by Gary Grady and Suzanne Goldberg. Comes boxed with rules, an 80-page clues book, a 12-page Newspaper Archive, a 22"x 17" map of Queen's Park area, an envelope with clues, a time pad, and material for a contest. □

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Film Reviews

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

By John Nubbin

THE TERMINATOR

Director . . . . . James Cameron
Producer . . . . . John Daly/ Derek Gibson
Screenwriter . . . Gale Anne Hurd/ James Cameron
Photography . . . Adam Greenberg

CAST

Kyle Reese . . . . . Michael Biehn
Sarah Connor . . Linda Hamilton
The Terminator . . . . . Arnold Schwarzenegger

Everyone loves to see the little guy win. Recently, with huge, bloat-budget films like *Temple Of Doom*, *Buckaroo Banzai*, and *Gremlins* ending up as pretentious pap, one has been forced to wonder about the state of American film-making. Large companies and powerful directors, smelling more profits, have sacrificed the magic of such films like *Superman* (the first one only), *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and others in their obscene bid for the world's wallets. Mistaking special effects for plot and cardboard cut outs for real people, these merchants have sold out the idea of the hero, turning their cameras only towards projects brimming with profit potentials—and little else.

Luckily, however, not everyone has been thinking that way. The creative forces behind a recent, modestly-budgeted science-fiction thriller, *The Terminator*, were not out to mount up enough profits to buy their own country. True, they certainly wouldn't have minded if such had happened, nor is there anything wrong in looking to make one's money back on one's investment, but—there seems to be more to this film than simply some greedy slug's need for more bags of coins.

The Terminator takes place in Los Angeles. The main action happens in the present, with numerous flashbacks (flashforwards?) to the future. The film postulates a time when machines and robots have increased in intelligence to the point where they seek to exterminate mankind. Working with dogged determination, they almost succeed.

To the rescue, an incredible freedom fighter who rallys humanity and strikes back, breaking the back of the mechanical armies, crippling their capacity to destroy the race. The machines do not take this blow lightly, though. Having worked out the principles for traveling through time, they send a robotic killer back to 1984 to kill the woman who will be their enemy's mother. Their enemy manages to send his own man back to stop the android.



Arnold Schwarzenegger as the Terminator.
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What happens next is the ninety some minutes of full-blown action fury known as *The Terminator*. Staying away from an over-abundance of special effects, using only those necessary to tell the story, the movie crashes along at breakneck speed, not failing to capture audience after audience in its hyper-violent spell. Relying more on storytelling and logic than dazzle, the film is the first good science-fiction film in a long time which has given its performers a chance to breathe as actors and actresses, rather than as props to move against traveling mattes and blue screens.

The idea for the picture came about while director/screenwriter James Cameron and producer/screenwriter Gale Hurd worked together on another genre film, *Battle Beyond the Stars*. "Jim came up with the idea," explains Hurd, "which I thought would make an exciting film. He went off and started the script, and eventually I worked on it. With Jim's background in special effects, it seemed like a natural for him to direct. Once the script was finished, we were both convinced that we had all the ingredients for a successful film."

One of the first outside the pair to also be convinced was star Arnold Schwarzenegger. "I have read a lot of action-adventure scripts," he told us, "and this definately was the best I had ever read. I knew I wanted to play the part of the Terminator as soon as I started reading the script."

Cameron added, "To me, Arnold was the only actor to play Terminator. I knew right away he'd be perfect."

"In every film I've been in, I always play the hero," finished Schwarzenegger. "In this one, I finally got to play a really bad guy. It was quite a bit different for me, and I enjoyed every minute of it."

Arnold's enjoyment shows. The camera stays on him through more than half the film; there is never a moment when he is not every bit of the menace he is supposed to be. The actor has taken a lot of abuse through his career for his accent and, a film in which he plays a robot will not make his critics any less caustic. It is unfortunate that their reactions are so predictable.

Schwarzenegger is a good actor. He approaches each part seperately, as an actor should, trying to mold himself to the part, rather than vice versa. There is never a moment when Conan, or any of the other roles he has played, shows through. He is the Terminator, and effective as such from beginning to end.

As are all the cast members; Linda Hamilton as the hunted mother-to-be, and Michael Biehn as her struggling protector are totally convincing. Paul Winfield as Lt. Traxler, a police officer caught up in the future war raging through his city, is in top-notch form. His third science-fiction film (after *Damnation Alley* and *Star Trek II*), his work here is the best he has done in the genre.

And, much the same must be said for everyone else connected with the picture. Stan Winston, nominated for an Academy Award, and winner of two Emmy Awards, for special make-up effects, admits that the work he did for the film ranks with the most complicated he has ever done. Special effects coordinator Ernie Farino has worked on numerous features, including *Caveman*, *The Howling*, and *The Thing*. He is as proud of his work here as in any of his previous pictures.

Director of photography Adam Greenberg has never been better. Film editor Mark Goldblatt, whose skill make up much of the suspense in *Halloween II*, has used the same kind of craftsmanship here to make *The Terminator* the fastest moving, edge-of-the-seater in years.

But, it takes more than a competent crew to turn out a good picture. More than once in the past, especially in recent years, motion pictures have been made that did not seem to have the slightest chance of failing; hot directors, top actors and actresses, the world's best effects people, etc., have been pulled together time and again, only to produce helpless, boring muddles, the failures of which no one can understand.

What it takes, apparently, is what *The Terminator* has—spirit. There is a perfect internal logic to everything in the film. The



Linda Hamilton as Sarah Connor and Michael Biehn as Kyle Reese, from *The Terminator*, the story of two men from the future come back to the present—one to assassinate a young woman and change the destiny of mankind, and the other to stop him.
©1984 Orion Pictures Corp.

science makes sense. There are no loopholes. Knowing they are going to blow the legs of a robot at the end of the movie, they are careful to show us that the legs are just pulleys and supports—the power is in the chest, which they are careful to tell us might be impossible to penetrate with the weapons available in our time.

There is no grandstanding here—no one was allowed to be more important than the end result. There is a magic in this small picture which could have made a triumph out of efforts like *Temple Of Doom*, or *Sheena*, or any of the other tired lifeless imitations that have been served up recently.

Some years back, when the 'black audience' was first discovered, a number of quite good films were made with that audience in mind. Quickly, however, the slugs crawled out, seizing on formulas which they rapidly beat into the ground, repeatedly disgusting those they were trying to entertain.

Now the 'science-fiction audience' has been discovered, and for every *Alien*, or *Ghostbusters* produced, a dozen *Yors* and *Planet Of Horrors* and *Spacehunters* are sure to follow. Those in the audience will have to take their chances, as always, waiting for word of mouth, reading reviews, watching trailers, and trying to seperate the wheat from the chaff. It is never easy, but every once in a while, a film like *The Terminator* makes the mistakes worthwhile.

SUPERGIRL

Producer . . . . . Timothy Burrill
Director . . . . . Jeannot Szwarc
Screenwriter . . . . . David Odell
Photography . Alan Hume, B.S.C.
Music . . . . . Jerry Goldsmith

CAST

Supergirl . . . . . Helen Slater
Selena . . . . . Faye Dunaway
Zaltar . . . . . Peter O'Toole
Bianca . . . . . Brenda Vaccaro
Jimmy Olsen . . . Marc McClure

The film was released in Europe to almost universally bad reviews. Word of mouth raced across the country before the picture opened—watch out, this one is really bad! People went to the theaters with trepidation—if they went at all. Reviews and response were mixed here as well, but one thing is certain—*Supergirl* is not bad. As a matter of fact, it is good—real good.

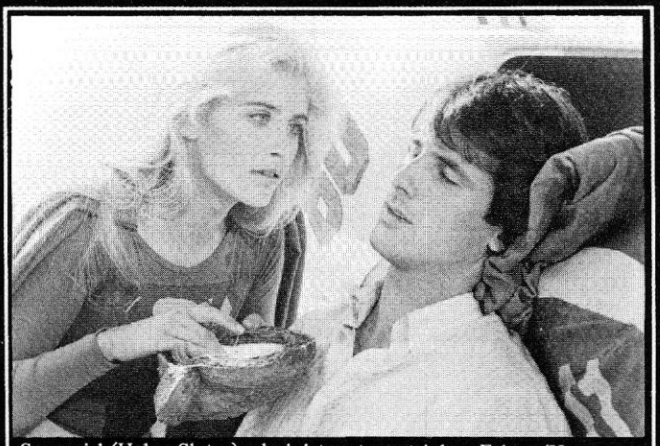
Unlike Superman, his cousin never quite shared the limelight he did. Whereas everyone knows all the basic facts about the world's number one hero, comparatively few folk know much about the origin, etc., of Supergirl. Using this as a plus, the filmmakers changed much of the Lass of Steel's origin . . . only for the better.

When the planet Krypton blew, it appeared just one infant was spared. In fact, a large fragment of the planet containing a domed city went spinning off through the cosmos, carrying its population with it. Sustained by the power of two mighty spheres, the Omegahedrons, Argo City flourished, free from crime and violence. Its people grew in innocence, happy and content. And unfortunately, for some, bored as well. This boredom is the spark which fires an accident that threatens the entire city's survival, and which sends a courageous teenage girl through the infinite void of inner space to a place they had all observed, but to where none had traveled—Earth.

In her world, she was known as Kara.

On ours, they call her Supergirl.

It is hype, and manipulative storytelling, but it succeeds with a vengeance. The film is tightly woven, internally logical, and correct work which does something no other fantasy or science-fiction film has done in many a year—it demands thinking of its audiences. Every single word is important. Background chatter, car radios, side remarks by characters whose names we do not know—everything that comes out of the speakers is integral to the story. Things which look like throw-away bits return later to be key ingredients. It is a masterfully powerful tale, the likes of which has not been attempted in a long time.



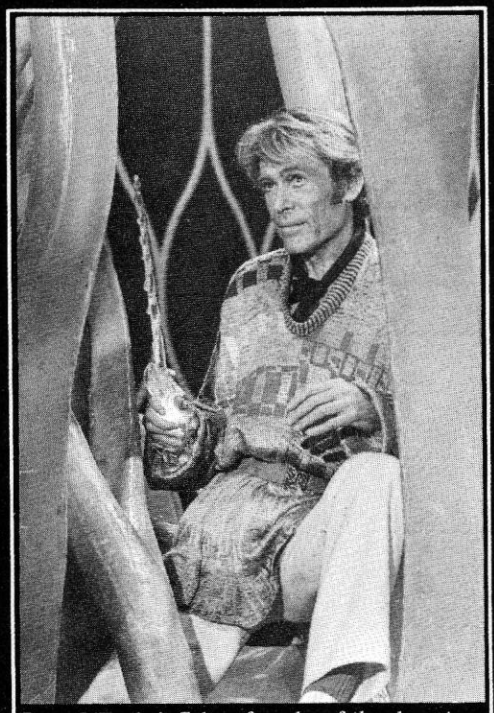
Supergirl (Helen Slater) administers to a stricken Ethan (Hart Bochner) after the villainous Selena cast a spell on him. ©1984 Tri-Star Pictures

Kara is a tom-boy; she has lived her life in a world devoid of the social pressures of Earth. She is not sexually advanced in her thinking. She is a girl. She comes to Earth to save her city, never dreaming she will gain powers like her cousin before her. Having lived all her years surrounded by plastic and stone, never knowing a single living thing outside of human beings, it is little wonder she is thrilled at the sight of rabbits and trees and all of the other dazzling beauty our world has to offer, for those who care to look.

Unlike the ponderous comic-booky *Superman II* and the excrementally terrible *Superman III*, *Supergirl* is a fresh, thoughtful film which nearly rivals the first Superman film in all its aspects. It pays proper respect for the characters within, and the lives they are living. Nothing happens in the film without a reason. Nothing happens simply for the convenience of the picture. There are simple answers for everything; the problem is, this film actually wants people to put the twos together by themselves to come up with the fours.

After so many years of being force-fed the simplest pablum, an

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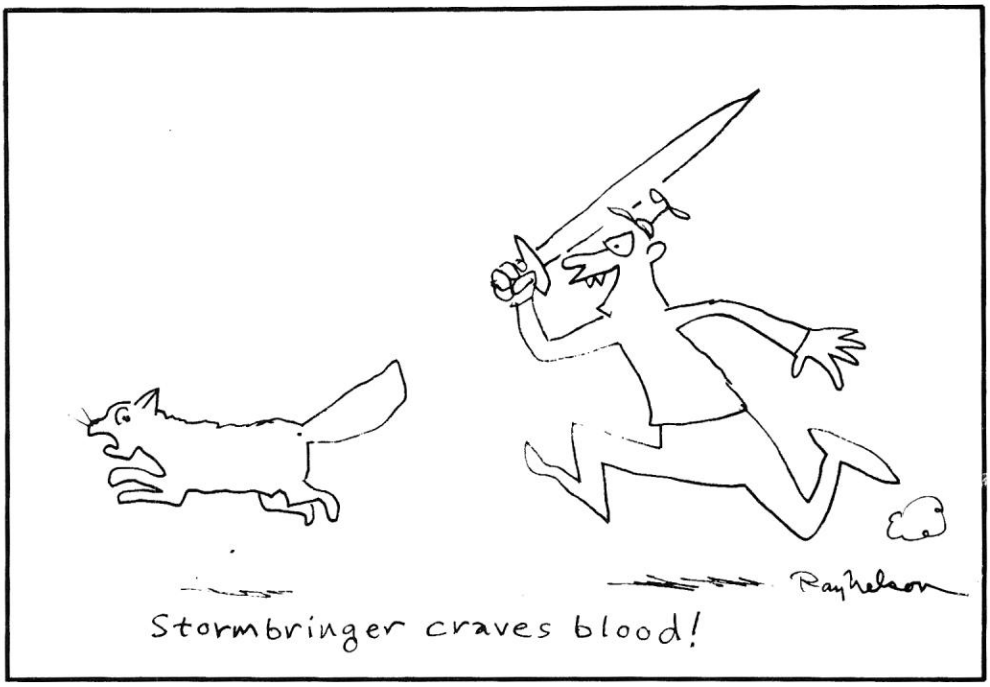
Peter O'Toole is Zaltar, founder of the elegant and glittering Argo City, which is Supergirl's home. ©1984 Tri-Star Pictures



Selena (Faye Dunaway) and Nigel (Peter Cook) join evil forces in an attempt to destroy Supergirl and overthrow the world. ©1984 Tri-Star Pictures

A Letter from Gigi

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



Dear Tadashi,

Biggest news this ho-hum month: ORIGINS 85 will be held June 27-30 at Towson State U near Baltimore MD. I'll be there!

Decision on ORIGINS 86 site is yet to be made but top contender is Strategicon's bid to hold it at the Los Angeles Hilton during the Independence Day weekend.

The group responsible for the H.G. Wells and Charles Roberts awards handed out at ORIGINS every year, the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Designs, is seeking more members. Interested gamers who feel qualified to join should contact Bill Somers, Box 512, La Place LA 70069.

Game rights to Michael Moorcock's *Hawkmoon* series have been snapped up by Chaosium who plans to release a *Hawkmoon* supplement for *Stormbringer* later this year.

Imminent is a big shake-out at FASA. A major investor-relative is going to take over running the company and set it on a more profitable direction. Rumour reports casualties will include part of the staff their magazine *Star-date* although the monthly's print run was recently increased.

Is there a snit between FGU, publishers of *Villains & Vigilantes*, and Adventure Simulations of Australia, publishers of *Super Squadron*, a highly derivative design of *V&V*? FGU in the meantime has announced *V&V* module *Devil's Domain* by TROY CHRISTENSEN for a January release. FGU has also obtained licenses to do *V&V* modules for *DNAgents*, *THUNDER Agents*, and the *Elementals*. The first of these, *The DNAgents Sourcebook*, is scheduled to appear in June.



Looking through my crystal ball I see wedding bells for you in the near future, Tadashi.

Congratulations, Flying Buffalo. The most successful PBM company that started the industry 14 years ago has just assigned their 10,000 account number to WALT BLACKWELL of Athens AL. Who holds account number 1? RICK LOOMIS, of course.

Congratulations to the APA-zine *Wild Hunt* for their 100th issue. Credit goes to editor MARK SWANSON.

In the works at TOME is *Heka Hoy*, a *Call Of Cthulhu* adventure set during the 1926 Philadelphia Sesquicentennial.

GDW has released their second role-playing game, *Twilight: 2000*, set in Eastern Europe during the holocause of WWIII.

What does it mean if the file you're logged on to is deleted by the computer?

The latest "Games 100" announced in the Nobember issue of *Games*, spotlights under the role-playing category *Call Of Cthulhu*, *James Bond 007*, *Star Trek*, and *The Traveller Book*.

The December issue of *Omni* contains their pick of the 20 best games of the year. For best role-playing game, the winner over *Star Trek* and *James Bond 007* was *RuneQuest*.

Chaosium's latest projects include *The Elfquest Companion* and *The Thieves' World Companion*.

RuneQuest supplements in the works by Chaosium for The Avalon Hill Game Company include a Samurai supplement by BOB CHARRETTE, one on the Hindu by WILLIAM HAMBLIN, an Aztec module by KEN ST. ANDRE and ERNEST HOGAN, and one on the Celts by KIT KERR.

Ral Partha has released two boxes of *RuneQuest* miniatures: *RuneQuesters*, including humans and non-humans, and *Monster Coliseum*.

What do alcoholics call New Year's Eve? Amateur night.

And don't call my toll-free number, operators are not standing by.

Love,

Gigi □