

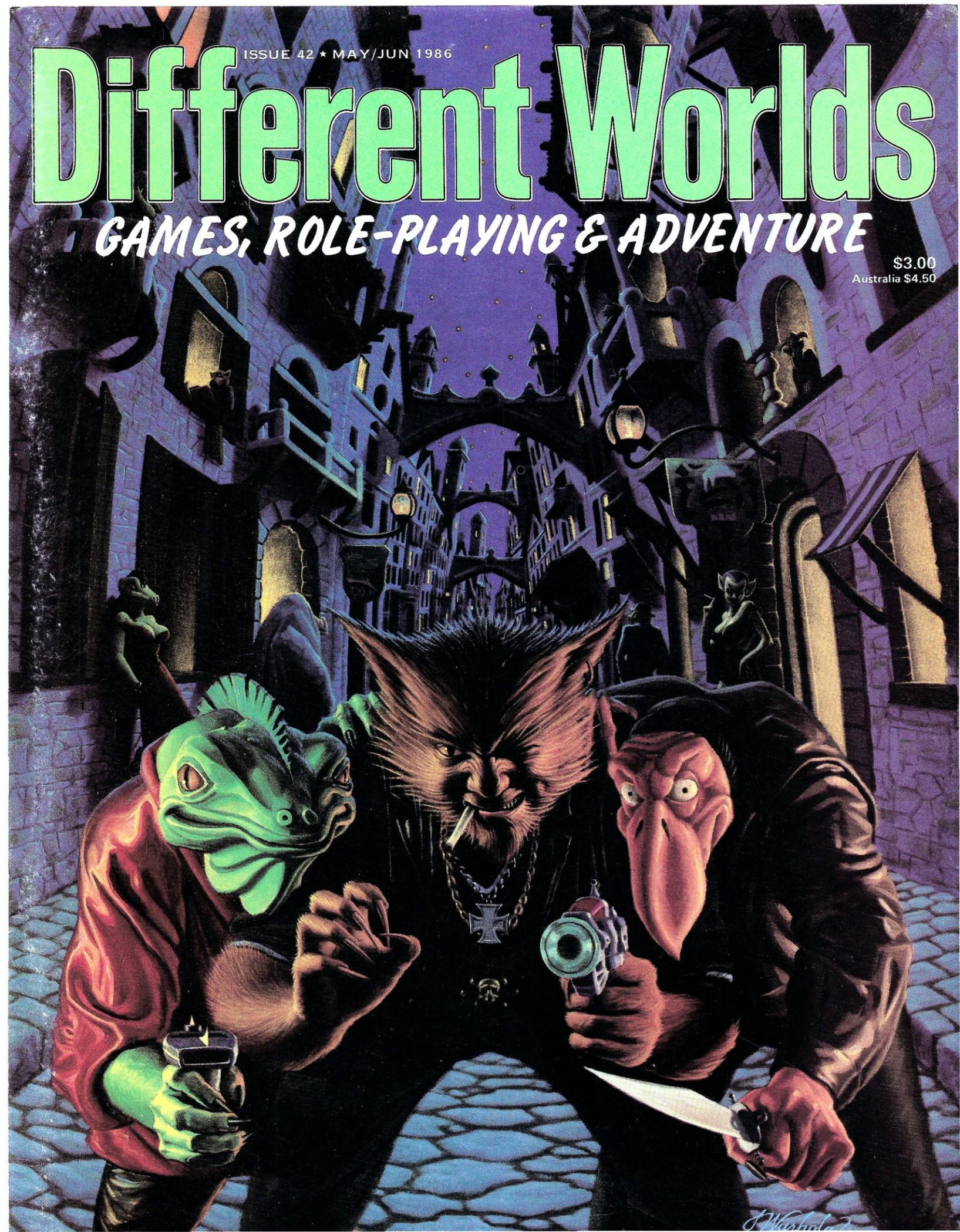
ISSUE 42 ★ MAY/JUN 1986

Different Worlds

GAMES, ROLE-PLAYING & ADVENTURE

\$3.00

Australia \$4.50



Poll (of Teutonic origin) means the head; hence the number of persons in a crowd ascertained by counting heads, hence the counting of voters at an election, and such phrases as "to go to the polls" (to stand for election), and "poll tax" (a tax levied on everybody).

—*Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable*

DW POLL

RESULTS OF SURVEY TAKEN IN ISSUE 40

Survey results of magazines and other games appearing in next issue.

This issue's poll appears on p. 23.

SEX: male 92.5%, female 7.5%.

AGE: youngest 15, oldest 51, average 26.

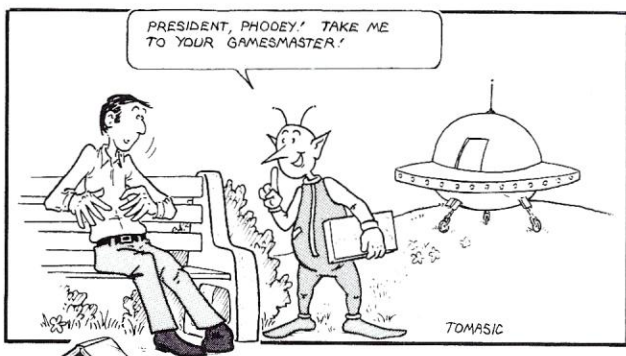
COMPUTERS: Apple 28%, Commodore 64 15%, Macintosh and IBM PC 13%, Atari 800 10%, other 13%.

Game company abbreviations: Fantasy Games Unlimited (FGU), Game Designer's Workshop (GDW), Games Workshop (GW), Iron Crown Enterprises (ICE).

GAME MODULES

Title	Publisher	Rating	
1. Masks Of Nyarlathotep	Chaosium	8.69	33%
2. Thieves' World	Chaosium	8.00	54%
3. Q Manual	Victory	7.78	46%
4. Harn	Columbia	7.61	46%
5. Goldfinger	Victory	7.07	36%
6. Haven	Gamelords	7.00	21%
7. Cities	Midkemia	6.86	36%
8. Handbook of Tricks & Traps	Dragon Tree	6.83	31%
9. City Book	Blade	6.71	44%
10. City Of Terrors	Blade	6.60	13%
11. Stormhaven	Blade	6.50	21%
12. Elves	Mayfair	6.33	31%
13. Octopussy	Victory	6.30	26%
14. Tarsus	GDW	6.11	23%
15. Grimtooth's Traps	Blade	5.84	64%
16. Dark Folk	Mayfair	5.83	31%
17. Dwarves	Mayfair	5.67	38%
18. Justice Machine	Palladium	5.67	15%
19. World Of Greyhawk	TSR	5.60	64%
20. Monster Coliseum	Avalon Hill	5.29	36%
21. Autoduel Champions	Steve Jackson	4.92	31%
22. Angmar	ICE	4.83	15%
23. Beltstrike	GDW	4.33	15%

Other modules polled but receiving less than 10% response: Curse On Hareth (Companions), Ivinia (Columbia), Cloud Lords of Tanara (ICE).



ROLE-PLAYING GAME SYSTEMS

Title	Publisher	Rating	
1. Call Of Cthulhu	Chaosium	8.33	77%
2. RuneQuest	Avalon Hill	7.77	79%
3. Pendragon	Chaosium	7.73	28%
4. Paranoia	West End	7.27	56%
5. Ringworld	Chaosium	7.11	46%
6. Toon	Steve Jackson	7.08	64%
7. Stormbringer	Chaosium	7.05	51%
8. James Bond 007	Victory	7.00	56%
9. Star Trek: The RPG	FASA	6.83	59%
10. Twilight: 2000	GDW	6.75	41%
11. DC Heroes	Mayfair	6.70	26%
12. Elfquest	Chaosium	6.56	41%
13. Champions	Hero	6.42	67%
14. Traveller	GDW	6.37	87%
15. TimeMaster	Pacesetter	6.33	15%
16. Superworld	Chaosium	6.31	33%
17. Chill	Pacesetter	6.25	41%
18. Morrow Project	Timeline	6.15	33%
19. Golden Heroes	GW	6.13	21%
20. Villains & Vigilantes	FGU	6.00	38%
20. Justice Inc.	Hero	6.00	33%
22. Middle Earth Role-Playing	ICE	5.70	51%
23. Daredevils	FGU	5.60	13%
24. Recon	RPG	5.44	23%
25. Bushido	FGU	5.38	41%
25. Land of the Rising Sun	FGU	5.38	21%
27. Advanced Dungeons & Dragons	TSR	5.26	97%
28. Thieves' Guild	Gamelords	5.25	31%
29. Mercenaries, Spies & PEyes	Blade	5.17	31%
30. Tekumel	Gamescience	5.00	26%
30. Star Ace	Pacesetter	5.00	23%
32. Espionage!	Hero	4.92	33%
33. Tunnels & Trolls	Blade	4.91	56%
34. Fringeworthy	Tri Tac	4.80	13%
34. Jorune	Skyrealms	4.80	13%
34. Mechanoid Invasion	Palladium	4.80	13%
37. Dungeons & Dragons	TSR	4.70	95%
38. Chivalry & Sorcery	FGU	4.63	49%
39. Space Opera	FGU	4.53	38%
40. Psi World	FGU	4.50	21%
41. Arduin Grimoire	Grimoire	4.41	44%
42. Heroes Unlimited	Palladium	4.40	26%
43. Top Secret	TSR	4.39	56%
44. Boot Hill	TSR	4.24	44%
45. Gangbusters	TSR	4.20	26%
46. Gamma World	TSR	4.11	69%
47. Stalking the Night Fantastic	Tri Tac	4.10	26%
48. Aftermath	FGU	4.09	28%
49. Rolemaster	ICE	4.07	36%
50. Marvel Super Heroes	TSR	4.00	62%
50. Palladium Role-Playing Game	Palladium	4.00	26%
50. FTL: 2448	Tri Tac	4.00	18%
53. Star Frontiers	TSR	3.94	46%
54. Conan	TSR	3.88	21%
55. Powers & Perils	Avalon Hill	3.70	26%
56. Other Suns	FGU	3.67	15%
57. Pirates & Plunder	Yaquinto	3.57	18%
58. Supervillains	Task Force	3.43	18%
59. Lords Of Creation	Avalon Hill	3.36	28%
60. Man, Myth & Magic	Yaquinto	3.29	18%
61. Witch Hunt	Statcom	3.13	21%
62. Indiana Jones	TSR	2.27	38%
63. Valley of the Pharaohs	Palladium	2.20	13%
64. Timeship	Yaquinto	2.13	21%

Other games polled but receiving less than 10% response: Flashing Blades (FGU), Heroes Of Olympus (Task Force), Lands Of Adventure (FGU), Time & Time Again (Timeline), Wild West (FGU), Danger International (Hero), Element Masters (Escape Ventures), Gangster! (FGU), Star Explorer (FGU), Merc (FGU), Privateers & Gentlemen (FGU), To Challenge Tomorrow (Ragnarok), Ysgarth (Ragnarok).



Editorial

The
Adventurer

DIFFERENT WORLDS STATUS REPORT

Last issue I reported on *Sleuth's* status. In this issue I will report on *Different Worlds's*.

DIFFERENT VIEWS: I'm not getting enough letters and comments. All of you must have burned out filling out that extensive poll in issue 40. Please comment on the direction you see this magazine taking and contribute profound ideas on where it should go.

FICTION: This issue contains the unusual story "Dagon Manor" by Robert E. Howard and C.J. Henderson. However, it is not the policy of *Different Worlds* to publish fiction on a regular basis. Therefore, please do not submit unsolicited manuscripts of fictional stories. They will be returned unreviewed.

HUCKSTERING: Since issue 40, *Sleuth* has offered mail order service for most games mentioned in each issue to those poor souls stranded on mountain tops and aircraft carriers who are unable to visit a neighborhood game store on a regular basis. This service was possible because *Sleuth* had a game store in San Francisco which carried all the items offered. However, this operation was closed as of March due to high rent in the area. Therefore, this is the last issue in which this service can be offered. *Sleuth* will continue to offer mysteriana and other items of interest to gamers,



products not normally carried by game stores, through *Different Worlds*. Look for the "Ye Olde Sleuth Shoppe" sign.

NAME THAT BABY CONTEST: Tom Shaw of the Avalon Hill Game Company has graciously offered a prize of a free game to the one who comes closest to guessing the name that will ultimately be given to my first-born child due in late April. The winner will be determined by the father. Send your entry c/o this magazine. Friends, relatives, and employees of *Sleuth* are, of course, ineligible.

NEXT ISSUE: "The Adventures of Solar Pons," "An Occult Who's Who for the 1920s," reviews of *Battle System*, *Golden Heroes*, *Flashing Blades*, and *Talisman*.

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ehara □

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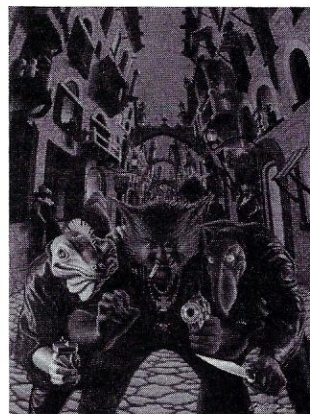
Issue 42
May/Jun 1986

Contents

COVER ILLU:

"ALIEN BANDITS"

By James E. Warhola



Page

The Art of James Warhola by C.J. Henderson 6
Cover Artist

Empire of the Incas by Michael Szymanski. 10

"Dagon Manor" by Robert E. Howard
and C.J. Henderson 16
A *Cthulhu Mythos* Story

Archaeological Expeditions by Thomas M Holsinger. . . 24
Keeping Call Of *Cthulhu*

Facts of Life in the Middle Ages
by Paul Montgomery Crabaugh 36

GARBAGE PITS
of DESPAIR Part 1

Special

Blackmoor
Campaign Module "The Slave
RAIDERS"

By Dave Arneson

Module between pages 24 and 25

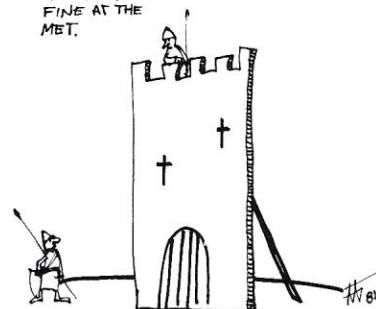
REGULAR FEATURES

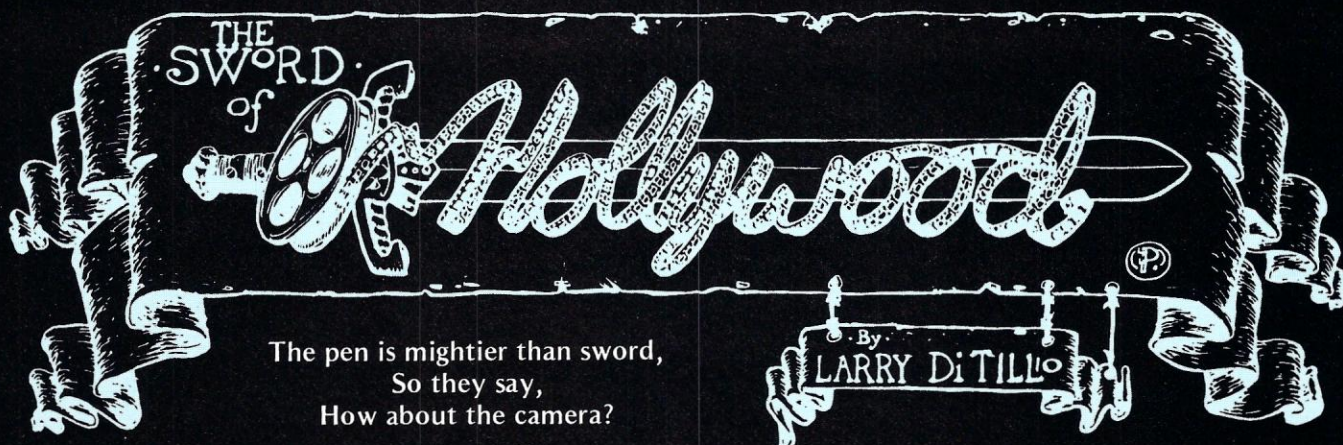
- 2 Poll Results
- 3 Editorial
- 4 Sword Of Hollywood
- 9 Cons
- 23 Poll
- 26 Game Reviews
- 42 New Games
- 44 Film Reviews
- 46 A Letter from Gigi

CARTOONISTS

- Gary Davis 35 (2)
- Alexis Gilliland 3, 46 (2)
- Francis Mao 9, 15
- Richard A. Tomasich 2, 9, 15
- Colin Upton 46

IT WORKED
FINE AT THE
MET.





The pen is mightier than sword,
So they say,
How about the camera?

Felicitations oh virulent viewers of the vibrating vision. Let's start off with a quick newsbit.

ELFQUEST LIVES: *ElfQuest* as a Saturday-morning cartoon? Yes indeed. Cutter, Skywise, Leetah, and all your other favorite Wolf-Riders are headed for the tiny tube, courtesy of CBS. Handling the writing chores for *ElfQuest* will be J. Michael Straczynski and . . . Ye Ol' Sword! No, I'm not joshing, after several meetings with CBS brass and the Pinis, pal J. Michael and myself wound up with this exciting assignment. Naturally the problems in translating *ElfQuest* into a show for kiddies are quite legion. Obviously the series has more than its share of violence and GASP, sex, both of which are utter taboos on Saturday Morning. However, with a little creative ingenuity and a lot of help from Wendy and Richard Pini we hope to maintain the spirit of *ElfQuest* and create an entertainment suitable for kiddie and adult fans alike. The series won't be rehashing the original books, instead it will begin after the end of the first saga, with a brand new quest for Cutter and friends. While there's a slim chance the deal could explode, it's reasonably certain that you can look for it in fall of this year. Needless to say *Different Worlds* readers will be getting exclusive coverage in the future. And that's the news!

AND NOW A WORD ABOUT "CHARACTERS": As I mentioned last issue, I intend to keep presenting "mini-seminars" on how film and TV relate to games, at least until irate fans tell me to stop. This issue I've chosen to examine the area of characterization and let me start by making this ponderous pronouncement: Characters are the lifeblood of stories whether those stories are presented as multi-million-dollar epics on the screen or simply as an evening's diversion with a few dicefiendish friends. No matter how good a tale is, or how marvelous the special effects, without

strong, appealing characters it all falls apart. *SpaceHunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone* is a good example of this. The story had the elements to work, a nasty villain, a daring rescue, a place of peril, but it all came out lifeless because the hero was utterly boring. Indeed the only saving grace of the film was Molly Ringwald's performance as Niki, a petulant little urchin who virtually stole the show from the humorless *SpaceHunter*. I don't say this just to make Ms. Ringwald's day, but rather to make a point. *SpaceHunter* is at its best when Niki is on the screen solely because we care about her. We don't care about *SpaceHunter*. Got your notebooks ready? Okay, take this down.

Factor Number One in a good character is that we care about him or her. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, but at the heart it hinges on the fact that we know something about the character. This knowledge might be as multi-layered as the fact that the character is the long-lost heir to an usurped throne, upon which a vicious uncle now sits and which he or she is determined to regain. This is Character Background, it tells us the character didn't just drop on the screen from central casting, makes the character more real for us, and implies that the character's history will affect the story we are about to watch. The characters in *Star Trek* are a prime example, not only do we have a good sense of their background from the TV show, but we are also frequently treated to even further background to affect the story (e.g., Captain Kirk's handling of the *Kobayashi Maru* scenario in *Star Trek II*). Another good example is the opening scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* which immediately informs us that Indiana Jones has a long-running background of conflicts with the French archaeologist-villain (sorry, I've blanked on his name). This background comes up again and again in the film, particularly toward the end when that

same villain urges Indy to blow up the Ark, knowing he won't solely because of their mutual character background.

Another type of character knowledge used to make protagonists appealing is the Character Trait. In this vein falls all the subtleties of human nature presented in such a way as to tell us without question what the character is like. Humor is such a trait, as is courage, dedication, intelligence, passion, loyalty, and all their counterparts (cowardice, stupidity, etc.). The very best heroes or heroines have many such traits, the worst have few or none (by the way, the same can be said for villains and villainesses). Character traits can be presented visually and verbally, e.g., in *Conan The Destroyer*, the first scene shows us a mess of character traits—verbally we learn that Conan is a thief as is his then partner Mallek (note however that we don't see the robbery of the merchant, keeping Conan a heroic rogue instead of a bullying muscleman, a neat writer's trick). Visually we see that Conan is courageous and Mallek cowardly as battle with Queen Taramis's soldiers is joined. When the battle is done we are presented with yet other traits as Conan makes clear that he bends knee to no ruler and then reacts fearfully to the magic of the Queen. Thus in only a few short moments of film time, we know quite a lot about our hero and that knowledge helps us care about him.

Character Quirks and Catchphrases is a third type of device useful for bringing cinematic characters to life. Quirks are small bits that add flavor to characterizations, examples are Indy Jones's fear of snakes, Clint Eastwood's squint-eyed reaction to peril, and Bogart's characteristic ear-tug (note that the latter two examples are cases of actors' contributions to characterization, as opposed to writers or directors).

Catchphrases are repeated verbal bits, the very best example is again Mr. Eastwood in the *Dirty*

Harry films, each of which contains a catchphrase such as "A man's got to know his limitations" (in *Magnum Force*) and the instantly famous "Go ahead, make my day" (in *Sudden Impact*). Catchphrases are not always the province of a film's main character, take for example Valeria's "Do you wanna live forever?" in *Conan The Barbarian*, a phrase that not only endears her to us, but immediately establishes the bold nature of her character.

The final necessity in making a film character appealing is Character Growth and Development. Unlike Background, Traits, Quirks and Catchphrases, this element is a direct function of the story. In a good film, the hero or heroine will change and grow by the end. This may be very subtle or rampantly apparent, but it will always exist in some form. *Excalibur* is a wonderful example, all its characters change and grow, indeed their change is the very essence of that classic tale. On a less lofty note take *Conan The Destroyer* again. Conan begins the film as a simple thief, by the end he has strengthened his resolve to win a kingdom and reconcile himself that Valeria is lost to him forever. In short he has grown.

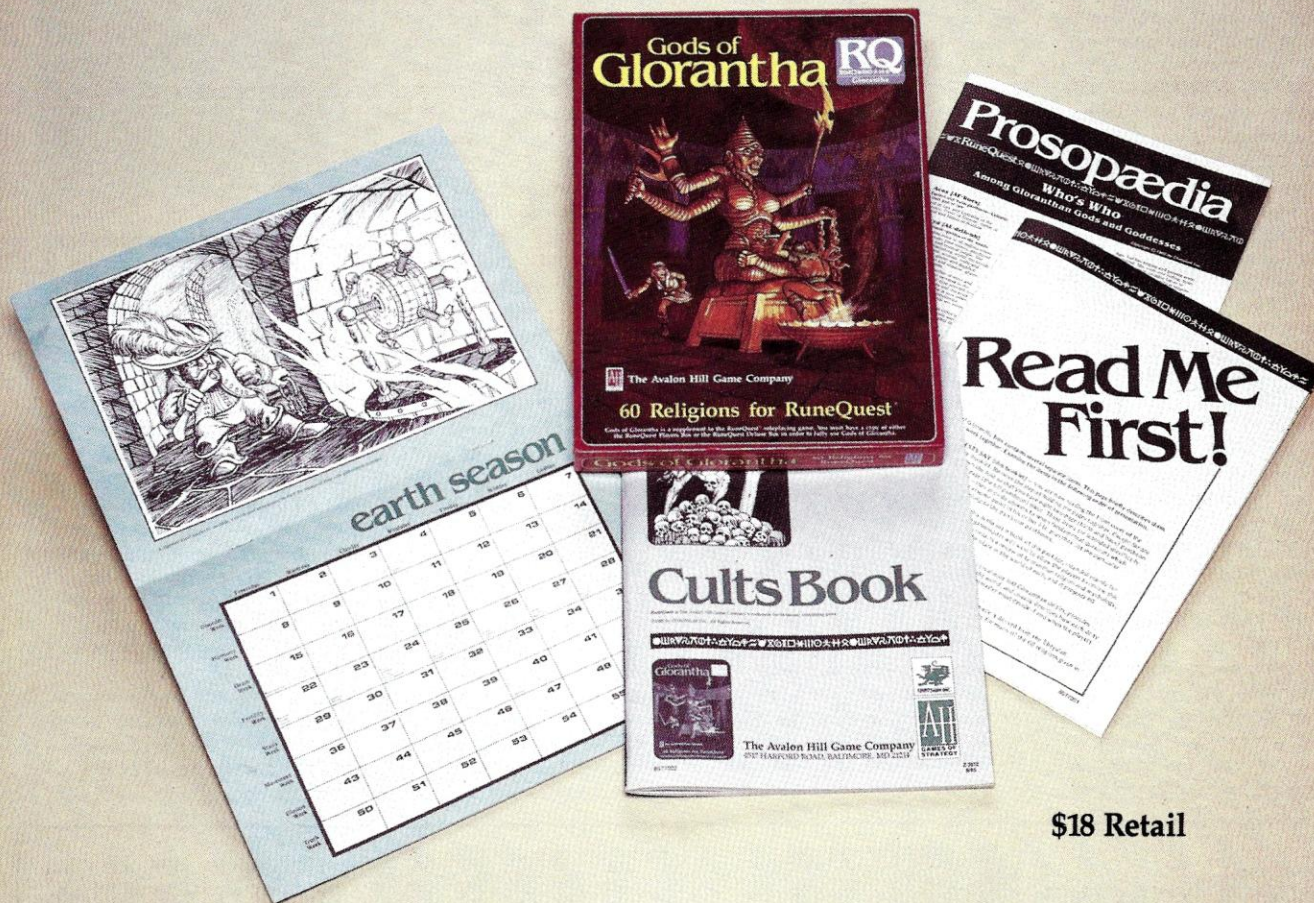
Now that I've outlined characterization in film, let's move to games, but first a brief disclaimer. You'll note I haven't mentioned television in this discussion and I have a good reason. Most television heroes and heroines lack the element of Character Growth. *Magnum P.I.* is the same character week after week, when a season's over, he may grow in some way, but in general he'll always be what he was when the show started. So having been informed, let's press on.

The key to characterization in gameplay is to think up a character even as you roll up one. Use the same guidelines I've just talked about, starting with background. Where is your character from? Does he or she have living

Continued on page 15

Gods of Glorantha®

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COVER ARTIST

The Art of James Warhola

By C.J. Henderson

He has illustrated the best of them. Warhola paintings have graced the covers of books by Robert E. Howard, Philip Jose Farmer, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and Ben Bova. They have been present on the works of Keith Laumer, Spider Robinson, Barry Longyear, and Joe Halderman. He has done work for most every major publishing house, and the notable science-fiction and fantasy magazines. His work has garnered its share of the genre's top awards, as well as such notable prizes as making *Marketing Best-sellers* "Top Ten Covers of the Year."

James E. Warhola has reached the top of his field at the age of thirty through persistence and hard work. "I start around 8:30 in the morning. I take an hour or two for lunch and then paint until dinner. That's usually an hour and then I go back to work until 10 or 11." Warhola's schedule is a seven day a week affair. "There's no such thing as weekends for me. But, that's the way it is for most freelancers."

Warhola grew up in a small community outside of Pittsburgh PA. The son of Paul and Ann Warhola, unlike so many creative people, he found a great deal of encouragement at home. "My art was

something that just started to come out of me; my parents saw I had a talent, and so they got me into art classes as soon as I was old enough to be accepted. They really nurtured me along. It wasn't like the other end of the spectrum, though. My dad wasn't over me with a stick telling me to draw—or else—none of that. When I wanted to work, they let me, and when I wanted to go out and play, they were all for that, too.

"Really, I can't imagine a better environment for an artist to grow up in. I was really lucky."

After graduation from Carnegie Mellon University, seeing little opportunity for work in his native Pittsburgh, Warhola (like his uncle before him, Andy Warhol) moved to New York at the age of 22. Up until that time, he had not made any commercial sales. In fact, he had not even tried.

"Everyone said that if you wanted to get anywhere as an artist, you had to be in New York, so that's where I went. I'll tell you a true story. I had a job offer in New York, but when I moved up, they looked at me like I was crazy. So here I was, in New York, with all my bills, and I went down and said, 'Here I am.' And they said, 'We don't need

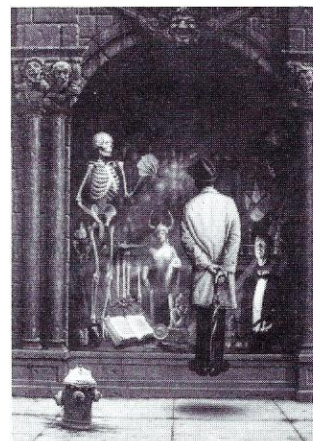
anyone anymore.' And that was it.

"So, I scrambled around, and I got a job at an art studio at the bottom—I mean the very bottom; statting and running errands and cut & paste work—the worst." Warhola spent eight months in the studio's bull pen as low man, doing the jobs no one else wanted to do. Finally, having put away enough money to survive for a while, and having taken all the humiliation his basically 'teenager's' position had to offer, he struck out on his own as a freelancer.

"I made enough money to exist—I lived with roommates, and none of us ate very much—we lived on a shoestring. But I was able to survive. What I wanted to do was make enough money to allow me to live and to go to school at night. I had to get better as a painter; if I was going to get the realism in my painting that I wanted, I had to improve."

Improve he did. Under the tutorage of several excellent teachers, all of whom he still drops in on, he says his skill doubled, especially in the field of oils. The increases came just in time. Roughly a year into his studies, offers to work for a new science-fiction magazine came in. *Questar* put him to drawing story illustrations and comic strips, and to doing oil paintings, both for the interiors and the covers.

"They didn't pay a lot, but they gave me the chance to build a



good portfolio of published work. That led to a lot of the stuff that followed." All of it in the science-fiction and fantasy fields. Originally, Warhola had not thought about doing any one type of painting, but as the offers increased, he followed them along, reaching his present position in the field quite happy to stay there forever. "I love science fiction. Why would I want to leave? I really enjoy making the unreal look real—it's something I think all artists enjoy, and I'm really happy getting paid to do something every day that not only doesn't bore me, but that actually excites me."

Luckily for the fans of science fiction, Warhola's art excites more than just him. He has received praise from all corners of the field, for adding what many con-

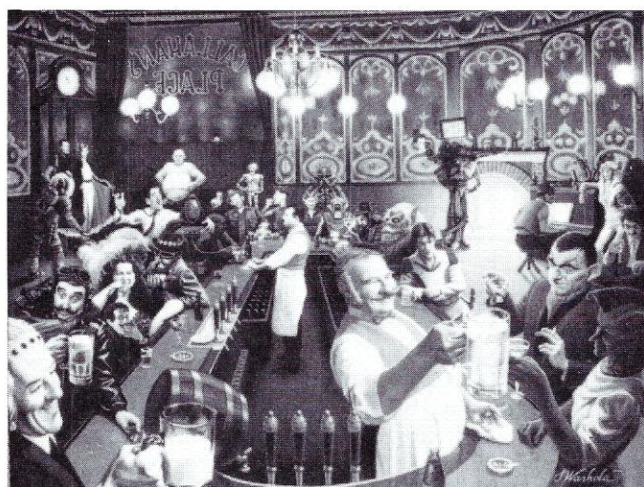
James Warhola ON ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

Believe it or not, James Warhola is a fantasy gamer. "Sure," he says, "Why not? I love it."

He has played with Robert E. Howard scholars, Marc Cerasini and Charles Hoffman, *Playboy* artist Gahan Wilson, *Crypt Of Cthulhu* publisher Robert M. Price, comics writer Peter Palmer, rock film star Donna Death, computer technician Marc Thorner, and even *Different Worlds*' own film critic John Nubbin.

"I really get into the Cthulhu games. They're my favorites. In fact, with my schedule the way it is, I can only afford to join a few campaigns a year, so I limit myself to the *Call Of Cthulhu* games that my group plays, because they're the most fun."

Why does a grown man with a limited amount of free time with all of the pleasures of New York City to distract him bother to play what many outsiders of the field refer to as 'some kid's game'? Warhola feels the answer is simple.



"First off, it's inspiring to my work. It's got a lot of imagination to it, and you can't help but conjure up things you never thought of before. I mean, the game has helped to expand my consciousness in that I've had to face real madness and terror. I know I'm just sitting in a guy's living room, but if you let yourself go while you're playing, you can use the game as a catharsis from daily life

that makes all the little details worth taking.

"But I guess that's really the second good thing about it. It's so relaxing. I must say that after a round of battling Deep Ones or running down caverns trying to escape a Shoggoth, little things like utility bills and the subway don't seem like much."

Warhola sees it as the next step beyond reading. "It's exciting,

and it's unpredictable. Just like a good book, a good game can be experienced on all levels. A group of kids can play the same adventure through, and get totally different things out of it than a group of adults will. You can really put yourself into a game, and come out of it six hours later feeling as if you just really lived an Indiana Jones movie."

Warhola also thinks of gaming as great entertainment. "Each game is a real social event for me. I never get to see my old friends much. Gaming really helps keep us together. It's so much more fun to become Professor William Godwin and get into a roadster to head down to the docks to unravel a mystery, than to just sit around and eat chips and talk about how depressing the economy is, or something like that.

"I like to have fun. I don't think a bunch of people getting together to have a good time is stupid or unhealthy. I work hard, just about everyday of the year. When someone offers me the chance for a solid night's entertainment, I grab it. Heck, who doesn't?"

sider to be a new dimension to what has often become a grist mill operation. Often times, painters merely do up what they want, selling standard paintings of rocket ships and aliens, or endless planetary landscapes. Not Warhola.

"I always read the story or the book I'm supposed to illustrate. I mean, that's my job. The cover of a book is supposed to sell it. If an art director thinks that a star background and a couple of space ships will sell a book—great, that's what I'll paint. But if it's up to me, I like to pick something that speaks in the language of the particular story I'm doing; something that will help the reader identify the mood of the book it's for."

Warhola works exclusively in oils. Acrylics do not offer him the depth of intensity he strives to achieve. Fast, mass-producing artists work with acrylics, using the modern paint's fast-drying feature to churn out more work. Warhola stays with the slow-drying oils, however, using them to create the individual atmosphere he looks for in each painting. It is a practice which has served him well, for all of his present work sings of painstaking labor. Unlike Frazetta, or Maitz, or a dozen others in the field, Warhola's style is not instantly



recognizable. This is not to say, though, that he has no style.

Like many mainstream artists, men and women known for landscapes and still lifes, Warhola sublimates his own need for instant recognition into his feeling for what he is doing. His care is centered on his work, not his ego, infusing as much life as possible into the art flowing from his brush. Faces do not look the same from painting to painting. Each alien landscape is different, not subtly, but dramatically.

Beyond his willingness to put work into his subject matter,

Warhola is also extremely gifted in his use of color. He seems to have a certain knack for bringing intense reality to his shadow work, and the interplay of light and darkness off the colors he uses. It is work beyond the photographic or the suggestive—it is even beyond reality.

Dressing people up in costumes is nothing new. Artists have used models for centuries; people have made movies for decades. In a film like *Starcrash*, the men were handsome and the women beautiful, the costumes exotic and the sets bizarre. In *Alien*, the same is

true, but which was the better picture? It is not a question of the amount of money spent to make a film either; compare the original black & white *King Kong* to the modern one. Put the \$40 million *Superman III* up against the low-budget *Terminator*.

Intent in the creative process is everything. Those intending to simply make money will do it. Their paintings and stories and films will be commercial, and they will sell. But they will sell only as filler, taking up the space in between the good pieces of work people keep waiting for. Work like Warhola's. Like a good novel, or an unforgettable film, his images stay with those who see them. Often times his cover paintings have been more memorable than the novels inside.

He is not the best artist in the field. There are other people with a better understanding of anatomy, some with a more intrinsic feel for drapery, a few possessing an abler hand for color mixing—but few indeed are as gifted as Warhola on all levels. Very few of the field's top people have as able a grasp of all the mechanics of the business as he does. Fewer still have his passion for their work.

No, James Warhola is not the best artist in the field. But then, he is only thirty. □

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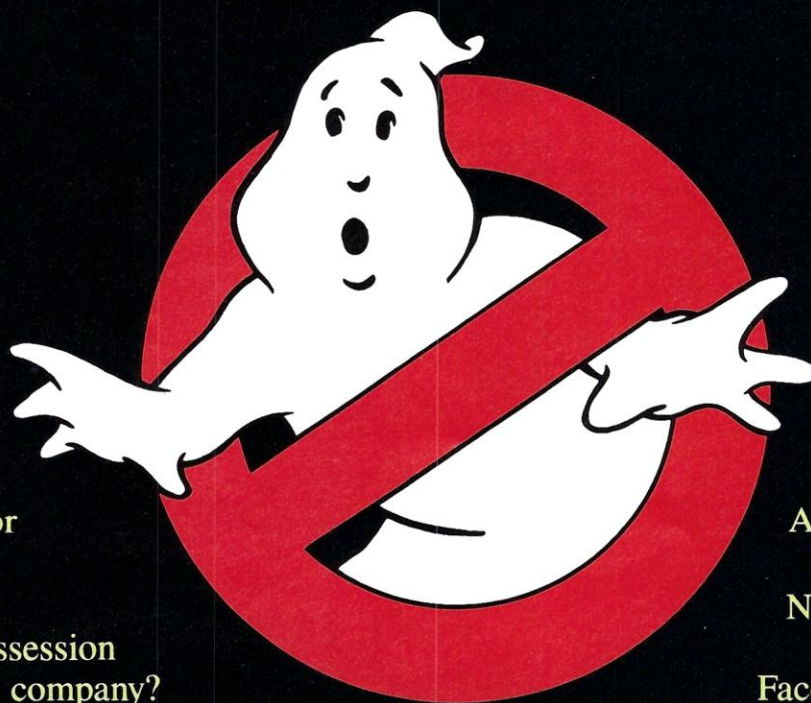
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If you wish to see your convention announced in Different Worlds, send us the name of the event, dates, location, who to contact, number of attendees you had last year. There is no charge for this service.

Dixie-Trek May 2-4, 1986

At Sheraton Century Center, Atlanta GA. Science fiction. Contact: Owen C. Ogletree, Jr., 454 Huff St (Apt 9), Lawrenceville GA 30245, (404) 962-8118.

HAVOC II May 3-4, 1986

At South Middle School, Waltham MA. Adventure gaming. Contact: Al Garnache, 142 Clark St, Waltham MA 02154.

Tri-State '86 May 16-18, 1986

At Southern Ohio College Main Campus, Cincinnati OH. Gaming. Contact: Tri-State '86, Box 1754, Cincinnati OH 45201, (513) 931-6028.

GamesCaucus 1986 May 23-26, 1986

At the Dunfey Hotel, San Mateo CA. Adventure gaming. Contact: GamesCaucus, 1550 Benton St (Apt C), Alameda CA 94501, (415) 865-3668.

DuPage Game Con May 24-25, 1986

At College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn IL. Gaming. Contact: Eric Ortega, 7321 Northgate Wy (Apt 3), Downers Grv IL 60516, (312) 964-4024.

M.I.G.S. VII May 25, 1986

At Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre, Cambridge, Ontario. Gaming. Contact: Les Scanlan, 473 Up Wentworth St, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L9A 4T6.

MichiCon Gamefest '86 May 31-June 1, 1986

At Southfield Civic Center, Southfield MI. Adventure gaming. Contact: MichiCon Gamefest '86, Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192.

ATLANTICON '86 June 19-22, 1986

At Trenton State College, Trenton NJ. Adventure gaming. Contact: ATLANTICON '86, Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220.

GHOST CON 1986 June 27-29, 1986

At LaSells Stewart Ctr, Oregon State Univ, Corvallis OR. Adventure gaming, comic books, SF&F. Contact: Ghost Town Enterprises,

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L.A. ORIGINS '86 July 3-6, 1986

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OKon 86 July 18-20, 1986

At Tulsa OK. Science fiction. Contact (send SASE): OKon, Box 4229, Tulsa OK 74159, (918) 622-2225.

SPOKON

July 18-20, 1986

At Ridpath Hotel, Spokane WA. SF&F. Contact (send SASE): S.A.I.F., Box 9582, Spokane WA 99205.

TIMECON '86 July 25-27, 1986

At Red Lion Inn, San Jose CA. SF&F, adventure gaming, filksing. Contact: TIMECON '86, 124-H Blossom Hill Rd, San Jose CA 95123, (408) 629-8078.

GATEWAY 1986 August 29-September 1, 1986

At Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel, Los Angeles CA. Gaming. Contact: GATEWAY 1986, DTI, Box 8399, Long Bch CA 90808, (213) 420-3675.

EARTHCON VI September 19-21, 1986

At Holiday Inn-Independence, Cleveland OH. Science fiction.

Contact: EARTHCON, Box 5641, Cleveland OH 44101.

ORCCON 1987 February 13-16, 1987

At Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel, Los Angeles CA. Gaming. Contact: ORCCON 1987, DTI, Box 8399, Long Bch CA 90808, (213) 420-3675.

For more information contact the convention organizers directly. □



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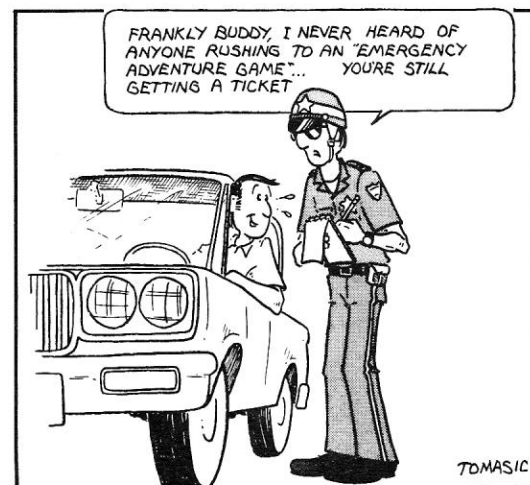
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*We will drink Chicha from your skull
From your teeth we will make a necklace
From your bones, flutes
From your skin we will make a drum
And then we will dance.*

—A popular Incan rhyme

Empire of the INCAS

By Michael Szymanski

IN THE year 1438, a tribe of Peruvian Indians who had traded the rich plains of Lake Titicaca for the fertile valley of Cuzco laid the foundations of an empire of vast wealth and magnificent architecture, transforming the little village which took its name from the valley into the sprawling capital of a nation which encompassed most of modern-day Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile. They called themselves the Inca, and their achievements remain a marvel to this day.

THE EMPIRE BUILDERS

In that golden year of 1438, a chief named Inca Yupanqui lead his warriors to victory against the invading Chanca tribe. To mark this glorious occasion, the skins of the defeated chieftains were stuffed with straw and ashes and installed in a shrine raised on the battle site. Some were seated in such a way that the wind caused their arms to beat out a macabre rhythm upon the stretched skin of their bellies. Emboldened by his victory, Inca Yupanqui set into motion a campaign of conquest and, it is believed, single-handedly transformed his tribe into one of the most powerful civilizations in the New World. Small wonder that he was renamed Pachacuti, "He-who-transforms-the-earth."

Pachacuti and the kings who followed him strove to peacefully expand their empire, treating their prospective conquests with open friendship and kindness, often using diplomacy and negotiation to attain their goals—but if these methods failed, they were fully prepared for war. Yet even during the

course of such wars The Inca ("The King") was open to offers of peace, and would tolerate no excesses on the part of his warriors, who were capable of great brutality on the battlefield.

A conquered people were completely absorbed into the Incan culture, and there was always a pause between campaigns which allowed for the organization of newly acquired territories and the re-education of the populace. The first order of business was the firm establishment of the worship of Inti, the Sun, though the conquered race was still allowed to venerate their old gods.

Nobles of a conquered people were brought to Cuzco for intensive study and indoctrination into the ways of the Inca. When this was done they were sent back to their lands to govern in the name of The Inca; usually a relative or two would be kept at Cuzco, just as an assurance of loyalty. The common folk of these new lands were sometimes relocated; this and a full schedule of hard but tolerable work served to keep their minds off rebellion.

Most of the work was done in the area of construction, and since most of this was executed in stone, a great deal of the physical empire remains today. The Incas were excellent engineers; they terraced entire mountains for farming, raised impressive aqueducts of astounding length and laid great military roads which allowed a force of over two-hundred thousand warriors to be assembled and marched swiftly to any part of the empire without exhausting the troops. One such road challenged the Andes, cut for miles at a time through the living rock of the mountains, chiseled in steep switchbacks up the sheer faces of looming cliffs and crossing deep gorges by suspension bridges made of woven fiber cables that were sometimes thicker than a man's body. Mobility and communication were essential to the Incas, and through their system of roads even the remotest points of the empire could be reached in a remarkably short time.

They were also quite expert at farming. Efficient use of canals and subterranean aqueducts provided irrigation for even the coastal desert areas, and by use of terrace farming they were able to grow crops of any climate from tropical to temperate. Every square inch of soil was utilized to feed a nation that was growing by leaps and bounds.

THE GREAT ORGANIZERS

The Incas called their empire Tahuantinsuyu, "The Four Quarters of the World," and it did in fact contain four provinces—Antisuyu, the eastern jungle region; Collasuyu, the Lake Titicaca region to the south; Condesuyu, the coastal highlands to the west; and



Chinchasuyu, the northern desert and mountain region. Cuzco itself was divided into quarters which represented the four provinces of the empire, and four great roads were built to join the capital with each of these far-off provinces.

Farmland was also divided; one portion for the support of the temples, one portion for the nobility, and one for the general populace—all three portions were of course cultivated by the common folk. Even the population of Tahuantinsuyu was broken down into units of fifty to one-thousand people, and into even larger units of ten thousand, with an Incan noble governing each by a few very strict laws dealing with criminal offenses such as murder, adultery, blasphemy against the Sun and rebellion, most of which were punishable by death.

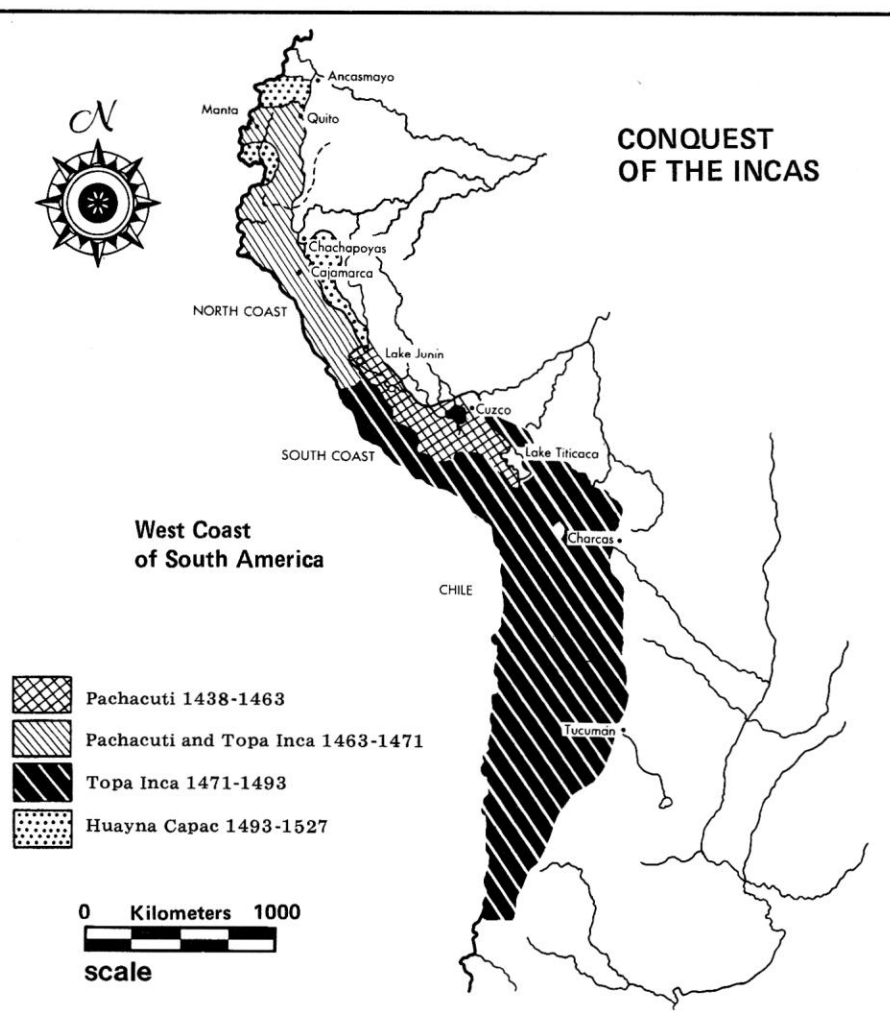
Though they were quite well off in terms of food and shelter, the common inhabitants of the empire had absolutely no chance for advancement or enrichment, for they were allotted only what they needed to maintain themselves comfortably and pay their taxes. Nor could they advance themselves socially, for only royalty and nobility had the birthright of aristocracy—only the high born were allowed to speak *Quechua*, the royal dialect. It was to this elite group, to the king and royal family, that the term Inca truly applied.

THE ROYALTY

The Incan king was a benign despot. It was law that The Inca must be the eldest son of the *Coya*, or queen, and it was The Inca alone who could also serve as head priest of the Sun.

The Incan princes inherited none of their wealth, and so were required to amass their own fortunes, for it was believed that sometime after an Inca died he would return once more to his home and lands. So, lest he be offended, all of his possessions—not to mention a number of wives and servants—were sealed up within his palace in anticipation of that return. The bodies of such royal personages were skilfully embalmed and placed within the great temple of the Sun at Cuzco, the dead kings seated on chairs of gold as though they were paying homage to the huge golden Sun disc which filled the western wall of the shrine. The Incan queens held a similar place of honor in the silver-adorned shrine of the Moon.

The royal palaces were numerous, low and extensive, their apartments richly ornamented with gold and silver, right down to even the most mundane of household items. The most favored of these scattered palaces was



in the sheltered valley of Yucay, where royalty would relax and refresh themselves in a luxury more common to the more exclusive resorts of the present day. The valley was a paradise of fountains, streams, hot baths, and beautiful gardens shaded by fragrant groves.

Incan nobility consisted of two classes—the pure Inca, who dressed in a manner reserved exclusively for them, spoke Quechua, and practiced polygamy. The second class was comprised of co-operative members of conquered nations, but these were never allowed to enter the priesthood or given positions of command in the army. This system minimized discontent and, together with a strict military enforcement of rule, ensured an unbroken flow of tribute to Cuzco.

CUZCO AND CORICANCHA

In every respect, Cuzco was the heart of Tahuantinsuyu. The Incan civilization began there, it was the home of the king, and was the site of the grandest structure in the New World, the imposing Sun temple at Coricancha, "The Place of Gold." To guard this holy city, Pachacuti decreed that twenty-thousand men should be put to work on an awesome temple-fortress

called Sacsahuaman atop a high hill overlooking his city, and connected to the capital by a series of underground passages.

Very little of this citadel remains today, for the conquering Spaniards dismantled most of the uncompleted structure for easily obtainable building materials for their own palaces and homes. Yet the massive defensive terraces still remain, three zig-zagging walls made of perfectly interlocking boulders weighing as much as one-hundred twenty-six tons. This magnificent fortress was a testament to the power of The Inca, and a fitting guardian for the jewel that was Cuzco.

Again, it was Pachacuti who was responsible for the design of Cuzco. As he had revolutionized the Incas' system of religion, law, and administration, so did he affect the architecture of his fledgling kingdom. The city was laid out in the form of a puma, with the district of Coricancha at the tail and Sacsahuaman at the head. Streets were put down in an orderly, logical manner, so that it was impossible to become lost in Cuzco—or in any other city of the empire.

The Incan government was a theo-

MAJOR INCAN SITES

<i>Site</i>	<i>Nearest Modern City</i>
Chincherro	Cuzco, Peru
Coricancha	Cuzco, Peru
Cusichaca	Cuzco, Peru
Cuzco*	Cuzco, Peru
Machu-Picchu	Cuzco, Peru
Moray	Cuzco, Peru
Ollantaytambo	Cuzco, Peru
Pisac	Cuzco, Peru
Rumicola	Cuzco, Peru
Cacsahuaman	Cuzco, Peru
Saihuite	Cuzco, Peru
Tambo-Toqo	Cuzco, Peru
Tarahuasi	Cuzco, Peru
Vilcabamba	Cuzco, Peru
Vilcashuaman	Cuzco, Peru
Vitcos	Cuzco, Peru
Huanuco	La Union, Peru
Ingapirca	Canar, Ecuador
Island of the Sun	Lake Titicaca, Peru
Temple of Viracocha at Raqchi	Urcos, Peru
Tiahuanaco	Lake Titicaca, Bolivia

*Though Cuzco is one of the ancient centers of Incan civilization, it is also a thriving metropolitan city of the present day.

cracy, which held a belief in an after-life and knew the concept of Heaven and Hell. They acknowledged a Supreme Being, whom they called Pachacamac, or as it is more widely known today, Viracocha. Out of great respect for this highest of all gods, only one temple was dedicated to Viracocha, this being at Raqchi, near Urcos, Peru. The most favored of all the lesser deities was unquestionably Inti, the Sun, who presided over every facet of Incan life; nowhere was this more clearly demonstrated than at Coricancha.

A tremendous disc of gem-studded gold filled the temple's western wall, and upon it was engraved a human face peering out from a blazing representation of the sun. All the furnishings and fixtures of this wondrous chamber were of solid gold, which was held to be "the sweat of the Sun." A golden statue of Punchao, Sun-child, stood in a place of honor nearby; in the body of that statue was a chalice which held the dust of the hearts of past Incan kings, whose mummified remains sat upon thrones of gold around this glittering shrine.

In an adjoining chapel dedicated to Mama Kilya, "Mother Moon," all the furnishings as well as the huge disc depicting her image were fashioned of silver, the "tears of the Moon," the better to represent the silvery light of the Moon. Mama Kilya was of great importance to the Inca, in that she

marked the times of great festivals and religious ceremonies. It was her silvery image who looked down upon the embalmed bodies of the Incan queens, seated upon thrones of solid silver so that they might pay eternal homage to this benign goddess. Also housed within this simple but impressive structure was a shrine to Ilyapa—the Thunder God of Weather—and others to Lightning, the Stars, and the Rainbow. Each of these chapels were also decorated with gold.

Coricancha was truly a place of gold. Slabs of the precious metal lined the walls, and most of the altars were solid blocks of gleaming gold. The temple fountains, life-sized representations of llamas and other creatures—all were made of pure gold. The Chosen Women, or rather those who became Virgins of the Sun, were charged with the care of the temple's golden garden, in which the trees, flowers, birds, cornstalks, butterflies, snakes, snails, and even the grass was of skilfully crafted gold.

It was the taxes levied upon the empire which provided this breathtaking wealth for the temples and palaces of the nobility, and yet it was this same gleaming metal which would one day prove to be the nation's downfall.

In all, there were three to four hun-

THE DYNASTY OF THE INCAS 1200-1572

Pre-Empire Era

(exact dates of reign unknown)

Manco Capac	(MAHN-ko KAH-pahk)
Sinchi Roca	(SIN-chee RO-ka)
Lloque Yupanqui	(YO-kay yu-PAHN-kee)
Mayta Capac	(MAHY-ta KAH-pahk)
Capac Yupanqui	(KAH-pahk yu-PAHN-kee)
Inca Roca	(IN-ka RO-ka)
Yahuar Huacac	(YAH-war WAH-kahk)
Viracocha	(wir-ah-KO-chah)

The Empire Era

Pachacuti	(pah-chah-KOO-tee)	1438-1471
Tupa Inca	(TU-pah IN-kah)	1471-1493
Huayna Capac	(WAHY-nah KAH-pahk)	1493-1527
Huascar	(WAHS-kar)	1527-1532
Atahualpa	(ah-tah-WAHL-pa)	1532-1533

Post-Empire Era

Tupa Huallpa	(TU-pah WAHL-pah)	1533-1533
Manco Inca	(MAHN-ko IN-ka)	1533-1545*
Paullu Inca	(POWL-yu IN-ka)	1537-1549
Carlos Inca	(CAR-los IN-ka)	1549-1572**
Sayri Tupa Inca	(SAHY-ree TU-pah IN-ka)	1545-1558†
Titu Cusi	(TEE-too KOO-see)	1558-1571†
Tupa Amaru	(TU-pah ah-MAH-roo)	1571-1572††

*Rebelled against the Spaniards and established his rule in the jungle

**Continued Paullu Inca's puppet reign for the Spaniards

†Continued Manco Inca's rebel kingdom

††Captured and executed by the Spaniards

dred lesser temples scattered across Tahuantinsuyu, and these too served as storehouses for Incan wealth, some of them boasting a staff of functionaries numbering in the thousands. The High Priest, called *Villac Vmu*, was second in power only to The Inca, and was in most cases the brother of the king.

Like all the priests serving under him, he officiated at the daily ceremonies, and presided over the major observances which marked the solstices and equinoxes of the Sun. After The Inca and his family had spent a decent interval at prayer in the temple, a sacrifice to the Sun was made, this being usually of animals, flowers, grain, or scented gums.

Capacocha — human sacrifice — was rare, and in this case the offering was a beautiful maiden or an unblemished child. By one method of sacrifice, a youth, drugged with coca leaves, was placed nearly naked in a rough crypt atop one of the frigid Andean peaks; there he would huddle until he froze to death, his body perfectly preserved for all these hundreds of years by the thin air and painfully low tempera-

tures of those lofty mountaintops.

In this respect it was a barbarous culture, and yet this same civilization was enlightened enough to be modestly proficient in astronomy, having knowledge of a few constellations and observing the movements of the planet Venus. It was a culture advanced enough to undertake successful transoceanic voyages on balsawood rafts, and yet it would condemn a nine-year-old boy to a lonely, shivering death. But such things were part of Incan beliefs, beliefs which helped to make their nation strong.

And so flourished Tahuantinsuyu until the year 1527, when the end of the Incan empire was foretold by the death of emperor Huayna Capac, who fell victim to the plague—possibly smallpox—which claimed almost two hundred thousand lives before it had run its course.

THE GOLDEN DOWNFALL

Upon the death of Huayna Capac, a great civil war broke out across the empire. The half-brothers Huascar and Atahualpa each claimed the throne of The Inca, and this bitter, bloody contest further weakened the empire at a time when its strength and unity were desperately needed.

During this time of upheaval, an illegitimate, illiterate pauper from Spain was undertaking a series of three expeditions into the lands of the Inca. After countless setbacks and two failures, the greedy and determined Francisco Pizarro encountered the Inca for the first time in 1526. He was warmly welcomed by friendly natives who added to his modest stock of treasure and told him much of imperial Cuzco. Shortly after this meeting, Pizarro returned to Panama City to plot his invasion.

In 1532 he returned to Incan lands in the company of his four younger brothers, a priest, and one hundred sixty-eight soldiers armed with crossbows, arquebuses, and two small cannons. On September 24, 1532, this small force set out across the Andes to meet with Atahualpa, who commanded an army of between thirty to eighty thousand warriors. But the Spaniards did not face these overwhelming numbers alone, as some historians would have us believe; once again, because of the civil war, Pizarro was able to recruit a force of tribesmen equal to or greater than his own, natives who did not care to be subjects of the Inca. Even so, Pizarro was vastly outnumbered, which may be why he resorted to deceit.

Emperor Atahualpa was lured into an ambush under the guise of a peaceful meeting and was kidnaped, his escort of seven thousand butchered

almost to the last man. It seems inconceivable that so small a force could have won out against such odds, but they did—with but a single minor injury to one of the Spaniards. Flush with victory, Pizarro began his march on Cuzco.

Having arranged for the death of his half-brother Huascar, the captive Atahualpa became the true emperor of Tahuantinsuyu, and in an attempt to buy his own freedom he provided the Spaniards with a total of twenty-four tons of gold and silver taken from the shrines and temples and palaces of the shaken empire. Pizarro took the treasure, but instead of releasing Atahualpa, he found an excuse to execute the last true Incan king.

The Spaniards rode into Cuzco on November 15, 1533, moved into the royal palaces and proceeded to loot the city. Nothing was spared in their lust for riches, and soon even the great Sun temple of Coricancha was a pilaged husk, most of its intricate golden artwork melted down into more easily manageable ingots.

In 1536 Manco Inca, whom the Spaniards thought to be their puppet, organized an uprising in which fifty to four hundred thousand warriors laid siege to Cuzco. But the Sun was setting for the Incas, and after a year of fighting the Spaniards emerged the victors, driving Manco Inca into a swampy and inhospitable region northwest of Cuzco, where he and his followers established their new capital at Vilcabamba.

Francisco Pizarro was given less than ten years in which to enjoy his wealth and new station. In reprisal for Pizarro's less-than-legal execution of his partner in the New World expeditions, a group of dispossessed Spaniards broke into his palace in Lima, Peru, on a Sunday in 1541 and assassinated the sixty-three-year-old conqueror of the Incas. That same night his body was buried in an out of the way corner of an unidentified church.

The surviving assassins joined Manco Inca at Vilcabamba and taught his people guerilla warfare tactics. Later, one of these same assassins participated in the stabbing death of Manco Inca, so that he might gain favor with the newly arrived Spanish viceroy.

The Incas struggled valiantly to keep their empire and their civilization alive, but it was simply not to be. In 1572 young Tupa Amaru, the last free Incan ruler, was captured in the jungles and, despite protests from horrified Spaniards, executed by the Spanish viceroy. With Tupa Amaru was captured the long-sought Punchao, the golden Sun-child that was the last great symbol of the Incan empire.

With the beheading of Tupa Amaru, an advanced and enlightened culture was wiped out after but ninety brief years of existence. In the years which followed, King Charles I of Spain attempted to correct some of these terrible wrongs, but it was by then far too late. The decrees of a far-away king meant very little in the New World, and the Spanish destroyers set about dismantling the cities and temples. Jungle reclaimed Vilcabamba, and the veil of time closed darkly over the empire of the Incas.

LEGACY IN STONE

The Incas had no written language, and so it was that their only legacy to the future was their architecture. They were a breed of prolific builders, and the sheer quantity of construction undertaken during the ninety-year history of the Incas is quite astonishing—even more so when one considers the quality of craftsmanship apparent in each and every one of these ancient structures.

No mortar was ever used in Incan construction, blocks being painstakingly shaped and fitted so perfectly that in some cases the joints are undetectable. It was this high standard of workmanship which enabled most of these great buildings to withstand the ravages of time and the violent shiftings of the earth.

There are places of awe and wonder in the mountains and jungles of South America, places of mystery which are, even today, being rediscovered and reclaimed from the lush foliage which has hidden them for these many centuries.

THE FORTRESS SHRINES

A strong military presence was the backbone of the Incan empire, and quite frequently great fortresses would also house prominent temples of the Sun or, in at least four known instances, the mysterious oracle shrines, the most holy of which guarded the magnificent suspension bridge which crossed the Apurimac River gorge, which was the sole approach to the capital of Cuzco from the northern quarter of the realm.

In this shrine, which was lined with thick slabs of silver, were several carved poles three to five feet thick, some banded with gold and all bedecked in fine cloth to resemble Incan women. Each of these carvings was bathed in the blood of sacrifices made to the larger, central carving which was called Apu-Rimac; it was this carving upon which the oracle called for a sign of what the future would hold. On one occasion, before a shaken Spaniard who witnessed the event, the Oracle of Apurimac was answered by a voice

which spoke to him from the blood-drenched central carving! Little remains of this shrine today, but the atmosphere of the unexplained still permeates the high, narrow gorge of the Apurimac River.

One of the most mighty Incan fortresses was Ollantaytambo, which was built upon the steep walls of the Patacancha ravine about halfway between Cuzco and lofty Machu-Picchu on the Urubamba River. It too guarded the approaches to the capital, and its high, massive terraces threw back every Spanish assault made upon it, remaining untaken until Manco Inca deserted it in favor of his jungle capital of Vilcabamba. The entire spur of the mountain was carved into a huge stepped pyramid upon which rested the sacred buildings of the Sun temple, which was defended by no less than seventeen terraces which overlooked the fortress compound.

It is interesting to note that Ollantaytambo was not known to the invading Spaniards until after Manco Inca's revolt in 1536. But there was one place the Spaniards never found, an Incan citadel which remained hidden from the world until 1911.

THE "LOST" CITY

Young Hiram Bingham was given his first glimpse of the ruins in 1909. Burning with excitement, Bingham returned to America, where he was responsible for the Yale Peruvian Expedition of 1911.

By mule team he and his fellows climbed the new trail cut into the walls of the Urubamba Gorge beneath the brooding sentinel of Ollantaytambo and entered the verdant Amazonian rain forests over which loomed the snow-capped peaks of the Andes. Guided by a local farmer, Bingham set out on the morning of July 24, 1911 on a rugged climb which took up the better part of the day.

Just as he was growing discouraged with what he felt was a false lead, Bingham came upon a tremendous flight of one-hundred stone terraces rising nearly a thousand feet up the side of the mountain. Later on that same damp and drizzly day, he entered a maze of granite structures which rivaled the finest works of Cuzco, a city in the clouds which has become the most famous Incan site in South America—Machu-Picchu.

The Inca Trail, following the course of the mighty Urubamba River, extended to the outskirts of Machu-Picchu, a lofty sanctuary stretched across the seven-hundred yard saddle between the peaks of Huayna-Picchu and Machu-Picchu, the mountain from which the ruins derive their name.

Many Incan settlements have been discovered along the Inca Trail, some of which were not thoroughly explored until 1982; but not one of these is nearly as impressive as the enigmatic Machu-Picchu.

To this day it is not known for what purpose the city was constructed. Its fortified location atop steep mountain cliffs indicate it may have been a fortress. One entrance to Machu-Picchu was a winding tunnel which could be easily sealed off, and another access was across a wooden drawbridge which spanned a drop which extended almost straight down to the Urubamba River, which flows around the base of the mountain. The inner city was protected by a dry moat and another defensive wall, while atop Huayna-Picchu there stood a lookout and signal station which could be observed by other outposts along the valley.

Yet the great number of temples and shrines found throughout the complex suggests that Machu-Picchu was a place of great religious significance. The beautifully curving walls of the main Sun temple overlooked the first in a series of sixteen ceremonial fountains such as are found in other important Incan temples, but these are on a far grander scale.

The Cave of the Moon discovered in 1936 was one of the city's most holy shrines, consisting of an Upper and Lower Cavern which were enchanted by the Incas' artistry at stoneworking. These, the hauntingly carved grotto beneath the main temple and the fifty burial caves found on the slopes below the city, are clear evidence that Machu-Picchu was indeed a holy place.

But the incredible number of vast terraces raised on the mountainsides speak of a healthy agricultural operation which produced many more times the amount of food required by the inhabitants. And so the debate continues.

Machu-Picchu is a city of mystery, but in fact it cannot rightly be called a city for, despite its size, it could only have held a population of no more than a thousand people—so in all probability it was a massive, splendid sanctuary of the Incan nobility. This great achievement has captured the imagination of all who have heard of it, and in 1944 it was depicted as a place dedicated to the reverence of Great Cthulhu in the short story "The Trail of Cthulhu," written by the late August Derleth for *Weird Tales* magazine.

Construction of the high citadel was probably begun in 1438, at the beginning of the Incan empire; yet it had been completely abandoned long before Manco Inca's rebellion against the Spaniards. Why? Since the Incas

had no written language, that simple question may never be answered, for that is the greatest mystery of Machu-Picchu, mist-shrouded Andean sanctuary of a civilization long since gone into the realms of history.

MYSTERY IN THE NORTH

In all of present-day Ecuador, there exists only one known remnant of the Incan empire, alone in the remote, barren hills of the Andes.

Ingapirca is noted for one striking feature which sets it apart from all other Incan structures; it has semi-circular ends which make for a lozenge-shaped design that is duplicated nowhere else in the empire. Further, the platform is made up of three circles of equal size, the spaces between the circles filled in to provide for the straight side walls.

It is thought that Ingapirca was a Sun temple or a type of solar observatory. It is thought that the three circles represent the three positions of the sun: anti (dawn), inti (full), and cunti (sunset); this is supported by the fact that the temple is aligned roughly east-west.

But if this is so, why was this design never repeated? And why was such a perfectly crafted temple located so far from the heart of the empire? Again, the shroud of time leaves a mystery here that may never be solved.

Yet the temple at Ingapirca may not be unique. The high peaks of the Andes and the sweltering jungles of the Amazon Basin hold their secrets well—and are most reluctant to give them up. Many Incan ruins have been discovered quite by accident, only to be lost once more in the treacherous morass of jungle in which a man can quickly lose his way.

Then too there are the native tribes who to this day will kill any outsider who dares to enter their lands.

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It is strongly suggested that the above titles be given a closer examination, if only for the wealth of maps, diagrams, and truly magnificent photos they contain. □

family? What events led to his or her current profession and how might such events affect future adventures? Next decide on your traits, is your character quick of wit or deadly serious? Is he or she loyal to comrades or likely to bolt in the face of serious danger? Is he or she a leader or a follower? (Certain game system systems, notably Chaosium's *Pendragon*,

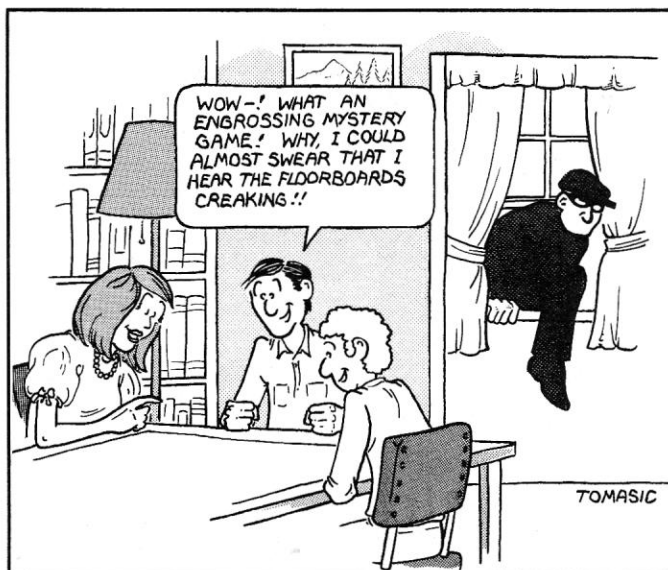
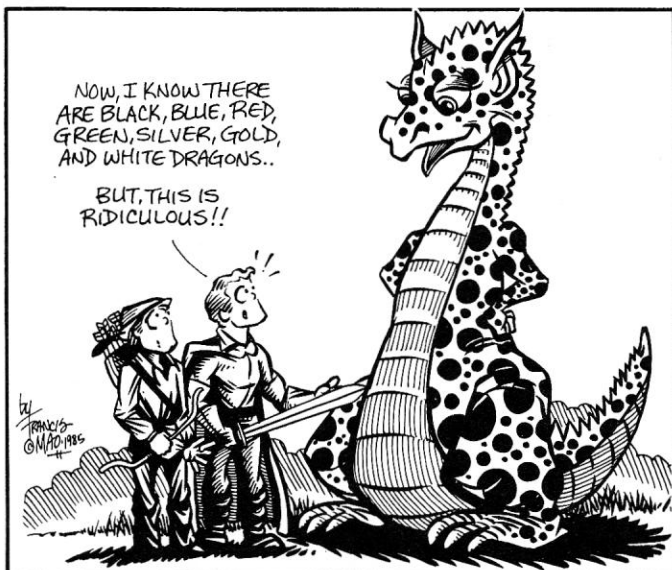
have such questions built in to the system and I've no doubt more will be coming our way.) Now that you know what the character is like, add Quirks and Catchphrases. Perhaps your character rubs his or her nose when thinking or always cries "To the death, spawn of a syphilitic camel!" when entering battle. Once you've added such touches, play them as often as possible. Rub your nose, shout your battle cry, that's the fun of it. And don't forget your traits either. If you've decided to be a courageous hero, don't leave your comrades to die because

your character might go as well. That's not courage, that's bad characterization.

The final step, Character Growth and Development, depends a lot on the gamemaster as well as the players. A good gamemaster will build stories around the player-characters enabling them to grow and change. Part of this process is making players feel that they occupy a real role in a real continuing story, set in a very real world. To do this the gamemaster must emphasize not only what is happening at the moment, but also

the implications of that action in the future and to the campaign world in general. Fellow players can also add to individual growth as they too develop their characters, causing early relationships between characters to change. As a player, be aware of this and encourage it. It greatly enhances the quality of play and keeps things fresh.

Okay, that ends this issue's seminar. Hope it spurs some thought—and some letters!!! Until next time, keep those dice rolling! Adios from Tinseltown. □



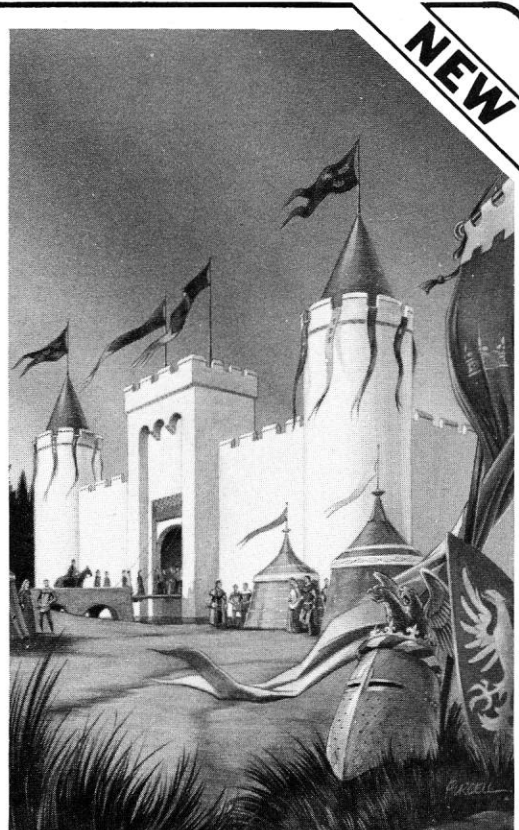
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A Cthulhu Mythos Story

DAGON MANOR

Illustrated by James E. Warhola



By Robert E. Howard & C.J. Henderson

WHEN I lie dying, I will remember my first view of Dagon Manor, the accursed. A cold grey sky arched above it where it loomed in the lonely desolation of the fens. Behind its sullen dark bulk the somber crimson of the sunset throbbed upon the foothills.

On all sides the moors sloped away, dim and drear, the long sere grass ripping under a chill wind. And as far as we could see, there was no other sign of human habitation—only that somber unlighted house rearing stark against the cold solitude.

Conrad shivered involuntarily.

"What a desolate waste! Why should the man choose such an unholy spot for his habitation?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"You should know Tavarel of old, Conrad. He was always a morose, taciturn soul, something of the recluse, something of the misanthrope, something of the mystic. This dreary and lonely setting is just such as would appeal to him, since his heritage from his uncle has made him financially able to carry out his wildest whims. Look!"

A light had sprung up in the silent house.

"Let's go in."

The heavy, old-fashioned knocker resounded spectrally throughout the house. The heavy oaken door opened, and a familiar figure was framed in the dim light from within the great cavernous hall. The fellow was Ketric, Tavarel's single servant, a gaunt, silent cadaverous man whose past not even Tavarel knew. I never liked the fellow. There was something about his bare, high skull, his cold light eyes and thin hooded nose which was unpleasantly reminiscent of a vulture or some foul bird of prey. And I knew Conrad shared this feeling.

Suddenly, I was again filled with the dread that had settled in me on our way to Tavarel's that evening. We had been hard pressed to find someone to take us from the main village to our host's estate. The only driver with heart enough to transport us was a lumbering, superstitious oaf whose courage was half bluster and half alcohol.

He had whipped his sullen nags throughout the trip, spurring them with curse and lash, until finally in their mad dash through the black night they bounced the fool's antique buggy one time too many. Conrad and I had been forced to walk the last pair of miles to Tavarel's, listening to the carriage man's foul curses behind us in the distance. His raging screeches haunted us for half of our march, filling me with a most irrational dread. Now, the sight of Ketric before me flushed my body with that same terror.

We had seen him last in Conrad's home, when he had "accidentally" struck his master's mutual friend, and ours, John O'Donnel, a near-crushing blow with an antique flint mallet. O'Donnel had been quiet, near to death, after the blow, until he bolted upright and made to strangle Ketric. He would have succeeded as well, if the entire assembly had not been there to pull them apart. At the time, amid the pandemonium, I had not noted Ketric's look as unusual. He wore the same look now, though, and it chilled me through my soul like a look in a demon mirror.

Half-stumbling, I acknowledged the manservant, gripping my irrational fears and making bid to enter. Conrad followed close. None of us had seen Tavarel since he had left for England the year before to claim his inheritance. Now, we were inside the oppressive bulk, being ushered into its new lord's presence. Ketric moved us into the main foyer, asking for our coats and wraps. He indicated a heavy, dark wood door, "All the others are here."

With that, he turned away, moving to some room hidden from our view. Grasping the door handle, I pulled, allowing Conrad and myself to join a gathering quite well known to us. Tavarel, sitting at the head of a long oaken table, stood and bellowed, "Conrad! Kirowan! About time. The hour is almost high—what happened to the pair of you? No matter, though; no time now. Best now you take to the bar and fetch yourselves a stout bracer!"

Waving his hands over the assembly, he urged, "Best we all find a fresh broth to warm our courage with."

Heeding our host's advice, those around the table advanced toward us and the bar beyond. Clemants joined us first, claiming our company from the others by sweeping us forward with a shove at each of our backs. Like many another artist, his fierce struggles with poverty in his youth had lined his face beyond his years. He was a tall, lean man, usually silent to the point of taciturnity. That night was different, though.

"Well," he asked, "are you ready for this evening's adventure?"

As I poured myself a brandy, I confessed, "In all truth, neither Conrad nor I really know what is behind all this."

Clemants turned to Harris and Singer

next to him at the bar. Singer confirmed, "Nor do any here, save our host and his serving man, apparently. I think Tavarel has relied on our own driving curiosities to drag us here to his doorstep."

"And who wouldn't have been curious with a message such as yours to greet us in the afternoon mail?" The speaker was O'Donnel. He was always the quickest to act amongst us. Standing from the table, he spoke evenly, but with a tone which meant his patience had ended. He pointed his finger at Tavarel.

"We are all of us, I am sure, tired of waiting. You've put us off all evening, saying you wanted to await Conrad and Kirowan's arrival before you explained your message. Well, they're here. Forget drinks and your promised dinner, and the cigars and brandy to follow."

Reaching inside his jacket pocket, O'Donnel pulled forth a telegram I was sure was a mate to the ones Conrad and I had received. "You brought us here with these words,

*October, thirty-first—
I shall slide the bit in
God's mouth. Join me.
Tavarel*

"Now I think you had better explain them."

Tavarel spread his large palms apart, gesturing acquiescence. Looking from one of our faces to another, he could see we all shared O'Donnel's enthusiasm to learn why we had gathered. Tavarel motioned us to the table, asking us to take seats. With strong drink in hand, Conrad and I joined the others as our host began his story.

"A number of people we have known, or known of, have lost their lives due to something none of us here has quite understood. Joseph Roelocke and John Grimlan were two. Conrad, your brother's 'suicide' was another. Hah, suicide, indeed. We all know better than that."

Tavarel was correct. James Conrad had faced something nightmarish, and there was no doubt he had been shaken by it. I had been the only one of us in contact with James at the time of his death. He had been troubled; at moments he could appear nearly mad, but he was maddened with anger and shame. What had happened to him in that house in old Dutchtown, I would never be able to say, but I do know he returned to it to destroy it, not himself. The fact his body had been found in the charred ruins proved suicide only to the local mayor and his sleepy, fearful council, no one else. Tavarel continued;

"Justin Geoffrey, that poor lunatic, he committed suicide—driven to it by the sight of a delirious dimension beyond ours. Geoffrey, like Conrad's brother, was given a glimpse of another world, an insane plane past logic or science or any other discipline we might choose to wrap ourselves within, and the sight of it made the crude normalities of our everyday existence too dry and laughable to bear."

Tavarel stood then, towering over the end of the table like some long lost Celtic war chief. His eyes shone with a red hue gluing us to his every word. Pointing down the table past us all, through the doorway beyond, down through the floors, he told us, "In this place left in my care by great goddess Chance, there is a doorway to that other place; beneath us is a chamber which acts as a veil between our sphere of life and that other."

"Tonight, for those willing, there is a chance to tear back that veil. A chance to remove the barrier and for once allow men prepared to act to capture and slay whatever it is beyond, which has come here one time too many."

We all sat in shallow quiet, none daring to stir. Conrad and I had seen the demon-thing Tavarel spoke of when it had carried John Grimlan back beyond its dimensional drappings. We watched, frozen in horror as flames turned Grimlan's home into a crimson inferno with appalling swiftness. Our eyes did not seek the licking tongues consuming his mansion, however. We stared instead at a great mass swirling in the sky over us. A gigantic black shadow, like a monstrous bat hovered above the holocaust. From its dark clutch, a small white thing dangled limply; that the thing was John Grimlan neither Conrad nor I had ever doubted.

Conrad stared at me, and I knew that night was before his eyes. It had flashed into his brain at Tavarel's mention of Grimlan as had another night into O'Donnel's when our host had spoken the name of Joseph Roelocke.

I was with O'Donnel when the same kind of monstrous shadow claimed Roelocke, blotting him out in one brain-shattering instant. I took O'Donnel's arm and we fled the accursed chamber, blind with horror.

Looking at O'Donnel's face now, though, looking from it to Conrad's, to Clemants's, to Tavarel's, to Beardsley's and the others', I wondered if our host was not right, and that maybe it was indeed finally the time to act. It was only the matter of a few moments' discussion to discover that all our party felt the same.

Tavarel stood in the glow of the fire-

place, shards of light glancing off his back. Though older by far than any present, his form radiated assurance and confidence to the rest of us. He was cut from the same cloth as O'Donnel; despite his age he was a fighting man, rough chopped from a solid block of muscle and determination that refused to acknowledge fear or defeat. He smiled at our acceptance of his mad defiance. And mad it was, for without scarcely a thought, the seven of us had determined to throw in with our old friend, determined to aid him in his attempt to destroy the thing which had so casually trampled through all our lives.

At Tavarel's order, we headed for the doorway, following him like school-boys promised their first view of a lion. We were excited and yet apprehensive, for we knew the beast in question might easily reach out from its confines and snare us all for a savage lunch.

Our host led us to the stairway descending to the manor's subterranean levels. Electric lantern in hand, Tavarel led the way into the infinite darkness stretching before us down the massive stone stairs. We stumbled along in single file, feeling the deep cold of the walls as we fingered our way through the descent. Although the stairway was a short one, the darkness combined with our purpose to strike us all with dread. Even after Tavarel brought the electric lights into being, none of us spoke, or expected any other to speak.

We stared about the massive sub-room, taking its contents in at a glance. The only permanent fixture was a massive oil heater. Sitting in the corner, it made its own quiet noises, churning steam through the manor. Other than the furnace, however, the huge chamber was filled with nothing but war materials. Tavarel explained the stores as provisions left behind after the Great War.

Dagon Manor had been used as a storage center, the army reluctant to build a supply dump in such a remote outpost. Tavarel's uncle had volunteered the premises to the military, who had bunked fifty men in his halls and filled his cellar with powder, shells, machine oil, and fuel. That the leaving of such supplies years after the war seemed quite unorthodox, Tavarel agreed most vigorously. He said the enlisted men stationed in his home had reported many disturbing feelings and emotions, in both rumor and reports. There had been more than one argument amongst the soldiers that ended in blood-letting, and one murder which had never been solved.

The army abandoned the post as quickly as they could at the war's end, but no one had yet come to cart out the explosives, even though Tavarel's uncle had written about it more than once. It was not this our host wanted us to see, though. Leading us through the twisting maze of barrels, sacks, and crates, Tavarel brought us to a large gash in the flagstones of the sub-chamber's floor.

Peering in, one could see a slope of packed dirt, falling away into blackness. Tavarel told us, "Ketric discovered this hole some months ago. Apparently the flooring gave out one day and collapsed into the tunnel you can see below. That the manor is built atop these catacombs there is no record, at least not one I have been able to uncover. But they are here, and they are most extensive. Ketric and I have explored them, finding much that beggars description, and more which begs not to be mentioned. We also discovered the room to which I shall now take you."

So saying, our host grabbed hold of a support rope, previously strung and anchored, and began making his way to the floor of the tunnel below. One by one we followed, our nerves reaching out into the pitch around us, searching for the source of the fear sneaking its way into our hearts.

As O'Donnel hit the floor, Tavarel had already powered the set of electric lights strung down the center of the cavern roof. "Had workmen put them in—damn cowards—charged me five times their worth, half the sluggards carrying guns and clubs the whole time, the other half warding bags and crucifixes, as if any of that could have stopped what was giving them the willies."

Tavarel spoke as he led us deeper into the tunnels. He estimated the eldritch age of the moss-clung walls around us, telling us the meaning of many of the hieroglyphs covering them. The chill of the subterranean passage crept into everyone, setting arms to slapping and teeth to chattering up and down our line. Before anyone made to complain, however, we arrived at our destination.

We came into a huge, half-natural, half-tooled cavern. At once one could see inhuman rites of an unexplainable nature had been performed within it. Bones, human and animal, were swept back against the walls, hundreds upon hundreds of varied skeletal pieces all jammed one into the other, creating a circle of bone around the center of the room nearly knee high. Tavarel explained that no time had existed in which to remove the bones. His work-

men had been troublesome enough over clearing as much area as they did; no amount of money or threats were able to convince them to remove the debris altogether.

But, more startling, more spell-binding than the bones themselves, were the object they had surrounded. An altar, for it could be no other thing, planted meanly in the center of the cavern, drew our eyes like an evening campfire on the desert. It was a beastly thing of dark origin; carved from a frightening, solid piece of red and black marbled rock, it beckoned to us all.

Even now I find it hard to put into words, but the altar was possessed of a physical presence, much beyond its mere base structure as a block of stone. Its surface gleamed as we approached in a way only describable as hungrily. The ground to all sides of it were a much darker shade than that on which we stood—a condition we could only attribute to its having been soaked in the blood of countless victims.

Tavarel's workmen had cut the haunting sight off from the rest of the cavern with a series of thickly wrought iron rods sunk several yards into the ground. These restraints extended upward into the ceiling, all of them seemingly as well-secured into place. In the center of the wall of bars stood open a reinforced door which Tavarel headed for, beckoning to us to follow.

The nagging dread I had been feeling continued to cling to me as I stepped through the entrance, coming closer to the altar. The dampness of the cavern added to it, drawing my eyes to the puddles of condensation smearing the walls and ceiling. At our feet, we saw that the darkness around the altar was indeed no one would ever know how many centuries' worth of blood, sponged up by the ground in such quantities that at some time in the past it must have pooled in the cavern, leaving staining on the walls nearly a foot in height.

It was that last image of brute violence which finally fired our anger. On this night, the thing that had feasted on the emotions and sanity and flesh of humanity for far too many eons, sluffing back and forth beyond the drapes of reality, dragging its bloated, evil frame with it would be within our grasp. Somehow, without words between us, we knew all assembled meant to put an end to such a routine, even though it might mean all our deaths.

Tavarel's voice boomed behind us, listing the means he meant for us to use in the destruction of our foe. Elec-

tricity had been harnessed for the purpose, as had many hundreds of gallons of a liquid poison—a concentrated form of death which had turned men to leather during the Great War, leaving their dried corpses behind like rotted apples on the floor of some forgotten orchard. He pointed out the delivery points of each of our weapons, showing how each blow would be administered.

It was all quite clever, and there was not a man among us who was not sure of our friend's plan's chances for success. As we prepared to exit Tavarel's ingenious chamber, however, we discovered other forces had been planning as well.

On crossing back to the doorway through the bars, we found it closed, ourselves locked within. Tavarel struggled with the door furiously, throwing all the strength of his old but broad shoulders to the task. We all crowded around, trying to reach the lock in front, pushing, pounding, hammering at the bars with a fury that went beyond expedience. Sudden laughter broke our attention. Looking up beyond the grill, we saw Tavarel's servant leading a host of others.

"Ketric! Explain yourself."

Grinning like an animate skull, the man stood before us looking as a sight from a forgotten time. Gone were the pinched black suit, white shirt and small, servitor's dark bow tie. Now his gangly reed figure stood half-naked in a costume scarce imaginable.

All his body was awash in thick muddy paints—reds and greens and blacks smeared in noxious patterns over his limbs and chest and face. He wore a loin cloth made of rodent pelts, his shoulders and arms adrape in a tangle of snake skins which flapped and rustled as he walked. Those behind him were costumed in equally bizarre fashion. Where they might have come from, we had no idea, for Tavarel had always supposed himself alone in the manor with his servant.

Stepping forward, Ketric pointed a long nailed finger at us, his yellow vulture's visage twisted with loathing. "Fools spawned of fools and a witless faith in only what you can explain. My people have fed your like to the protector since before a time we can remember. While you have admired your most modern toys, I have set the workings in motion to call forth That Which Is To Come to consume you all!"

We stood, staring hopelessly, frozen immobile by our seeming fate. "This place was found by no cave-in," Ketric sneered at Tavarel. "I indentured myself to you twenty years ago because

we knew this day would come. We arranged your uncle's death so this land would be in your hands at the proper time—and thus ours.

"But—the time grows nigh—pray to your white god, children, for now, we pray to ours!"

And then, Ketric clapped his hands, spurring his followers into action. As a group, they took what seemed assigned places, moving with an attractive and yet repugnant precision which showed more than simple practice. All the crowd, men and women, gave off a feel of sensual brutishness. Several of them set a tune with drums and pipes, a terrifying and repelling music which sent a continual beat of madness throughout the cavern.

The rhythm of the swaying bodies grew faster. Ketric's followers danced with lashing hair and blazing eyes, spinning dizzily on their toes, leaping about the chamber, every moment building their fever to a greater height.

Oddly, O'Donnel seemed nearly uninterested. Calmly and methodically, he tore at his jacket lining, pulling the bunched cotton from within. Quietly he handed some to each of us, indicating that we should stuff it into our ears as he had done. I might have thought him mad as those beyond the bars, had not his demeanor suggested that he was instead waiting for something I simply could not imagine. While we complied with his instructions, O'Donnel eyed our captors continually, gauging the lengths of their madness until finally deciding it was time to act.

Instantly it was made clear to me—a man much traveled in the western reaches of America, O'Donnel never went anywhere unarmed. Always suspicious of the worst, mayhap more so after Tavarel's telegrams, he had secreted a revolver beneath his jacket. Distracted by their ritual, our foes did not notice as he suddenly crossed to the doorway. Packing his jacket against the lock, he reduced it to scrap with five rapid but muffled blasts!

In truth, the noise was scarce heard over the mad dance in the cavern beyond. Ketric's followers had taken to flailing themselves—gyrating beyond control, frothing spittle mixed with blood bubbling from their lips and draining from their noses. Stepping out into the open between two poles of electric lights, O'Donnel raised his revolver, growling, "One for you, devil!"

The bullet sang across the chamber, cutting the red fogged air, tearing into Ketric's throat. Even through our stuffed ears, the noise was hellish. The cultists' frenzied dance ceased as most

grabbed for their ears in pain. Crimson pulsed free in blowing arcs from Ketric, splashing across the heights on which he stood, and those below him. Clutching his neck, he held fast his throbbing jugular, clamping back the rebellious blood, shouting at us,

"Too late, Mr. O'Donnel—a grand effort, but too late! For now, nothing can stop the entrance to our world by Gol-Goroth—the forgotten Old One!"

So screeching, Ketric raised his hands to the cavern roof, his released blood throbbing out over all the scene as his followers moved toward us. Rapidly fitting new shells into his revolver, O'Donnel cautioned, "Careful, they're trying to herd us back into the cage."

Tavarel sneered. Stooping to pull a thick, wicked looking jawbone from the heap surrounding us, he hefted it grimly, stepping forward in measured steps.

"Let them try."

So speaking, he feigned and swung, tearing the face away from the closest of the painted devils. Gory tendrils of flesh slid free, but the victim's companions pushed him aside and swarmed forward. O'Donnel again emptied his weapon, the accompanying reverberations doing as much damage to the cultists as the bullets.

We all lay into them then, fighting with fist and bone, fear and desperation driving us into a berserk animation which pushed our foe men back to regroup.

Singer was already done, his thinly haired head rent open and his eyes staring in futile helplessness. Clemants had busied himself lashing a length of electrical cable about the doorway bars, trying to once again secure the cell. As his head had been bent to its work, so had ours, but now that the cultists had fled back a space, several of us had turned to look about the chamber. It was Conrad that saw it first.

"Kirowan!"

His scream was the desperation of the walking dead—a pierce that rent brain and soul like flame through gauze. We whirled at the sound, and saw as he saw, and were taken with the same madness.

Within the chamber, oozing upon the altar like some beached sea creature, lay Gol-Goroth, a sight of such horrible nature that we were fixed like birds before a snake. Its call sang to us, and we listened, each of us seeing its monstrous bulk in our own way.

To some, it appeared as a large, loathsome toad-shape, a webbed bloated sack of moving green which retched upon the block of stone, filling the chamber with noxious sounds.

To others it was crab-like in nature, possessed of claws and hooves at the same time, all of it running with long strands of red jellied pus, hanging from it loosely.

No matter what its appearance, however, all stood mute and watched as it reached out from its perch on the altar, and then sent its forward appendages through the bars to wrap around Harris. It plucked him forward, smashing him against the bars, pulling him through in pieces, cramming him into its puckered maw a piece at a time.

The sight of such horror snapped something in Tavarel. Shaking his head, he turned to his side and slapped Conrad mightily across the face, spinning him from the sight in the cage. Conrad in turn freed Clemants as Tavarel moved to myself.

O'Donnel, twisting himself free, brought Beardsley around. Shaken, the group of us conferred quickly. The cultists had all fallen to their knees, their faces buried in the ground. They had no notion of what was happening, all of their satisfied attention directed to the noises coming from beyond the bars. Silently, Tavarel waved us to follow him.

Mounting the ancient carved stone stairs which led upward to his devices, Tavarel plucked up the dull-eyed remains of Ketric which blocked our path. Gripping the corpse in both hands, he hurled it from the ledge into the again approaching tendrils of the obscenity below. Gol-Goroth greedily closed on the limp form, whipping it through the air, breaking its bones to pull it between the bars.

As we all attained the uppermost ledge, O'Donnel cautioned, "Hurry up. That thing's nearly done with its ju-ju boss."

Tavarel snapped open the first restraint on a large tin. Cursing to himself, he whispered, "Then grab hold and get one of these open before it comes looking for more of us."

O'Donnel and Conrad immediately began to work on another while I assisted Tavarel with the one he had started. Beardsley worked to keep Clemants quiet. The sight of Gol-Goroth had been beyond the artist, twisting his notions of reality too severely for him to be able to function. His hair had gone shock white, standing away from his head in sweat-dripping strands like a bizarre crown. The rest of us tore furiously at the catches of the drums, hurrying to open them as Conrad shuddered, "Damn, we're too late!"

Again the snaking tentacled claws were reaching forward. At Conrad's

shout, however, several of the cultists looked up, spotting us on the ledge. Forgetting about their god for a moment, they stood, several reaching for their bludgeons. Doing so brought them within Gol-Goroth's red-rimmed sight, though, and they were snatched up like handfuls of chestnuts.

Their bleats of terror attracted their fellows, however, and suddenly, the entire chamber was shot through with screaming echoes. Before anything could be done to prevent it, a dozen or so of the swarthy painted figures began mounting the stairs. Beardsley dragged Clemants upward out of their range, even as O'Donnel and Conrad rolled their half-opened tin to the edge of the stair and then tipped it over. The heavy drum bounced once and then tore open, splashing the ascending cultists with a force which sent them sliding away.

Instantly those covered with the freed liquid tore at their skin, howling with a pain beyond reason. And then, without warning, the seeking arms caught hold of several of the blinded cultists, dragging them toward the bloody, flesh-slimed bars. With no concern, or even understanding, Gol-Goroth happily slammed its captives to death against the bars and again began its process of dragging forth the pieces it desired.

Scarce attention could be paid it, however, as more of the howling cultists came at us. Tavarel rolled our tin forward, sending them scattering again, the death within washing over the floor of the chamber. O'Donnel took aim and fired, cutting down several more, their bodies falling and twitching in the burning moistness soaking into the dirt floor.

And then, maybe in reaction to the noise, or maybe in response to some long forgotten urging, Gol-Goroth slid from its perch and moved forward. We tore at the remaining tins, opening and emptying them as quickly as possible.

Reaching the cell wall, the green bulk pondered it dully, and then, began moving against it, shoving with an impossible strength. Great bulges of green flesh squirmed through the bars, stretching tight from the pressure. Tavarel shouted, "Judas priest! Quickly, topple all the drums. Hurry!"

We rolled the remaining tins over the edge, listening to them splash open as they hit the rocks below. The cultists had all fled the chamber screaming by this point, their nightmarish howls long gone and forgotten. As the air began to thicken from the released poison, Tavarel flung gas masks at us, yelling instructions as to their proper fit. After getting his own on, Beardsley

turned to struggle one onto Clemants, but it was too late.

The artist had descended the stairs, approaching Gol-Goroth's cage. Already the bars had begun to bend, powder from the stone ceiling grinding free from the pressure. Ignoring the seering hiss which came each time his shoes came in contact with the thin pool of liquid we had spilled over all the cavern, he reached forward, grabbing the end of the electrical cable he had threaded through the bars.

As he turned toward the generator, Beardsley made to cry out, but Tavel stopped him. "It's the only way. We can't help Clemants now, but he might be able to help us." Our old friend looked down at Clemants as he began wiring the connections to the generator in the corner, and then said, "Quickly, we'd best be out of the chamber before he finishes."

Scrambling down the stairs, we dashed for the exit, trying not to watch the ever-bending bars, or the obscene, green shape staggering them. Several of the thick rods had already buckled, hanging loosely from the ceiling and jutting from the floor like the splintered fangs of some ancient nightmare.

We reached the edge of the pool, getting well back into the tunnel from which we first emerged when Clemants's voice reached us.

"Now thing—now, we'll see." Without tremble or quiver, his normally thin voice echoed strongly. "Come, thing. Feast on me!"

Compelled by a curiosity beyond reason, I looked back into the cavern. There I could see Tavel's cage now completely shattered, and beyond, Clemants standing defiantly in the poison pool, wrapped in coil from the generator. In each hand he held a sparking live wire. As he taunted the god-thing before him, he stared wide-eyed, the slightest trace of foam brewing past his lips. Blood-smeared extensions grabbed out for him. Smiling, Clemants dropped the wires into the poison, setting the cavern crackling in blue light.

Gol-Goroth made to drop its captive, but could not. Clemants fried away before my eyes, his body juicing into flame and cinders. Current flew through the shambler's great bulk, the lashing flying lengths of it thrashing wildly. A dark, burning stench filled the chamber and tunnel, followed by a vomitous billow of gagging black clouds.

A ponderous blinding holler, a noise beyond human reckoning thundered around and through us. Gol-Goroth screamed in a killing, murderous throttle of tones which sent us all

stumbling through the tunnel like deer in a forest fire. It was the uncomprehending wail of despair in agony—the bleeding shriek of madness incarnate, inarticulate and brutal.

We were assailed by smoke and stench and noise in quantities to make a stranger to the types of abnormalities we had known crumple to a mind-shattering death. How we survived the never-ending pain of the thing we had sought to destroy I cannot say. When I finally realized that its screams had ended, I knew they had been done for some time.

Smoke still hung in the tunnel, reeking of the smell of Gol-Goroth's burnt flesh, and its pain. I staggered to my feet, throwing my arm about Conrad, dragging him to his feet. O'Donnel did the same for Tavel, helping the older man to a place against the wall. Beardsley pulled himself up, mumbling beneath his breath about things I could not hear.

The tunnel lights, powered from the mansion above, were still working, but dimmed by the smoke in the tunnel. Walking back to the mouth of the



chamber, Beardsley peered in to view the remains of our other-dimensional foe. It was the last thing he was destined to ever do.

Without warning, Gol-Goroth's still burning tentacles whipped into view, crushing the life from our friend instantly. The sound of his breaking bones echoed rudely, chasing and passing us in the halls as we stumbled blindly in terror from the thing behind us.

We ran without plan or thought, fleeing with the insane frenzy of fish in a net. We bounced from the walls, tearing our hands and faces, blood sluicing from our wounds, trailing behind us. Gol-Goroth followed.

The thing's noise gnawed at us, clutching through the tunnel at our heels. Through the gas masks, through the wadding in our ears, still we gagged with nausea at the smell and sound of the beast. Strangely, even as we ran, a small pool of logic within the storm-tossed workings of my mind wondered at how our pursuer could still live.

It had soaked into itself hundreds of gallons of Tavel's poison; it had swal-

lowed the fury of the heavens, charred inside and out until the air was heavy with the stink of its burning flesh, but still it came. Dogging us with an unfazed power, it came oozing through the halls behind us, snorting its mind-twisting static at us as if to ridicule our efforts.

Blind in the smoking insanity of the tunnel, I stumbled on behind the vague form of Tavel, wondering at what we had done. I was sure the others had the same thought as I; would Gol-Goroth track us upward into the mansion—into the outside world? Had we, in our attempt to rid the world of this occasional nightmare, brought it permanently to our plane?

I shuddered with the thought, realizing in that moment that there was nothing left for us to do. In truth, I near gave up hope then, for I had come to believe that nothing of man's science could injure, or even turn, the rampaging bulk at our heels.

And then, suddenly, the exit to the surface loomed before me. O'Donnel was already scrambling up into the manor cellar, followed haltingly by a dazed Tavel. Conrad and I stumbled to the support rope and began dragging ourselves to the surface. Clambering up through the shattered flagstones, I saw O'Donnel, smashing open numerous of the packing crates which sat about the chamber.

"Take Tavel upstairs—quickly!!" he roared, tearing free his gas mask, "We've one last chance to halt this damned thing, and I've the mind to take it."

Offers on our part to assist him were met with mad snarls. O'Donnel screamed at us to go, and then turned his back on us. Breaking the old abandoned war crates apart, he scattered blasting powder about himself in all directions, his black mane whipping arcs of sweat into the air with every swing.

Afraid to interfere with his plan, aware that the madness of our ordeal had affected us all, I took Conrad by the tattered edge of his sleeve and pulled him to where Tavel lay, heaving great breaths in and out. Each taking an arm over our shoulders, Conrad and I lifted our friend to his feet, practically dragging him up the stairs.

We staggered up and out into the main hall, all the three of us carrying the others. Upon reaching the foyer, though, I told my comrades, "Keep going. Outside. Get away."

They sought to restrain me, but I escaped their grasp and plunged back into the house—my brain refusing to surrender one more human being to the monstrosity below without a price.

Whatever O'Donnel's plan, he would not face Gol-Goroth alone.

Upon reaching the stairs to the cellar, however, I found he had no intentions of facing the thing at all. His rational, fighting instinct had taken over, cutting through the shock and insanity of what we had seen to force him to proper action. As I started down the stairs, I found him starting upward, dragging a large burlap of blasting powder behind him. Shaking the last of it free, I watched him reach into his pocket and pull forth a small match case.

Before he could strike one, though, he looked forward into the cellar, and suddenly he froze. Without thinking I knew Gol-Goroth had ascended from the tunnel.

Knowing O'Donnel in the thing's power, I dashed back down the dark stairwell, somehow shoving aside my fear, realizing only that the world's one chance was to be weighed by my actions. Grabbing my friend's arm, I swung him away from the cellar and then struck him as sound an open-hand blow as I might, staggering him back a step. As his eyes began to blink, I shouted.

"Don't look at it—don't even think, O'Donnel! Just do it!"

Reacting from instinct, he struck the match still frozen in his hand and then dropped it into the heap of powder mounded at the base of the stair. Instantly the dooway filled with the harsh black of hissing powder sputter. The obscene presence of Gol-Goroth disappeared from view as the blanket of explosive grains ignited, flame racing throughout the cellar. O'Donnel and I reeled headily up the stairs, pulling and pushing each other as we went.

As we topped the landing, we could hear the thing's form scrapping at the stairwell, seeking to rise behind us. Giddy with desperation, the pair of us ran for the front door; O'Donnel's hand took the knob of it as the first explosions rang free.

We were thrown to our knees—then our faces. Plaster sprang from the walls; the chandeliers came crashing. Smoke curled through the floorboards. Dragging each other up, we pushed open the doors, a rush of wind from outside beckoning the flames beneath us upward into the walls.

We hurried onto the porch, able to see Conrad and Tavel awaiting us in the distance. We stumbled for the stairs, but then, even as safety called to the fore, some mad impulse caught me, damning me to stop and look backward into the burning reek of Dagon Manor.

More explosions rocked the mansion,

but they could not turn me from the dragging horror of Gol-Goroth, covered in dark slag and ruin, moving through the hanging, serpentine billows of smoke toward me. Noxious tentacles flung themselves forward, and I felt my doom nearing, only then to be plucked from such an end by the fruition of O'Donnel's plan. Before the elder beast could enfold me unto its being, suddenly the floor buckled beneath it, a rushing grey scorch of fiery destruction consuming the horrific terror as it fell back to the cellar below.

Taking the chance offered, I flung myself from the porch, hitting the fen beyond with an impact which shattered ribs, but saved the rest of me. For, in that instant, the greater part of the explosives which lay beneath Dagon Manor shattered the mansion's massive boiler, cutting the night with an explosion of untold force. All of us were thrown like so many leaves in a gale across the carpet of grasses toward the road beyond.

Flaming board and glass showered us; brick and stone sent skyward as if by cannon rained on the countryside, some bits coming down more than a mile away. Flame raged across the sergrass, wildly shot by the force of the main explosion, only to quickly die against the fall soak of the fens.

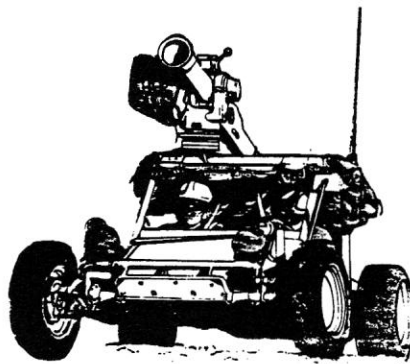
Little trace was found of our friends' remains. Their bodies perished in the holocaust, as did those of Ketric and his followers, and that of their god. Gol-Goroth did not return to its foul altar, nor did it live through the night. Bits and pieces of it were discovered over the days that followed. Where it fell, life died out. Ponds were poisoned, fields rendered barren—but the thing was no more, and would never come again.

From our recovery beds, Tavel and I learned that O'Donnel and Conrad had tracked down all the torn scraps of Gol-Goroth and consigned them to the pyre.

In the end we had proved to be nothing more than men, and Gol-Goroth nothing more than beast. At times, delirious in morphine dreams, I would question whether our struggle and the loss of life resultant was worth our efforts. In more rational moments, however, I would remember the heaps of human bones surrounding the thing's altar, the thousands of crushed and bloodied breastbones and skulls of women and child, and the dark red stain to the yards of ground we stood upon, then the answer comes much clearer.

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—Call of Cthulhu (Chaosium)
—Challengers (Ragnarok)
—Conan (TSR)
—Danger International (Hero)
—Daredevils (FGU)
—DC Heroes (Mayfair)

—Doctor Who RPG (FASA)
—Element Masters (Escape Ventures)
—Elfquest (Chaosium)
—Fantasy Hero (Hero)
—Flashing Blades (FGU)
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—Fringeworthy (Tri Tac)
—Gangster! (FGU)
—Goldern Heroes (Games Workshop)
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—Heroes Unlimited (Palladium)
—Jorune (Skyrealms)
—Land of the Rising Sun (FGU)
—Lands Of Adventure (FGU)

—Merc (FGU)
—Midnight at the Well of Souls (TAG)
—Other Suns (FGU)
—Palladium Role-Playing Game
—Pendragon (Chaosium)
—Privateers & Gentlemen (FGU)
—Psi World (FGU)
—RuneQuest (AH)
—Sandman (Pacesetter)
—Space Master (ICE)
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—World Action & Adventure (Kinney)
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—Harn (Columbia)
—Ivinia (Columbia)
—Justice Machine (Palladium)
—K'kree (GDW)
—The Klingons (FASA)
—Lands Of Mystery (Hero)
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—The Lexicon (Bard)
—Masks Of Nyarlathotep (Chaosium)
—Old Ones (Palladium)
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—Pendragon Campaign (Chaosium)
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—Unearthed Arcana (TSR)
—Vampires (Pacesetter)
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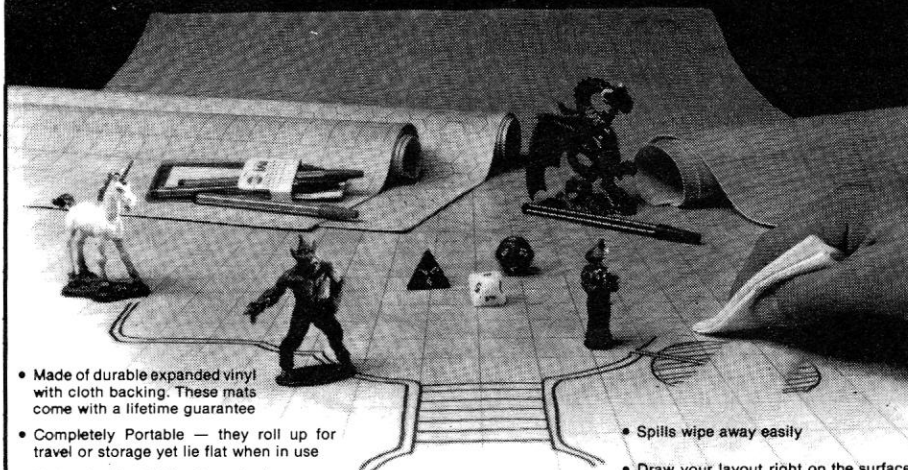
SELECTED MODULES

—Aliens (Pacesetter)
—Aslan (GDW)
—Beltstrike (GDW)
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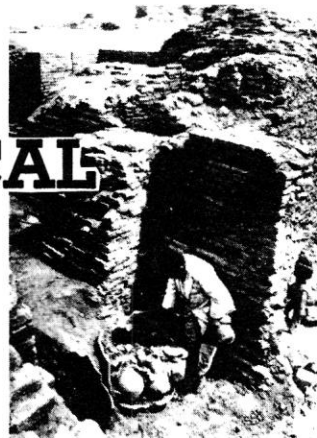
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KEEPING CTHULHU ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITIONS

By Thomas M. Holsinger



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITIONS are often involved in *Call Of Cthulhu* scenarios. Background information about them would be helpful to keepers and is provided here, plus examples of keeper-character sponsors and even participants.

The archaeological profession even during this period is fairly bureaucratic and based in the great universities. Government permits are required in most areas of the world. The British and French rigorously enforce their rules and their empires cover most of the world. Expeditions to independent nations without strong governments are less likely to have trouble with the authorities and more likely to have trouble with natives and bandits. Egypt has its own university, archaeology professors and graduate students plus trained government officers who regulate expeditions.

Digging on sites requires substantial preparation and is seasonal due chiefly to transportation problems before the widespread use of motor vehicles and aircraft. The off-season consists mostly of indexing previous discoveries and planning the next season's digs. In addition, analyzing findings and writing reports requires several years off for every year of site work.

Large expeditions involve hundreds or thousands of personnel. Medium-sized ones might have 3-8 professors, 2-3 times that number of graduate students, and at least ten native laborers per professor. The native laborers must be highly skilled to excavate by hand without damaging any discoveries. In addition there would be a support staff of teamsters, truck drivers, cooks, guards, and servants.

Keepers may have trouble handling too many keeper-characters so it is recommended that they use small expeditions, e.g., a staff of 3-4 westerners plus 10-20 native laborers and camp personnel. Informal groups with strictly limited aims concerning targets whose location is known could consist of 5-6 investigators and a similar number of native keeper-characters.

The expeditions attached to the great universities might be small if they were

following up one aspect of a site already excavated, or doing exploration or preparation work for a larger expedition later. Independent expeditions would generally be small or informal and explore only sites beneath the notice of the great universities, due to small size, being overlooked or to being attractive only to disreputable theorists. □

FRENCH ARCHAEOLOGIST KERMIT LE GRENOUILLE

Kermit Le Grenouille can be used either as a keeper-character employer/sage in the background or as a participant in play. He usually operates small digs as the only professor with a small western staff, though he is affiliated with the Sorbonne and can be used in larger expeditions. He might also hire investigators for apparent small tasks, just as Lord Ashton-Tate might. Le Grenouille will always be accompanied by his servant and former batman, Hercule Poilou.

Kermit Le Grenouille is the only legitimate child of a French naval officer, who served in Polynesia as a colonial administrator, and a mixed-blood native. His maternal grandfather (and namesake) was a whaling captain from Innsmouth, Mass., who settled in Polynesia. Le Grenouille's maternal grandmother was a Polynesian of suspicious background. He inherited substantial wealth and has a fortune of about \$200,000 in 1920's dollars which produces income of about \$10,000 annually. The Sorbonne finances his work.

Le Grenouille's parents died in a Polynesian epidemic when he was two and he was raised in France by his paternal grandparents, who moved in

Keeper-Characters Archæologists

BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGIST LORD CECIL ASHTON-TATE

Lord Cecil Ashton-Tate is a wealthy Englishman who finances archaeological expeditions concerning the Cthulhu Mythos. He should be kept in the background as a keeper-character employer and sage as *Call Of Cthulhu* investigators are dangerous to be near, to keep him alive for other scenarios.

He had a reputation as a bright young archaeologist but has been ostracized for a mania about unspeakable elder gods which he developed during World War I. He served initially in British Intelligence in the Middle East and transferred to the Royal Flying Corps.

Ashton-Tate continued some of his archaeological investigations during the war and came across a scrap of *Al-Azif* plus a peculiar whistle and a pottery fragment with an odd looking creature painted on it. It seemed to be a magic spell for summoning the creature but he failed to do it right until returning from a moon-lit reconnais-

high social circles. He knows nothing of his American relatives. He was remarkably ugly as a child but was highly intelligent, an excellent athlete and superbly educated in Jesuit institutions. In general, he is a real prince of a character but has always been a loner. Le Grenouille is catnip to the ladies but he is not interested in them, though his manners are almost always gallant. He is quite reticent toward blondes due to a recurring nightmare about one which he can never quite remember.

He was an active officer in the French Navy for a few years, then became an archaeologist. He retained a reserve commission and fought in the Fusiliers Marins (French Marines) during World War I, rising to command a regiment. He is a natural leader and his men adore him. His bearing and personality are such as to command attention, respect, and obedience. Le Grenouille was terribly wounded, suffering a shattered left knee, loss of his left arm above the elbow, and partial loss of vision in his left eye and hearing in his left ear. He has substantial scars on the left side of his face and limbs on his left leg.

He resumed his archaeological career after the war and has an office and residence in Damascus, Syria (a French protectorate). The Arabs respect him

Blackmoor

Campaign Module

For DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

GARBAGE PITS of DESPAIR

Part 1

The Slave RAIDERS

By Dave Arneson

Illustrated by Walter Moore

Map rendering by Tadashi Ehara

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Terrance's Free Company, while returning from a job in Glendower, interrupts an attack on Bathare's Immigrant Train by Slave Raiders. Escorting the survivors to Vestfold, Terrance and his men are offered a commission by the co-Regent Bakula to track down the slavers. Accompanied by a Councillor Marshal, the Marshal's Deputy, Bathare's prospective son-in-law named Arthur, and volunteers from the Free Company, Terrance sets out on his mission to find the raiders and free the prisoners and Bathare's daughter.

It is obvious that the raiders are quite tricky and are aware of Terrance's mission. If there was any doubt about the party being watched, a devastating ambush by the slavers almost destroys the party while Terrance is trying to sneak up on the raider's camp. The raiders then flee southward to the Dragon Hills, having accomplished their mission in the Northern Marches.

The expedition watches the slavers enter what appears to be the lair of the Great Dragon of the Dragon Hills. Suspecting that all is not what it seems,

Terrance has Joey the Hobbit search for another entrance to the cave system. This will avoid what would probably be another ambush. Meanwhile the Slave Raiders emerge into a valley on the other side of the cave entrance and meet with a party of slave buyers from the Temple of the Frog.

The slaves are quickly turned over to the buyers who anxiously load the cargo on a river barge and head back to their monastery in the great swamps. The cause for their haste is the presence of the Great Dragon's garbage pit in the valley. The dragon will wake soon and aside from the stench of the decaying garbage, a Great Dragon will frown upon slavers using her lair for slave trading.

Before the loading can be completed, several of the prisoners escape into the caves through the garbage heaps. Meanwhile in order to rescue the remaining prisoners, other players negotiate the cave system and attempt to intercept the monk's barge before it reaches the main river leading to the great swamp. If they succeed, valuable information can be passed on to the Regents of the Northern Marches and several innocent people saved as well.

DIFFERENT WORLDS
SPECIAL MODULE

TERRANCE'S FREE COMPANY

Terrance of Walworth has been a member of the Company since it was first organized some years ago at the Comeback Inn in Blackmoor. In those days all the men thought about were fighting Orcs and looting dungeons. Nowadays, easy dungeon loot is a thing of the past and the Orcs weren't about to show their pig snouts around here while the Great Svenny still lived. But one must make a living even if the Company's latest employment was quite odd.

Escorting a cargo of gourmet items to a Dragon was indeed a unique venture. It would have been nice if Doffy, the former Captain of the Company, had been more inquisitive about the details of the job. Such as that the giant ants had first to be captured alive and then delivered! Too bad that Doffy had ended up in a tarpit with one of those gourmet ants but then perhaps that was his karma. The Dragon's agent had paid Terrance and the Company well for the ants that had been delivered.

In Terrance's years serving in the Northern Marches, odd events still cropped up with startling frequency. This was indeed a strange land, so peaceful on the surface and yet so dangerous at the same time.

One always sought to avoid trouble whenever possible. You grew older and wiser that way. For example, it was a good decision to have put in a long day's march to get clear of the fog enshrouded fens of Glendower. Moving cross-country to intercept the main trade road to Vestfold had been difficult. This fatigue was nothing compared to the possible trouble of spending another night in these foggy swamps.

The Company was tired but they had just left the last of the fog behind them. Up ahead there must be a large wagon train halted for the night. The aroma of their cooking was heavy in the evening air. Providing such a train with a few additional guards even this close to Vestfold would further augment the Company's purse. Plus the home cooking, after days of iron rations, would boost everyone's morale.

They were close now, for welcoming cries could be heard up ahead where the point man, Long Bill, had entered the woods. The cookfire smoke was getting quite thick.

Composition of Terrance's Free Company

Terrance

10th Level Good Fighter

Strength	12	Dexterity	15
Intelligence	14	Constitution	9
Wisdom	11	Charisma	13
Armor Class	4	Hit Points	47

WEAPONS: dagger +1, shortsword, war hammer (+1 vs. all opponents, additional +1 against undead, permanent spell effect Deceive)

ARMOR: chain mail, shield, helmet

Long Bill Jordan

8th Level Good Fighter

Strength	18	Dexterity	13
Intelligence	8	Constitution	13
Wisdom	3	Charisma	16
Armor Class	4	Hit Points	51

WEAPONS: pole axe (+3 Strength vs. all non-magical opponents, permanent spell effect Defend), short sword, dagger

ARMOR: chain mail, shield, helmet

NOTES: An excellent tracker in wooded or swampy terrain. Has a 90% chance of spotting a trail.

Joey

9th Level Good/Neutral Hobbit/Thief

Strength	10	Dexterity	14
Intelligence	12	Constitution	9
Wisdom	14	Charisma	6
Armor Class	6	Hit Points	38

WEAPON: shortsword, sling (20 stones), dagger

ARMOR: leather, helmet, and shield

Andy the Jack

7th Level Neutral Fighter

Strength	11	Dexterity	16
Intelligence	10	Constitution	15
Wisdom	6	Charisma	11
Armor Class	4	Hit Points	36

WEAPONS: sword, hand axe, dagger, crossbow (40 bolts)

ARMOR: chain mail, shield, helmet

Father Laum

9th Level Lawful Cleric

Strength	14	Dexterity	14
Intelligence	11	Constitution	18
Wisdom	16	Charisma	17
Armor Class	5	Hit Points	46

WEAPONS: +1 mace, wooden club, Amulet of Protection against Evil, five bottles of Holy Water, three Holy Symbols

ARMOR: chain mail, helmet

SPELLS:

First Level: Cure Light Wounds, Resist

Cold, Detect Magic

Second Level: Hold Person, Speak with Animal, Bless

Third Level: Cure Disease, Cure Blindness, Striking

Fourth Level: Cure Serious Wounds, Neutralize Poison

Twelve Warriors

1st to 4th Level (4/1/2/5)

Half wear leather armor and the rest chain mail, each wears a helmet and carries a shield. All are mounted on normal horses. Half of the men have short bows (20 arrows each) and the rest spears. All have one or two daggers and a sword

General Equipment

Iron rations for one week, 200 extra arrows, 250' of rope, 48 torches, 2 lanterns, 4 flasks of oil, 20 backpacks, 24 small sacks, 18 large sacks, 20 iron spikes, 1 canvas tent, 24 water skins, 6 wine skins for medicinal purposes, 12 tinder boxes, 3 steel mirrors, 4 bunches of wolfsbane, 5 Holy Symbols, 9 pack mules

THE IMMIGRANT TRAIN

It has been a long journey for the immigrants. Since being recruited weeks before by Iscar, an agent from the Council of Regents at Vestfold, Bathare had led the train many leagues north from the Empire's lands in the south.

Bathare's train had started with over 500 people but now there were fewer than three hundred remaining. Some had fallen during the attack by orcs some ten days ago but most have fallen by the wayside due to disease or just weariness. It was not a train with adequate medicinal supplies nor cure spells.

Now the train was actually in the Northern Marches of the Great Empire. Iscar had not been exaggerating when he had told them of the vast empty tracts of fertile farmland just waiting for their plows.

In a few days the train would reach the Northern Capitol of Vestfold. Once there each family would receive a writ allowing that family to farm a



choice bit of ground with only a set double tithe going to the landlords and Regents—a tremendous freedom after the wanton avarice of the Southern Lords.

Iscar, the agent for the Regents, had even promised to try and get an escort for the slow moving colonists. Iscar had left early this morning to notify the Regents' outpost at Booh of the train's arrival. Iscar had promised to secure the train an escort to Booh and then to Vestfold.

Here in the heart of the Northern Marches and near the capitol all seems peaceful and quiet. The cookfires are started and soon the evening air is filled with the tantalizing aromas of the coming repast. In the gathering twilight the boys guarding the livestock announce to all the approach of riders. Through the gathering darkness the riders can be seen coming toward the camp along the road from Booh.

"Ah," says Bathare, Captain of the train, to his assistant and prospective son-in-law Alfred, "these Regents are as good as their word!"

Composition of the Immigrant Train

Bathare

9th Level Good Druid

Strength	17	Dexterity	10
Intelligence	11	Constitution	16
Wisdom	12	Charisma	17
Armor Class	9	Hit Points	20

WEAPONS: small club, staff (+3 with 2nd Level Obscure spell, 3rd Level Hold Animal and Water Breathing spells, 1D10+6 charges—Alfred knows how to use the staff but will be very reluctant to tell anyone else of its capabilities; it is hidden under the wagon)

ARMOR: leather

Alfred and Monaca

Thirty Men

1st to 3rd Level (19/10/1)

Half have leather armor, all have small clubs and daggers. Five have old swords and there are eight spears, ten helmets, three smith's war hammers, and four bows (10 arrows each). None are armed when the attack begins and it will take each of these men 1 to 6 turns to find a weapon after the attack begins.

Others

100 women, 150 children, 20 elderly men and women, 15 wagons, 68 horses of various sizes, 73 heads of cattle, and 170 sheep.

THE ATTACK

Bathare steps to the edge of the encampment with Alfred. The two prepare to greet the approaching escort of soldiers. He cannot see Iscar but a stalwart looking knight can be plainly seen at the head of the riders.

As Bathare raises his arm in greeting, an arrow sings through the night striking him in the forehead. Although the arrow has a blunt head, Bathare slumps to the ground seriously hurt. Then the riders sweep past him and down upon the luckless immigrant train. Those who seek to flee are brought down by raiders casting capture nets. At the same time footmen rush in upon the camp from the surrounding woods subduing helpless men and women trying to flee the riders.

Composition of the Slave Raiders Party

Robert of Stone Brook

9th Level Neutral Fighter

Strength	17	Dexterity	14
Intelligence	11	Constitution	11
Wisdom	12	Charisma	11
Armor Class	1	Hit Points	35

WEAPONS: 2-handed Flaming Sword (a +3 Sword of Legend acquired several years ago with a 25% bonus, 8 Ego, 9 Intelligence, primary powers Detect Metal, Find Secret Doors, and Find Traps, extraordinary power Teleportation), two daggers, lance, flail, thumbscrew, Ring of Protection against Good

ARMOR: plate mail, shield, helmet

Lare of Fenstien

6th Level Chaotic Magic User

Strength	9	Dexterity	8
Intelligence	19	Constitution	13
Wisdom	17	Charisma	4
Armor Class	9	Hit Points	24

WEAPONS: dagger +1, Wand of Protection against Magic

ARMOR: Ring of Protection +2 (usable by Chaotics only)

SPELLS:

First Level: Charm Person, Detect Magic

Second Level: Locate Object, Levitate

Third Level: Fire Ball, Haste

K'Colrom

4th Level Half-Orc Evil Magic User

Strength	4	Dexterity	13
Intelligence	15	Constitution	12
Wisdom	18	Charisma	3
Armor Class	6	Hit Points	11

WEAPONS: dagger +2, Wand of Cold

ARMOR: leather worn under cloak

SPELLS:

First Level: Detect Magic, Sleep

Second Level: Continual Light, Invisibility

Sammy the Slime

6th Level Chaotic Thief

Strength	10	Dexterity	17
Intelligence	9	Constitution	9
Wisdom	17	Charisma	2

Armor Class 4 Hit Points 23

WEAPONS: composite bow (30 arrows), short sword, three throwing daggers, throwing axe, Ring of Invisibility good for one use.

ARMOR: chain mail, shield, helmet

Main Body of 40 Men

Two 2nd Level Fighters, rest 1st Level Treat as Brigands

Half are wearing leather armor and the rest chain mail, all are riding regular horses, half the men have shields, half have short bows, half have spears. All have short swords. All have small clubs and short ten-foot ropes for subduing victims.

THE RESCUE

Terrance can now tell that the cook-fire smoke is mingled with that of burning wagons while the cries of greeting are clearly cries of terror. It is evident that somebody is trouble. This close to Booh, it could only be bandits. The company's course of action is clear. The men urge their tired mounts forward through the trees. But where is Long Bill? He's out in front encountering Robert of Stone Brook.

NOTE: Long Bill Jordan will get the first strike if he attacks immediately. If Jordan manages to knock out or kill Robert in one melee round, the Free Company will completely surprise the raiders. Until another of them is attacked and not killed or knocked unconscious, the other raiders cannot flee the attacking Company. If not immediately neutralized, Robert will order the raiders to flee immediately carrying only what they can carry. This order will be instantly obeyed by the raiders who will only stop and defend themselves when attacked.

To reflect the fatigue of Terrance's Company, reduce all mounted movement by 1/3. The men will all suffer a -1 on Dexterity and Strength for the duration of the combat. These effects can be reversed by the usual magical means if such means are available.

On the other side of the trees, Terrance can see several burning wagons. Riding amongst the wagons are men with torches setting the few unburnt

wagons on fire. Other riders, as well as men on foot, can be seen pursuing fugitives fleeing from the train. Immigrants that have already been captured are in a small huddled group gathered in the midst of the burning wagons.

The Company does not hesitate as they follow their Captain into the midst of the raiders. A few of the raiders are slain but at the first hint of serious opposition, the Slavers are able to carry off only a few victims as they flee into the night.

OPTIONAL: The only loss among the rescuers is Long Bill Jordan who falls to a stalwart looking knight wielding a flaming blade. Jordan's long bill and hook did not save him this time as it so often had in the past.

Stunned and bewildered, the immigrant train survivors spend the night binding their wounds. In the morning the dead that can be found are burned. At noon the train heads west towards Vestfold with Terrance's Company as escort. Before evening a dozen mounted Musketeers arrive from Booh to escort the immigrant train as arranged by the missing Iscar.

The train makes good time and a few days later it arrives at Vestfold without further incident.

VESTFOLD

At Vestfold there is an official inquiry that wastes everyone's time. It's findings are that the agent Iscar, after delivering Bathare's request for an escort from Booh, was captured by the raiders. The raiders then extracted from Iscar the information about the location and size of the immigrant train. Having gained all the information that they needed the raiders then killed Iscar. The raiders then disguised a part of their force to resemble the expected escort of Council troops. This diversion allowed other raiders to sneak up and surround Bathare's train. Only the timely arrival of Terrance's Company saved all of the immigrants from death or capture.

Terrance's Company will receive a reward for their timely action on behalf of Bathare's people. Bathare is still unconscious but is expected to live. As much as possible the immigrant's losses will be replaced.

Some additional information is revealed to Terrance and Alfred during the course of the investigation.

—High in the hills southwest of Blackmoor Castle lurk at least one band of slave raiders. This band has harassed the main trade route to Vestfold for several months.

—The Council of Regents in Vestfold have been too distracted by events along the border to send any regular troops to deal with these raiders.

—The Council's convoys are attacked frequently but only a few additional guards can be spared at this time.

—The elves of Blackmoor see these raiders as basically a human problem since elves are never attacked by the raiders.

—The Merchant's Guild is upset but not extremely so. They have set a reward for destroying the raiders. Regular convoys of the Merchant's Guild are not attacked. Only the smaller merchant trains have suffered an occasional outrage.

—Other groups of travelers are the prime victims of these raiders with groups of immigrants almost always being attacked.

—The raiders always take great pains to capture prisoners rather than just kill everyone and loot. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that immigrants rarely carry any significant amount of gold. Thus the raiders are certainly slave raiders and not just bandits. Their hapless victims either end up on the altars of the Monks of the Swamp or in the great slave pens of the Duchy of Ten. Slavery has been officially abolished in the Northern Marches by the King and the Council of Regents.

Gamemaster Notes:

1. All the survivors have reported a stalwart knight with a flaming sword leading most of the attacks. This knight is thought to be Robert of Stone Brook, a ruthless renegade who once served in the garrison at Blackmoor with Terrance a few years back.
2. All the attacks have taken place on the main road between Vestfold and Bramwald. There have been no attacks around either Blackmoor or the Tower of Booh until recently.
3. No trace has been found of any of the prisoners once they reach the Dragon Hills. No one has ever escaped after these hills have been entered.
4. The few prisoners that have escaped prior to reaching the Dragon Hills will report the presence of several large gray birds with the raiders.
5. As a result there is no information about where the prisoners are taken or sold.
6. No raider has ever been captured alive. Even slightly wounded ones that are captured die soon after as raving

lunatics. The only thing known for certain is that many of the raiders are former robbers and bandits whose faces are well known in the Northern Marches.

THE OFFER

The co-Regent Bakula summons Terrance to his private chambers. Once there Terrance hears that while he and his men were among the fens of Glendower, the Northern Marches have come under increasing pressure from its neighbors. Thus no troops can be spared to hunt down this band of raiders which prompts the following:

"Although troublesome, the slavers had not been a serious nuisance until the last month or so. Now almost every wagon train of immigrants or small merchant is attacked. Before there was usually only one or two attacks in a month.

"The co-Regent Bakula wishes Terrance to undertake an expedition to track down and destroy these raiders. Even locating the raiders' main camp or finding out what happens to all the prisoners will be invaluable. Without that information the Regents cannot adequately analyze the extent of the threat or really find a long term solution.

"If the force of raiders proves to be small enough then Terrance can destroy them himself. In any event, Terrance's Company will be well rewarded for their effort."

Terrance is eager to undertake the task and he persuades many of the others in the Company to join the expedition. Hunting slavers must be easier than capturing giant ants and seems a lot more respectable.

Bakula is very pleased and offers to send along one of the Councillor Marshals and his deputy to assist, since the reputation of these Marshals is quite high. The Marshal will provide his own supplies and the two of them will not receive a share of the Company's expected reward.

Terrance accepts this additional aid.

Councillor Marshal McCumulae 9th Level Lawful Fighter

Strength	14	Dexterity	12
Intelligence	12	Constitution	14
Wisdom	11	Charisma	9
Armor Class	2	Hit Points	42

WEAPONS: mace +1, two bottles of Healing potions, sword, dagger, Wand of Fireballs (see below), Amulet of Protection against Evil, staff of Lightning Bolts (Starting up to 300' away and 60' long from that point, victims who miss their saving throws take 6D6

The Slave Raiders

points of damage. The staff contains 60 charges and takes three uninterrupted melee rounds for the Marshal to recharge the staff. Each time the staff is used there is a 5% chance of the weapon malfunctioning. If the Marshal decides to try and fix the staff he may undertake no other activity at that time. Roll against the Marshal's Intelligence for successfully clearing the malfunction.)

ARMOR: plate mail, shield, helmet.

Deputy Councillor Marshal Fenster
6th Level Lawful Fighter

Strength	13	Dexterity	13
Intelligence	10	Constitution	15
Wisdom	7	Charisma	12
Armor Class	4	Hit Points	31

WEAPONS: sword, dagger, morning star, one bottle of Healing potion, Wand of Fireballs (see below), Amulet of Protection against Evil.

ARMOR: chain mail, shield, helmet.

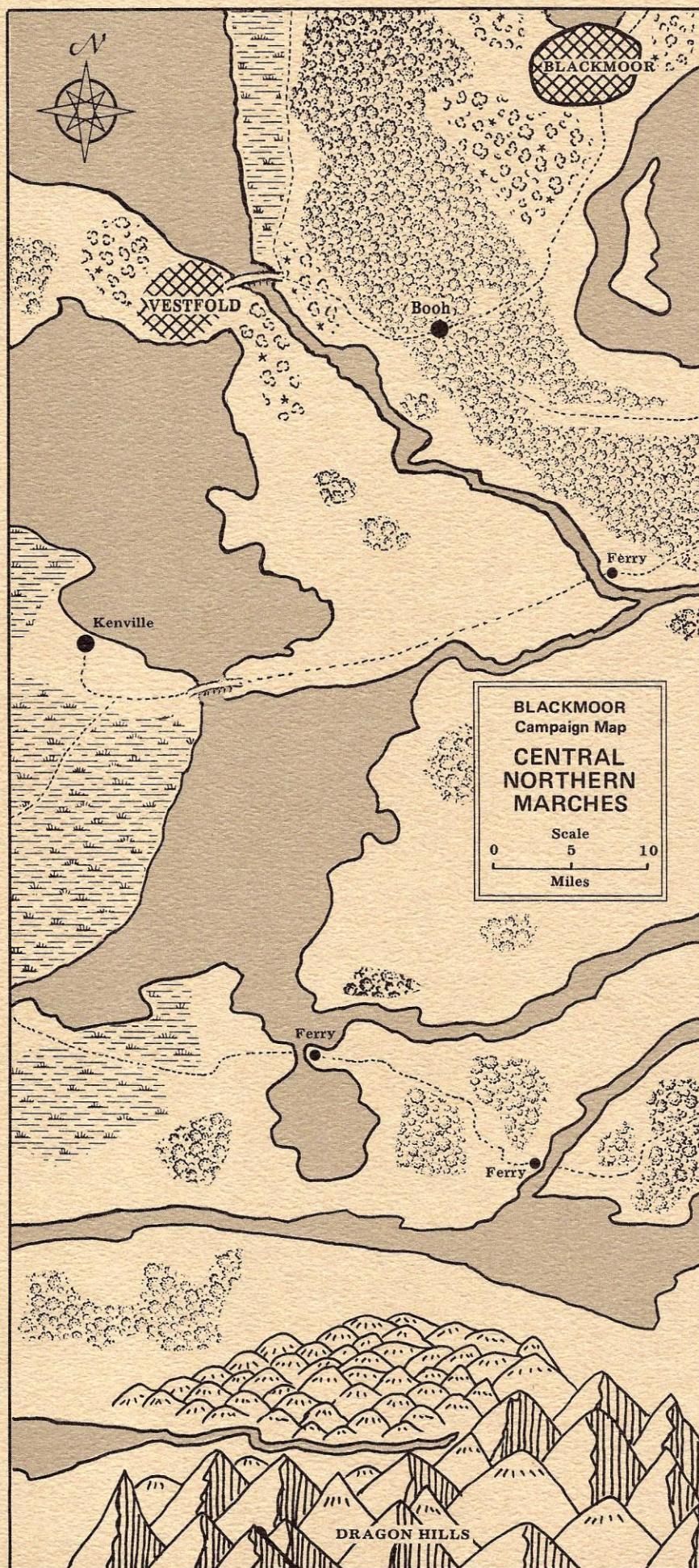
EQUIPMENT: Both ride trained war-horses of the 2nd Level although the Marshal's horse is a year older than his deputy's horse. Also each has 50' of rope, a tinder box, three torches, two iron rations, two water skins, two small sacks, one large sack, backpack, one Holy Symbol, wolfsbane, one lantern, one mirror, and 50 gp.

WAND OF FIREBALLS: Both the Marshal and his Deputy carry a small Wand of Fireballs. Each has six charges and the wands recharge after the passage of three melee turns during which the owner cannot engage in any other activity. The wand contains 30 charges. They have a range of only 100' and do 2D6 points of damage. Victims who make their saving throws take no damage. There is a 15% chance per spell that the wand will malfunction. It will require a roll against the owner's Intelligence to remove the malfunction. They may not undertake any other activity at that time.

PAYING RESPECTS

Before departing from Vestfold, Terrance goes and pays his respects to Bathare, Bathare requests that Alfred be allowed to come along. Alfred's intended bride, and Bathare's eldest daughter, was carried off by the raiders. Bathare can offer only a dozen silver pieces to the Company and his blessings.

If Alfred is accepted, Bathare will insist on giving the money to Alfred so that he can pay Terrance immediately upon the woman being rescued. Alfred confesses that he has little skill



at arms but feels that commitment and enthusiasm make up for anything.

Alfred

4th Level Lawful Cleric

Strength	14	Dexterity	11
Intelligence	11	Constitution	8
Wisdom	9	Charisma	11
Armor Class	5	Hit Points	21

WEAPONS: Bathare's staff (see Composition of Immigrant Train), mace.

SPELLS:

First Level: Cure Light Wound, Protection against Evil.

Second Level: Resist Fire.

EQUIPMENT: normal horse, pack, iron rations, tinder box, torch, water skin, small sack, flask of oil.

ON THE TRAIL

The Company proceeds quickly back to the area where Bathare's train was attacked. Once at the site of the attack the party will attempt to pick up the trail of the raiders. Although several days have passed, the raiders' spoor is still fresh. Joey the Hobbit is easily able to pick up the scent.

The raiders evidently proceeded to a clearing some ten miles south of the ambush site. Several trails are evident and the raiders were here at least one day. A large party came from the northeast, evidently with prisoners, and joined the main band. A smaller party headed off to the southeast towards the Dragon Hills, while the main party headed almost directly east from the clearing. There is some indication that a few riders proceeded northwest towards Vestfold and then returned this way. This trail is quite fresh and indicates that Terrance's expedition may already have been discovered.

The Councillor Marshal comments that the raiders seem to have an uncanny ability to sense any danger. Efforts in the past to trap them have been frustrated as the raiders knew of these parties' approach even before they got close. That Terrance's company was able to ambush them in the act of attacking the immigrant train is without precedent. He speculates that the foggy conditions and approaching night may have been the reason.

"Or just plain dumb luck!" adds Fenster.

Marshal McCumulae adds that there is no sign of magic being used by the raiders to detect and avoid these searches. Nor is there anyone in Vestfold, outside of the Council of Regents, that are aware of these missions.

Gamemaster Notes:

If pressed, the Marshal will add that the Council considered that there might be a traitor among the Council or some other information leak. Since the Council has been almost paranoid about these matters in the past there is a strong magic spell that protects all the Council's meetings. Although he cannot provide complete details, the Marshal adds that the protective spells would prevent anyone overhearing a meeting. It also prevents anyone at these meetings from passing on information to a hostile third party.

He speculates that there may just be a very extensive system of agents that provide the slavers with information although none of these agents, if they exist, have ever been discovered.

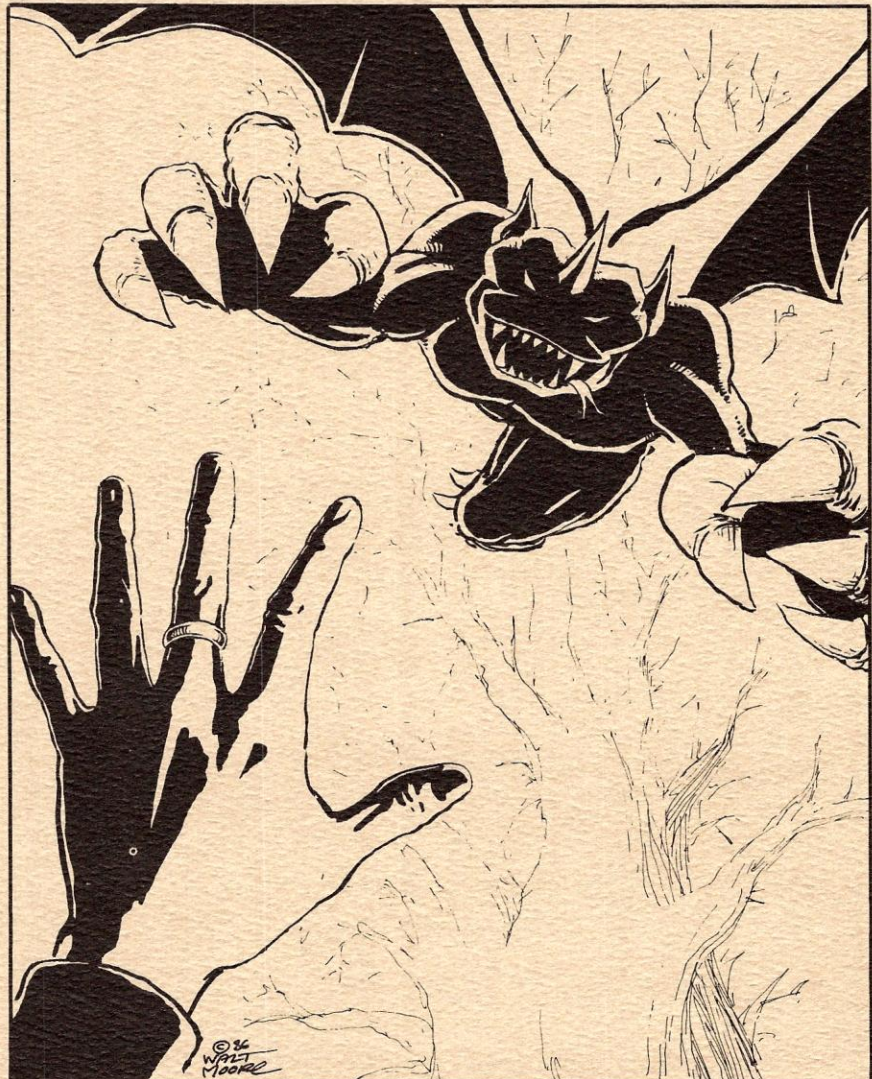
Terrance is not at all happy about being followed. He tells the Company to prepare all their weapons and then has them scatter out more as they move cross-country. In this way they will present less of a target for a raider ambush.

THE GARGOYLE AMBUSH

Within the next mile the party is indeed ambushed, but not by the slave raiders. Leaping out of the tree tops, several gargoyles attack the Councillor Marshal and his Deputy. No other member of the expedition will be attacked unless they attempt to aid the Marshal. The gargoyles will announce their quarrel is only with the Marshal.

Gamemaster Notes:

The ambush will occur regardless of what the expedition does. If the others do not aid the Marshal they will lose alignment status since Lawful types are supposed to aid each other. This is a test of their alignment. After two melee rounds, if the others have not gone to the Marshal's aid, all the game-master-characters present will rush in to attack the gargoyles. Going to his aid after this point will be too late and the player-characters will be charged with cowardice. If the Marshal and/or Deputy survives without their aid, he will tell them what fools, etc., they are.



Seven Gargoyles

AC 5; HD 4; hp 14; MV 90' (30'), flying 150' (50'); AT 2; D 1-3, 1; D 1-6, 1; D 1-4; Save F8; ML 11; AL C; XP 125

The gargoyles have been sent by the magic user underground to kill the Councillor Marshall and thereby humiliate and embarrass the Council of Regents. If the gargoyles fail in their mission they will return to a point ¼-mile north of the attack where a member of the underground is awaiting a report. He will give them 1000 sp if they have been successful.

The agent is only a Level 2 magic user with no magic items, just a riding mule. Any surviving gargoyles will attack this agent if they have failed in their mission. This way they at least get the silver.

If the gargoyles have killed the Marshall, they will withdraw immediately and go collect their pay. They will leave the Deputy, even if he is still alive. The gargoyles will have to take the Marshal's badge of office with them to prove that they have accomplished the deed.

Bloodied but victorious, Terrance's Company stops to bind their wounds and burn the dead.

The attackers were probably sent by the magic user underground to kill the Councillor Marshall and discredit the Council of Regents' efforts to stop the slave raiders. Although the expedition still exists, the attack has resulted in the trail of the party of gargoyles being hopelessly obliterated. The only two choices are to return to Vestfold or press on after the slave raiders' main party.

Since none care to return empty-handed to Vestfold after but a single encounter, Terrance and his Company determine to continue.

THE RAIDER CAMP

Another day passes and nightfall is approaching. Billy reports back that the raider camp is just ahead. Terrance orders the party to take cover immediately. Any magic users present are requested to cast Search spells to see if the Company has been spotted. They have not.

Alfred is quite agitated and demands that an immediate attack be made on the slavers. The Marshal, gamemaster-characters, and Terrance are opposed to the idea and wish to scout out the raiders' camp first.

Nearly hysterical Alfred leaps upon his horse shouting, "Cowardly fools! Mere bandits cannot stop even a single

brave man. Follow me if you dare!"

Alfred then gallops off towards the enemy camp.

Gamemaster Notes:

The player-characters may choose to follow Alfred. If all the player-characters do so, then Terrance, the Marshal, the Deputy, and remaining members of the Company will follow them.

The players may also choose to try and subdue Alfred. If they fail to subdue him, then he will have a significant head start in his single-handed attack on the raiders. This will last 1D6 melee rounds.

Alfred's attack will bring an immediate response from the raiders who will follow Alfred's path back to where the Free Company is located. If they are still there, the Free Company will have 2D10 rounds of combat before darkness falls. When that happens the Free Company may attempt to disengage.

If Alfred's sortie is stopped, the Free Company will be able to scout out the raiders' camp. They may then choose to attack if they wish.

Gamemaster Notes:

Actually Alfred's immediate attack will catch the raiders by surprise. If the Free Company takes the time to scout out the camp, the raiders' watchwings will detect the Company's presence. The raiders' response will be to send half their number around behind the Free Company and attack the Company in the rear in 2D10 turns. The remaining half of the raiders' force will remain in the camp with a few prominently displayed prisoners. When the ambush is sprung, the raiders remaining in the camp will immediately mount up and attack the Company.

The Raiders

An additional group of raiders have arrived with one 2nd Level fighter and ten 1st Level fighters. All these are armed and equipped like the first group of raiders.

Twelve Watchwings

They are in six portable cages near the northern edge of the camp. Their only guard is their trainer Dar 'Rom.

Dar 'Rom

3rd Level Neutral Thief

Strength	10	Dexterity	13
Intelligence	14	Constitution	12
Wisdom	9	Charisma	8
Armor Class	6	Hit Points	12

WEAPONS: dagger +1, sword, small club.

ARMOR: leather.

SPECIAL NOTES: Watchwings are only trained and handled by a single individual throughout their lives. That person is regarded as a part of the flock and will be defended by all the watchwings in the nest/aviary. Only Dar 'Rom can release the watchwings without them attacking the person who touches the cage. At the start of the action only two of the watchwings are free. All the rest are in their cages with their mates.

Prisoners

There are some 50 prisoners in the raiders' camp. Half are healthy men and the rest are women and children. All are under restraint (tied up) and can only participate if released.

Human Males (25): AC 9; HD 1; hp 4; MV 120' (40'); A 1; D by weapon; Save as F 1; M 6; XP 5.

Gamemaster Notes:

If defeated, the survivors may decide to return to Vestfold. The Marshal and the players may elect to continue to follow the raiders.

If Terrance has been captured, the Free Company can be convinced to continue on the expedition. Otherwise the remaining members of Terrance's Company will return to Vestfold.

If the watchwings have had their nest/aviary destroyed or their trainer killed, they will fly away. Then the raiders will only have the normal chance of detecting that they are being followed. If the watchwings are still in existence, then any pursuer will be detected by the watchwings. The raiders will then try the same ambush tactics as they used before to destroy or capture the expedition.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

Garbage Pits of Despair
Part 2

THE DRAGON HILLS



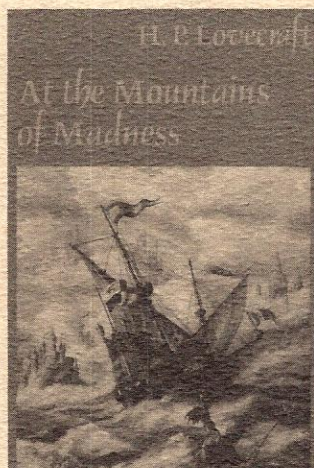
"Now that time has given us some perspective on his work, I think it is beyond doubt that H.P. Lovecraft has yet to be surpassed as the 20th century's greatest practitioner of the classic horror tale."

—Stephen King

THE CTHULHU MYTHOS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT

The Dunwich Horror and Others by H.P. Lovecraft. This book contains what the editors of Arkham House believe to be the best stories by Lovecraft. Following a new long introduction are these works—"In the Vault," "Pickman's Model," "The Rats in the Walls," "The Outsider," "The Colour Out of Space," "The Music of Erich Zann," "The Haunter of the Dark," "The Picture in the House," "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Dunwich Horror," "Cool Air," "The Whisperer in Darkness," "The Terrible Old Man," "The Thing on the Doorstep," "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," and "The Shadow Out of Time." (AR-037-8 hardback 433pp \$15.95)

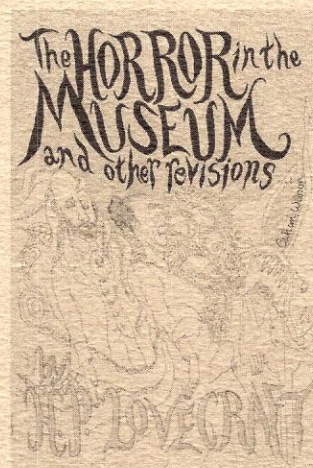
At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels by H.P. Lovecraft. Here are all the novels of H.P. Lovecraft in one volume, uniform in size with *The Dunwich Horror and Others*. This book contains



the complete texts of "At the Mountains of Madness," "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward," and "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath," together with "The Shunned House," "The Dreams in the Witch House," "The Statement of Randolph Carter," "The Silver Key," and "Through the Gates of the Silver Key." (AR-038-6 hardback 458pp \$16.95)

The Horror in the Museum and Other Revisions by H.P. Lovecraft. It was not the creative work under his own by-line that was H.P. Lovecraft's major source of income, but the revising of manuscripts submitted by hopeful authors, young and old, that supplied enough income to enable him to eke out a living. Some of these manuscripts were in Lovecraft's own favorite field, that of the macabre, and with these he went to especial pains to produce salable work—even to the extent of completely rewriting many of them, and in the course of so doing, subsuming some of them into the Cthulhu Mythos. This omnibus collection brings together all these "revisions" and in the main belongs solidly in the Lovecraft canon. Jacket by Gahan Wilson. (AR-319 hardback 383pp \$14.95)

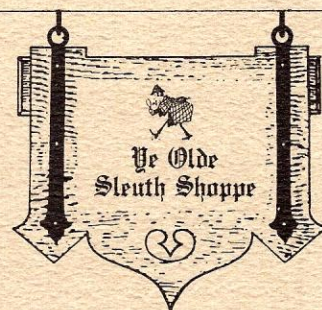
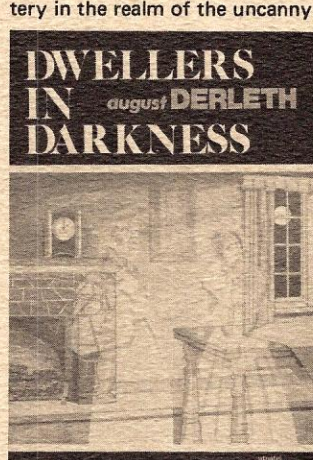
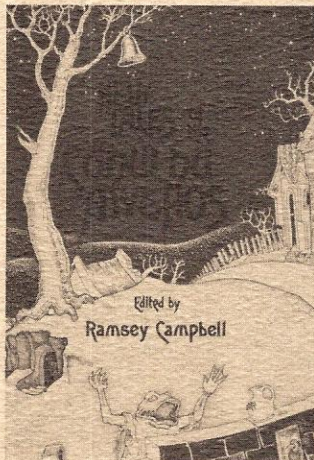
The Watchers Out of Time and Others by H.P. Lovecraft and



August Derleth. At the time of his death in July 1971, August Derleth was writing *The Watchers Out of Time* and had just completed Chapter IV, approximately the halfway point in the novel. After long deliberation, and since this was the final writing of August Derleth, the trustees of Arkham House decided to publish the unfinished novel exactly as Derleth left it, for historical and literary record, at the end of this omnibus collection of all the posthumous Lovecraft-Derleth collaborations. (AR-033-5 hardback 405pp \$14.95)

New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos by H.P. Lovecraft, et al, edited by Ramsey Campbell. Great Cthulhu—the blind idiot god Azathoth—the sea-sunken realm of R'lyeh—the infamous *Necronomicon*—all come to life once again in this anthology of hitherto unpublished work. The Cthulhu Mythos was the crowning achievement of H.P. Lovecraft, and his dream-world of mythical lands and beings has become an established part of contemporary folklore and legend. (AR-085-8 hardback 257pp \$11.95)

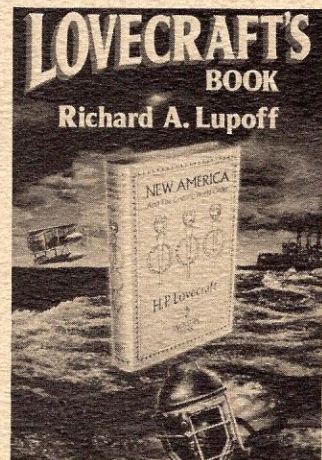
Dwellers In Darkness by August Derleth. The final collection of fantastic stories and macabre tales by August Derleth affords unerring evidence of this author's mastery in the realm of the uncanny.



Available thru Sleuth. Use order form on page 39 or send check or money order to Sleuth Publications, Ltd., 2814-19th St., San Francisco CA 94110. Add \$2 postage & handling for first item, 50¢ for each additional item. Foreign orders add an extra \$1. Calif. residents add appropriate 6% or 6½% sales tax.

Whether on a theme of science fiction, a classic ghost story, or a rare contribution to the Cthulhu Mythos, no other writer in recent memory has displayed such complete command over the entire genre of fantasy. (AR-302 hardback \$8.95)

Lovecraft's Book by Richard A. Lupoff. In December 1926, the German-American propagandist George Sylvester Viereck sent a letter to Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Viereck's proposal was a simple one: if Lovecraft would write a political tract, a sort of American *Mein Kampf*, Viereck would assure the publication of a volume of Lovecraft's stories as well. Through Viereck's maneuvering, Lovecraft was drawn into a web of intrigue involving Benito Mussolini's overseas agents, the Friends of New Germany, and such nativist radical groups as the Ku Klux Klan and Father Charles Coughlin's nascent Social Justice movement. "The finest example of this special genre I've seen yet—a thoroughly delightful and nostalgia-heavy yet by no means altogether unserious romp through the years 1926 and 1927."—Fritz Leiber in *Locus*. (AR-151-X hardback 260pp illustrated \$15.95)



sance mission during the proper season. A Byakhee (the creature shown on the pottery) appeared and attacked him. He killed it but was over Turkish territory and could not locate its body the next day. This and lesser related experiences convinced him that there were terrible unexplained mysteries which must be investigated and he has done so since the War, though all his former colleagues think he has gone mad.

He is a younger son of a British nobleman and married a wealthy heiress who died in the influenza epidemic. She left him a fortune exceeding a million pounds (over \$5 million) which he uses to pursue his quest. He has an estate in Cornwall with offices and mansions in London and Cairo.

No one with any reputation will aid him publicly, which inhibits his investigations as he has to do almost all the important work himself. In addition, the great universities continually cause trouble for him with foreign authorities. Unofficially the picture is different as Ashton-Tate is known to be professional and meticulous in the field, even if he has odd theories. Personnel trained by him are much sought after by other expeditions.

Lord Ashton-Tate is the only western archaeologist on his expeditions, with perhaps one or two Egyptian archaeologists, a few Egyptian graduate students, and the laborers and staff of a small expedition. The only other westerner present are usually journalists and amateur archaeologists who Ashton-Tate watches like a hawk to make certain they don't break or steal anything. If the keeper desires to use him on an expedition during a scenario, any action should take place with him away from the site for some reason; illness, dealing with red tape in Cairo, supervising transport of some important item, etc.

The most likely use of Ashton-Tate is to have investigators be the western journalists and amateur archaeologists on his small expeditions, or as the entire western staff of an informal group to investigate a newly discovered aspect of an already-worked site or to locate a supposedly minor site referred to in scraps of information from another dig. Hiring investigators to check out an obscure reference in an ancient library is another possibility. He has many professional contacts plus a few in British Intelligence, and knows quite a few pilots.

greatly and he has many influential contacts in the Catholic Church, the French colonial administration and armed forces. A significant Syrian rebellion starts in 1924. Le Grenouille has developed some experience with the Cthulhu Mythos since the war. He knows of Hastur, Nyarlathotep, and Star Vampires.

Le Grenouille's biggest problem is that he is an immature Deep One and any insanity has a substantial possibility of causing him to recognize his true identity. Kisses from romantically inclined women have a 50% chance of causing a 1-point SAN loss. If she's blonde, a 1D8 SAN loss is certain and 2D8 if she's plump too. Insanity in the latter case will absolutely and for sure induce the Change.

Hercule Poilou is the devoted servant of Kermit Le Grenouille. He is of Basque peasant stock and was a career non-commissioned officer in the Fusiliers Marins, with substantial experience in French colonial disturbances in Madagascar and Indochina. The Basques may be the oldest race in Europe ("ceiling" in Basque translates literally as "roof of the cave") and his mother was quite superstitious. He has also seen a lot of strange things in isolated areas of the French Empire. He is a highly skilled veteran of trench fighting and colonial skirmishes.

KERMIT LE GRENOUILLE

AGE: 54 (1924)

STR 11	DEX 8/14	INT 17
CON 12	APP 6	POW 11
SIZ 8	SAN 50	EDU 24

SKILLS: Anthropology 30%, Archaeology 90%, Astronomy 25%, Bargain 30%, Camouflage 40%, Climb 45%, Credit Rating 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 13%, Fast Talk 20%, Hide 25%, Library Use 85%, Listen 45%, Occult 15%, Oratory 42%, Photography 20%, Psychology 20%, Ride 60%, Sing -15% (croaks horribly), Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Swim 50%, Throw 50%.

LANGUAGES: Ancient Egyptian -/60%, Arabic 70%/60%, Aramaic 15%/60%, Attic Greek 10%/40%, English 60%/80%, French 100%/100%, German 40%/60%, Latin 50%/60%, Sanskrit 10%/40%.

WEAPONS: 9mm Revolver 90%, Kick/Knife/Club 60%, Rapier (sword cane) 50%.

SPELLS: Enchant Weapon, Summon Star Vampire.

EQUIPMENT: 9mm revolver, enchanted sword cane, binoculars, *Liber Ivonis* (+13% to Mythos knowledge, -1D8 SAN, spells: Enchant Weapon, Summon Star Vampire, INTx2% to learn a spell), other as needed.

LORD CECIL ASHTON-TATE

AGE: 39 (1924)

INT 14	POW 17	EDU 22
SAN 73		

SKILLS: Archaeology 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Library Use 80%.

LANGUAGES: Arabic 40%/40%, Attic Greek 15%/45%, Latin 15%/50%, Ancient Egyptian -/60%.

SPELLS: Summon Byakhee.

EQUIPMENT: Scrap of *Al-Azif* (+1% to Mythos knowledge, -1D3 SAN, spells: Summon Byakhee, INTx2% to learn), enchanted whistle for summoning Byakhee, pottery fragment containing picture of Byakhee.



HERCULE POILOU

AGE: 40 (1924)

STR 17	DEX 15	INT 10
CON 17	APP 12	POW 15
SIZ 15	SAN 70	EDU 8

SKILLS: Astronomy 25%, Bargain 35%, Camouflage 80%, Climb 100%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Drive Auto 30%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 100%, Hide 60%, Listen 60%, Military Demolitions 25%, Occult 30%, Psychology 25%, Sneak 90%, Spot Hidden 50%, Swim 35%, Throw 80%, Track 40%.

LANGUAGES: Arabic 60%/20%, Basque 80%/—, French 75%/40%, Malagasy 15%/—, Spanish 30%/—, Vietnamese 20%/—.

WEAPONS: Knife/Rifle Butt/Bayonet 100%, Kick 80%, Rifle/Pistol/Fist 70%, Entrenching Tool 60%, Automatic Rifles & Machine Guns 50%.

EQUIPMENT: 9mm revolver, 7.65mm rifle, enchanted trench knife/bayonet, other as needed.

Game Reviews

Pendragon/Pendragon Campaign/Arabian Nights/Klingons/
Fantasy Hero/Midnight at the Well of Souls/Unearthed
Arcana/Atlas of the Imperium/Desert Environment/
Duneraiders/Havoc/Adventure Construction Set/World War II



Chivalric Roleplaying KING ARTHUR PENDRAGON THE PENDRAGON CAMPAIGN

Both by Greg Stafford
(Chaosium \$20 & \$10
respectively)

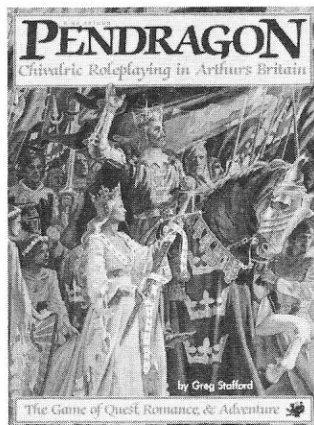
Reviewed by Anthony Fiorito

Are you tired of fantasy role-playing scenarios dominated by Ulric Hotdice, Slayer of Thousands? Would you rather play a character reminiscent of Robert Wagner in *Prince Valiant*, or woo Maid Marion as Errol Flynn did in *Robin Hood*? If hack & slash is getting tiresome, then *King Arthur Pendragon* is the game for you.

The designers of *Pendragon* have done away with over-worked mechanics leaving what can truly be called a role-playing game. Success in *Pendragon* is not measured by how quickly your character can decimate armies, but rather on how well you as a player can act out your character's personality and abide by the rules of chivalry.

The *Pendragon* boxed set contains a Player's Book, a Gamemaster's Book, a detailed map of Arthurian Britain, pull-out tables, game stats on just about every major character in Arthurian legend, plenty of blank character sheets, and all the dice needed for play.

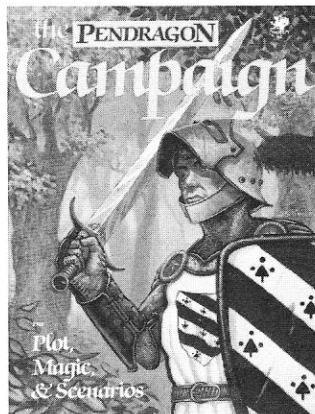
The first supplement to the *Pendragon* game system is already available. *The Pendragon Campaign* contains notes for the Gamemaster, setting information from Arthurian legend, descriptions of major characters, an in-depth timeline of Arthur's life-time, ideas for scenarios in given time periods, an expanded bibliography, and designer's notes. *Campaign* elaborates on magic use, encounters, scenario layout, and the use of glory for the gamemaster. There is more information



on the peoples, places, and religions of Arthur's kingdom. More monster stats and descriptions of magical creatures are included. There are descriptions of the major clans and of Arthur's High Court. If the *Pendragon* boxed set is the skeleton of the game system, then *The Pendragon Campaign* is flesh for the bones.

Pendragon departs from Chaosium's *Basic Role-Playing* system. Skills are on a 1 to 20 scale. *Pendragon* characters do not have all of the physical attributes of a *Basic Role-Playing* character, but do have additional attributes related to personality. The object of the game, unlike most fantasy role-playing systems, is not just to gain experience or fortunes but, more importantly, to gain glory. Glory is a measure of a knight's fame and separates the ordinary knight from the legendary one. Combat is different in *Pendragon*. In addition to the rules for single combat, there are abstract rules for battles ranging from small melees up to massive wars. The system is simple, the rules flow smoothly, and the game can be mastered in a reasonably short amount of time.

The Player's Book contains introductory information on both the game system and the Arthurian legend. The book describes character generation, game mechanics, skills, combat, and the *Pendragon* personality system. There is a section on chivalry and how the glory of knighthood fits into the game. In addition, there is a wealth of historical information including excerpts from Arthurian stories. The last few chapters of this book deal with a knight's life. There are descriptions of family life, money and treasure, and common animals, both wild and domestic.



The Gamemaster's Book is short but contains vital information for the gamemaster on magic, monsters and magical creatures, and the time of King Arthur. There is also a bibliography of Arthurian source material. At the end, a short scenario is included as an example. The magic rules essentially limit the use of magic to the gamemaster. There is a brief overview of what traditional magic is like in the tales of Arthur but the rest is left for the interested student. The best part of the Gamemaster's Book is the timeline of Arthur's Britain. It provides a historical backdrop against which scenarios can be run, with general suggestions for adventures and timing of the major wars. The time span covered is from the year 495 A.D. to the year 570, leaving plenty of room for a long campaign.

Character generation is straightforward. Characteristics are divided into four major areas; personal data, personality traits and passions, stats, and skills (including combat skills). Personal data include things like religion, homeland, social class, and cultural group. Homeland, culture, and religion are all determined on one table by cross-indexing two die rolls. Two more die rolls determine social class and which son the character is. Personality traits and passions determine how the character will act in a given set of circumstances. The traits considered virtuous vary with religious background. For example, chastity is a Christian virtue whereas pagans consider being lustful a virtue. Personality traits are divided into twelve sets of opposing pairs such as Chaste/Lustful or Honest/Deceitful. The player rolls 3D6 for a base value for one of each matched pair. The

opposite trait value is figured by subtracting that value from 20. These matched sets of traits are used as a guideline for the player's decisions when role-playing given situations. Passions are strong emotional reactions that a character will show. Starting passions are loyalty to one's liege and love of family. More passions may be gained during the course of play.

Stats are physical attributes. In *Pendragon* 3D6 are rolled for size, dexterity, strength, constitution, and appearance. These may be modified by cultural heritage. Starting skills, including combat skills, are determined by cross-referencing cultural background and lineage. Rules for augmenting skills through previous experience and player preference are included. Depending on how well initial rolls went, your character may be a well-equipped knight or a lowly squire.

A note should be made here about female characters. *Pendragon* revolves around male characters and knighthood, just as the Arthurian legends do. There are a few pages devoted to women in play, but essentially they don't fit into the system and should be reserved for special roles and gamemaster-characters. This may not fit in with modern thinking, but then again the designers were not trying to develop a 20th-century role-playing game. *Pendragon* is a 6th-century game and as such, this treatment of female characters is acceptable.

The mechanics of *Pendragon* are simple and seem to be more of an outline than a complete rules set. There are basic rules for determining success with a skill, experience, movement, damage, healing, and game time. The rules do not cover every possible circumstance but give enough of a general concept that the gamemaster can handle just about every situation that arises. *Pendragon* mechanics center around two concepts, the unopposed and the opposed resolution rolls. Unopposed resolution rolls are simply rolled on a D20 and trying for less than the attribute or skill that you are rolling against. Opposed resolution rolls are a fascinating idea unique to *Pendragon*. Opposed resolution occurs when a character must pit one of his skills versus an opponent's skill. The player rolls a D20. The roll must not only be less than the given skill level but must also be greater than the

GAME RATINGS

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

opponent's roll. Tied rolls that are both under the respective skill levels mean that neither adversary was successful.

There are several categories of combat in *Pendragon*. There are rules for single combat, tournament fighting, and large-scale battles. Single combat is not too unlike other fantasy role-playing systems using a character vs. character melee round format. The combatants use the opposed resolution system to determine who was successful for each round. Fighting continues until one or the other is too badly wounded to continue. Tournament combat includes challenges, jousting, and team melee. *Pendragon* characters have a joust skill separate from normal combat skills. Large-scale battle rules are abstracted in such a way that each player can determine how his particular knight did in the midst of a full scale engagement. Rolls made based on

each commander's skills modify the individual knight's rolls. Other conditions such as terrain or ambush may also modify the die rolls. The final modified results are checked against several tables and the character's fate determined. Results can range from heroic success by carrying the day, to dismal failure by being captured or killed.

The object of *Pendragon* is to become a famed Knight of the Round Table whose name will go on to live in legend right next to the names of Lancelot and Galahad. Characters gain fame by collecting glory points. Glory is a measure of a knight's fame as "expressed in minstrels' songs, court gossip, peasant chatter, holy-mens' prayers, enemies' curses, traders' tales, and nobles' praise." Glory can be gained by receiving land grants or offices from a liege, by fulfilling religious or chivalrous ideals, by fighting in

tournaments or battling evil foes, or by defending the oppressed and helpless. Glory can just as easily be lost by committing evil deeds or by being bested in battle. Great acts of passion can gain glory for a knight as can a heroic death, although the last method is not always popular. As a character gains fame he will also gain status, moving up from being a simple knight to a landholder and then perhaps into the nobility.

In summation, *King Arthur Pendragon* is a straightforward, uncomplicated attempt at recreating the atmosphere of Arthur's Britain. It is easy to understand and extremely playable. The rules flow smoothly and although they do not cover every possible situation, are structured to give a general idea of what to do in any reasonable case. The system has a few weaknesses, most notably an almost total absence of a magic system in the boxed set and the

lack of any sort of Luck or Power attribute for characters. Creating a scenario is more demanding on a gamemaster's background knowledge than in most fantasy role-playing systems. The *Campaign* supplement helps somewhat with creating a scenario backdrop and in laying out a plot. I would recommend reading several books from the bibliography before trying to create realistic Arthurian scenarios. But even with these few drawbacks, *Pendragon* has turned out to be one of the most enjoyable new role-playing games that I've played in a long time. It was definitely worth the money spent. I recommend this game to everyone who has ever dreamt of being a knight in shining armor or pulling the sword from the stone.

Available thru Sleuth (order CH-2701-X for King Arthur Pendragon and CH-2702 for The Pendragon Campaign). □



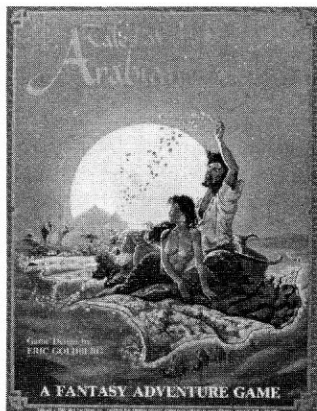
Fantasy-Adventure Game TALES OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

By Eric Goldberg
(West End \$18)

Reviewed by Larry DiTillio

Tales of the Arabian Nights is at first glance a board game, but its board is secondary to its real heart, the 64-page Book of Tales.

Some years ago, Flying Buffalo gave the game field the first solo "dungeon" adventures run by cleverly written paragraphs which directed the player to various outcomes of single encounters. Years later other companies used the solo concept for their role-playing games and soon after that a profitable business sprang up in generic "Choose-Your-Own-Adventure" novels. This brief history lesson is the best way for me to explain the way the Book of Tales works. In concept, its solo, cleverly-written paragraphs outline encounters and explain various outcomes, depending on what option the player chooses. The difference is, it's not a solo-solo. Each player uses the Book of Tales on his turn to "have an encounter," accomplished by drawing from the 64-card deck and determining if an encounter takes place (I'll elaborate on the process later). Those familiar with solos might think this is limiting, but since there are no less than 1400 paragraphs in the Book of Tales, there's plenty of variation. West End used this "paragraph system" in their previous *Star Trek: The Adventure Game*, but in *Tales of the Arabian Nights* it



has reached a new height.

Now that you know what makes *Arabian Nights* tick, let's go on to how the game is played. Each player starts by choosing a character, one of six heroes or heroines from the Arabian Nights stories—figures like Sindbad, Ali Baba, Aladdin, and Sheherezad (and by the way, your character's sex is important, it does affect encounters). The player takes the counter for his character and places it on the center of the board in the city of Baghdad. Each player then takes a player display, sets his wealth marker on "poor" and his destiny and story point markers at zero. (Besides being used to mark wealth level and number of story and destiny points, the player display also contains 28 status boxes and a box for displaying any treasures gained—all, I might add, on a nicely compact 9"x6" card.)

Each player in turn then chooses one skill counter for his character and this process continues around the table until each player in turn has drawn three

skills. Skills are things like wisdom, courtly graces, weapons use, etc. They affect the outcome of encounters, help the players choose appropriate reactions to situations and can at times be used against other players.

Finally each player secretly writes down the formula he or she will strive after to win. This formula is any combination of story points and destiny points adding up to 20 (e.g., 12 story points and 8 destiny points). The first player to enter Baghdad with a completed formula and remain there a turn with formula intact wins. (Though this is the most probable way to win, a player may also win by entering Baghdad with the Sultan status and remaining a turn with status intact. Status will be explained shortly.)

Story and destiny points are gained by moving around the *Arabian Nights* board and having encounters as described in the first paragraph of this review. Movement is dependent on the wealth level of the player and may be modified by skills or statuses. Each player gets a shot at an encounter once each turn, whether or not he or she chooses to move. The encounter procedure depends on the card deck. Cards are of two types—Encounter cards, subdivided into terrain encounters (e.g., Magnetic Mountain) or character encounters (e.g., a Sage), and Fate cards, subdivided into Special cards (e.g., "If you enter the same space as another player, you may choose his reaction in his next encounter) or City cards. City cards contain the name of a city and six results. When a player reaches the city named on the card he may play it,

then roll a die to obtain one of the six results. These are things like "Gain 1 Treasure," "Lose ALL statuses," "Gain 1 story point," etc. City cards and Special cards are held by the player until he or she uses them (to a maximum of two at any one time). Encounter cards send the player immediately to the Book of Tales to resolve the encounter. The exact nature of an encounter is decided by a die roll on an encounter chart in the Book of Tales, following which the player chooses a reaction to the encounter. Reactions are chosen on one of eleven matrices known as reaction matrices. They are used in this manner: The encounter chart gives a key adjective like Beautiful, Mad, Lonely, etc. If the encounter is with a character, this adjective describes the kind of a character, e.g., if the chart is for a Sage encounter, the adjective shows whether it is a lonely sage, a wicked sage, a foolish sage, etc. If it is a terrain encounter, the adjective is followed either by a character type or some other force such as a storm or whirlpool. In either case, the player is next directed to a reaction matrix. On this matrix the adjectives are in the left-hand column and across the top are a number of reactions. The player is told what reactions are available and picks one. For example, say a player encounters a terrible storm. The player acting as reader finds "terrible" on the appropriate matrix and tells the encountering player that he may pray, avoid the storm, wait, or hide. Skills may come into play at this point, e.g., if the player has the skill of piety he may decide to

pray, hoping his skill will aid him in the attempt. Once the player has chosen a reaction, a die roll will take him to one of three "award" paragraphs where the reader will find the results of the encounter. Skills may be listed in the award paragraph and if the character has one or more of the listed skills these determine the result, otherwise the "no skill" portion of the paragraph is used. Awards range from absolutely nothing to the gaining or loss of story or destiny points, the gaining or loss of skills and the gaining or loss of statuses. Statuses are conditions which affect the player for good or ill throughout the game, until the status is lost. For example a player may become imprisoned, thus losing his ability to move until the status is lost. In the basic game, a status is automatically lost when a new status is gained, however, optional rules provide for the existence of multiple statuses (be warned however that keeping track of the effects of several different statuses can be tricky).

You now know everything there

is to know about the basic game, but hold on, *Arabian Nights* does not stop there. By adding the optional Adventure rules, players can substitute quests for normal victory conditions or become Merchant characters establishing trade routes between the cities on the board; in order to acquire enough wealth for a win. Other Adventure rules allow for multiple statuses, change procedures for getting cards and let players use their skills on other players. Adding these rules is dirt simple and significantly vary the game, but wait, *Arabian Nights* is not through yet. Also included in the rules is the Storytelling game, an innovation which should appeal strongly to role-players. In this version, players do not meekly accept the results of award paragraphs but instead study the paragraph and use it as the basis for their own version of the story, told in as much outgoing detail as possible. Other players then vote on how entertaining the story was and give awards appropriately. Both the Storytelling game and Adventure rules add to playing

time, but also add to the game's considerable entertainment value, something that is not always the case in other games.

Graphically, *Arabian Nights* has its pluses and minuses. A huge plus is the board itself, one of the most gorgeous boards I've ever seen in a game. On the minus side the cards and player displays are a dull blue-gray which contrasts quite unfavorably with the resplendent board. The counters have a nice mix of color and the components are all very sturdy and useful and should wear well over the course of time.

A big plus in *Arabian Nights* is that rules problems are virtually non-existent. The rules are very clear and simple and the few things that do crop up are usually easily settled with some reasonable thought. The paragraph system does create one problem which is virtually unsolvable, i.e., even with the greatest number of options available, it is possible for one player to repeat an encounter another player had and use the knowledge to his or her advantage. It's also logical to assume

that the more the game is played, the more this problem may arise, especially among players with good memories. I don't think it's a major concern, primarily because in essence *Arabian Nights* is not a competitive game. If anything, players strive more against the system itself than they do against other players and "winning" is not so much the goal as playing. This is the greatest strength of *Arabian Nights*, it's just plain fun to play, no matter who cops the gold when play is over.

So to sum up, if you're a sucker for wild-eyed efreeti, wicked viziers, magical treasures, and just plain gosh-darn-Arabian-Nights-style fun, then *Tales of the Arabian Nights* should be your oasis in the desert. It wears as many hats as a hydra and marvelously blends them all into a game that merits both your time and your money. Trust in Allah, toss down your shekels and enjoy! Wa-Salam-Alaikum!

Available thru Sleuth (order WE-11003). □



A Supplement for Star Trek THE KLINGONS

By Fantasimulations Associates (FASA \$15)

Reviewed by William A. Barton

If you've ever had the hankering to play a bad guy in a complete culture of bad guys—not just the semi-lawful type most *Traveller* characters are or even the random Chaotic Evils of *Dungeons & Dragons*—then FASA has just the role-playing supplement for you: *The Klingons*, a sourcebook and character generation supplement for its excellent *Star Trek: The Role Playing Game* that allows players to generate and run characters of what is undoubtedly the most famous—and favorite—race of bad guys in all of science fiction.

The Klingons is designed by the people who designed the original game and science-fiction author John M. Ford. While the division of labor isn't exactly noted, it's probable the game mechanics came from the original designers, while the background on the Klingon Empire was the work of Ford, as is evident if you've read his Klingon-Star Trek novel from Pocket, *The Final Reflection*. All of the background on the physiological nature of the Klingons themselves and on their home world, empire, and world philosophy—the *komekex zha*, or "perpetual game"—are derived from Ford's concept of the Klingons in



that novel.

The Klingons comes boxed with a properly imposing cover illustration of one of the Klingons from *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. Inside, along with the 64-page character generation and sourcebook, are two Klingon-oriented adventures, "Intrusion" and "The Natural Order"; a set of player-character console sheets for bridge positions of the D-7 battlecruiser for use in the starship combat system, along with game-master sheets for playing *Constitution*-, *Reliant*-, or new *Enterprise*-class vessels in combat with Klingon characters; and half-inch die-cut counters depicting various Klingons of the game's three main types, plus ships and console data, for use with the man-to-man and starship combat systems. While not containing as much material as the original basic game set, *The Klingons* certainly gives you your

money's worth—provided, of course, the background data and character generation of Klingons is of interest to you in the first place.

Klingon character generation is basically the same as for *Star Fleet* characters in the original game (the first edition; the second displays notable differences), with exceptions due to racial and cultural differences between Klingons and humans. Attribute modifiers for generating Klingon characters are somewhat different, too, from those for creating Klingon gamemaster-characters in the basic game. Much of this is due to Ford's concept of Klingon physiology—and his way of explaining the differences between the Klingons of the TV series and those of the movies. Ford has postulated that the Klingons of both *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* and *Star Trek III* are the original Klingon stock called the Imperial race. The Klingons of the TV series, on the other hand, were genetically bred human-Klingon fusions, created by the Imperial race to better deal with the human race after Empire's initial encounter with the Federation. Carrying this idea a step further, Ford introduces into the game Romulan-Klingon fusion as well, the idea being that these fusions were bred to deal with the adjacent Romulan Star Empire.

While I applaud Ford's ingenuity in explaining the differences between the Klingons of TV and

the silver screen (which actually came about due to differences in make-up budgets between the series and the first movie), I have a few reservations about this explanation. (Personally, I prefer one offered in a fan essay in *Trek* magazine, where the Klingons of the movie were described as a barbaric subrace, consigned to border patrols—where they and their extra viciousness would take the brunt of any invasion of the Empire—by the more "civilized" Klingons of the series.) I certainly concede the need to reconcile the two versions of Klingons from TV and movie, but I really fail to see a need to carry the explanation over to a previously nonexistent third Klingon species. (Romulan fusions don't actually appear in Ford's *Star Trek* novel, either, removing that potential justification for their existence, too.) Still, this isn't really an excessive manipulation of *Star Trek*'s background (and apparently has now been embraced by Paramount as the official explanation of Klingon nature with the approval of this supplement and the novel), so I can certainly live with it. Those of you who don't wish to deal with Imperial Klingons or Romulan fusions and prefer to keep your Klingons those of the series can quite easily ignore those sections of the supplement dealing with the other variants. There is still a mother lode of useful Klingon data even without them.

Character generation includes a lot of nice variants just right for

Klingons. Players roll for their characters' line affiliations—to see if their family is in the Emperor's favor or disfavor or is simply undistinguished in any way, extremes of which can affect their rolls for academy graduation, assignment, etc., favorably or negatively. Specialty areas in the Imperial Klingon Star Academy differ somewhat, too, with navigation and helm branches combined, a separate weapons/defense branch, a security department that is reminiscent of the Gestapo, and a branch for combat officers of the Imperial Marines. There are other distinct touches, such as the use of Bribery skill to affect a character's assignment upon completion of the cadet cruise and the possibility of being labeled a "security risk" if the cadet cruise is failed, all of which add to the Klingon flavor of the supplement. And, of course, there are new skills for Klingon player-characters—among them Klingon Law and History, Surveillance, and a somewhat more fully described Interrogation skill than the gamemaster-character version in the original game.

The sourcebook also includes sections on Klingon Physiology and Medical Aid, Equipment and Weapons, Planetside Adventure, History, Structure and Organization of the Klingon Empire and its Forces, Klingon Shipboard

Systems, and Starship Combat, the Klingon way. While all this information is helpful in running a Klingon campaign—or adding background on the opposition in regular Star Fleet campaigns—the most interesting, to me, were the sections on the Empire itself and its culture (there's even a section on Klingon epithets—the worst being to call a Klingon a "willing slave," although to say one's "mother wears army boots" is a compliment).

The section on the Empire includes data on Klinzhai, the Klingon home world (though, sadly, no game stats are included for the world—an odd omission), and on the physical extents of the Empire, featuring a map of Imperial Klingon space and its points of contact with the Federation and the Romulan Star Empire (still misnamed "Confederation" here, though newer *Star Trek* game books correct this). Several notable terms in *Klingon* are explained here and elsewhere throughout the supplement, usually in the form of excerpts from *An Informal Guide to the Klingon Empire* by J. Ford and E. Tagore (a character in Ford's Klingon novel). Bits on Klingon history and its socio-political structure are outlined, too, further adding to the flavor of the book. A few contradictions to past *Star Trek: The RPG* works

crop up, such as the note that there has been no contact between the Klingons and the Gorn, while the *Klingon Ship Recognition Manual* states that Federation intelligence on the Klingons' big battleship comes from intercepted Gorn reports. There is also mention that the Klingons have encountered another starfaring race on the opposite side of the Empire from the Federation, yet fails to even name it, much less give data on it—something most Klingon officers would at least know about. Even in spite of such quirks, however, the information that is provided on Klingon culture is priceless for spicing up any *Star Trek* campaign in which the Federation's "favorite" opponents play a part (and falls into the "must-have" category for any true *Trek* fan).

Of the two adventures that come with the game, the four-page "Intrusion" is pretty straightforward. It involves an escape attempt from a Klingon D-7 by a group of captured Romulans, and as such is similar to the scenario in the basic game in which a group of *Star Fleet* characters must do the same—except that in this, the player-characters are the Klingons attempting to stop the escapees, and the Romulans have something a bit more than simple escape in mind. Playing it will require the

D-7 deck plans from the first-edition basic game or the separate 15mm-scale deck plans. The 16-page "The Natural Order" is a bit more complex, involving treachery, intrigue, double-dealing, and betrayal—in short, everything dear to the Klingon heart—and is a more satisfying adventure for players who enjoy such (which should be just about anyone who would like playing a Klingon in the first place).

In spite of a few minor flaws already noted, and quite a few more typos than should have been managed to slip through proofing, *The Klingons* is an excellent addition to FASA's *Star Trek* line. Now players who enjoy portraying characters to whom rape, pillage, and plunder is part of the natural order can do so with a clear conscience as members of *Star Trek's* most popular villains. FASA has announced their intention to publish future adventures specifically for Klingon characters, and if they are as of high a quality as this supplement, they should be good (if such a term can apply to Klingon doings). If you don't already own a copy of *The Klingons*, I suggest you pick one up as soon as possible. You'll be missing a whole new viewpoint of *Star Trek* if you don't.

Available thru Sleuth (order FA-2002). □



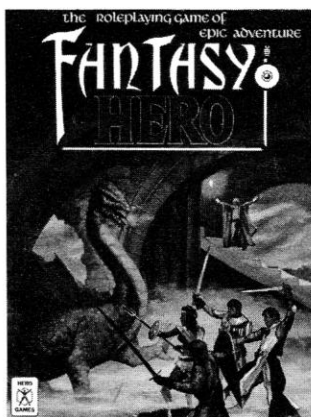
The Roleplaying Game of Epic Adventure FANTASY HERO

By Steve Peterson
(Hero Games \$14.95)

Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

Fantasy Hero, as the name implies, is a fantasy role-playing game from Hero Games. With it you can fight orcs, conjure demons, vanquish dragons, fulfill quests, and do anything else you might want to in a medieval fantasy setting.

Hero Games is one of the game companies that designs all their games using the same basic system with alterations appropriate to the genre. So far, they've presented superheroes (*Champions*), spies (*Espionage!*), pulp era (*Justice Inc.*), and now fantasy. Although each game has certain new rules to represent elements of the specific genre, in general, knowing how to play one of these games makes it easy to learn any of the others. Also, it became possible for spies to work together with pulp-era adventurers against supervillains and dragons, if one were so inclined, without having



to do a lot of conversion between systems.

One of the best things about the Hero System is that the characters are built from scratch. The gamemaster specifies how many starting "character points" the players are allowed and they use these points to increase characteristics and buy skills and (if desired) magic. If they need more points than the starting amount (and they almost certainly will), they can take disadvantages to get more points to work with.

The magic system is designed so that players may duplicate almost any magic spell that they can

think of, but it isn't set up for beginners because every spell has to be built from scratch, using basic effects that are fine-tuned with advantages and limitations. The more powerful the spell, the more expensive it is, unless more limitations are put on it to bring the cost down. This may seem complex, but once you get used to the method involved, it's not too complex (and the gamemaster will probably get plenty of practice while setting up his world and he can help new players if they want to play spellcasters). In fact, the only problem I see is that it's much too difficult to increase the power of a spell as you gain experience and apparently impossible to replace it completely if you should happen to find a more powerful spell you'd prefer to have (say on a scroll or in a tome).

There are also a few problems inherent in the system due to the fact that it started out as a superhero system, designed to allow for very powerful characters. The obvious example is Speed, a characteristic that determines how often a character can act. In *Champions*, the maximum Speed is 12, basically an action every second. In *Fantasy Hero* (and the

others), where people are generally less powerful, the practical maximum is four, an action every three seconds (still fast, but player-characters are supposed to be amongst the best in their world). This decreased range means that most characters (and their human adversaries) will act in the same phases, and probably simultaneously. While certain creatures in *Fantasy Hero* act more often, I still think that it would have been better to redefine the phase from one second long to three seconds long and allow a wider range of Speeds, with the note that Speeds would have to be converted to use the two games together. Most of us can multiply or divide by three.

The adventures are a solo boar hunt intended to demonstrate the combat system, handy if you're new to the Hero System, but no great shakes otherwise, a full description of an inn that the characters can meet in, and a story of two rivals that happen to be wizards, with options for either one to hire the characters to help him storm the stronghold of the other. It's a fairly good starting adventure, but even the more complex option is fairly straightforward. My big objection is that

each wizard has a spell or two specifically mentioned in the adventure, but the write-ups of the wizards omit any spells, instead giving each 90 points in "various spells, as needed." I admire the fact that this allows the individualization of the adventure, but each should have been

provided with the details of the spell(s) he must have. I also object to allowing these wizards new spells as necessary "on the spot. Just make sure you note them down so he can use them later." This makes gamemaster-wizards much more powerful than those run by other players, who must

have their spells predesigned.

Still, I don't think that there are any major flaws with this system and it is quite fun. I recommend it to anyone who plays other games from Hero as a primer on how to introduce magic to those systems, as well as various mythological creatures. And I recom-

mend it to anyone wanting a fantasy system where the characters are limited only by the players' imagination (and the gamemaster).

Available thru Sleuth (order HG-58-5)

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Role-Playing System MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS

By Timothy A. Green
(TAG \$19.95)

Reviewed by Bob Kindel

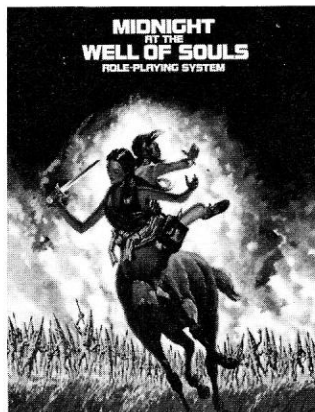
Jack Chalker's novels about the Well World seemed destined to be converted into a game system. The Well World is a world-sized sentient computer whose surface is divided into 1560 hexagonal biospheres c. 355 km on a side and 615 km across. Each area has a self-contained eco-system that includes one intelligent race and has an assigned level of technology and/or magic (psionics) that cannot be exceeded. The computer maintains the tech/magic level and biosphere and controls the population of the intelligent races. Airlocks connect the hexes and a gate to the central hex is present in most environments.

Each hex is analogous to a planet in the real universe. The game system allows adventuring both in the real universe and on the Well World. The social structure of the COM (Community of Worlds), Chalker's society in which the Well series is set, is described briefly.

The multiplicity of environments and races and the wide range of technical and magic levels provide the potential for a broad range of experiences within the game. From these potentials has come a very well-designed system. It is flexible enough to allow a gamemaster to tailor it to his or her campaign's needs but provides adequate structure to prevent the "anything goes" mentality of some games.

Character stats are randomly generated. Two of the eight stats, Endurance and Fatigue, are used as hit points. Damage taken from combat, injury, disease, poison, or temperature extremes comes off Fatigue first, then Endurance. Fatigue is a variable state, the points of which are readily restored. Endurance, the general constitution of the individual, is more difficult to restore.

Skills are divided into five subsets. A character has a number of skill points based on his/her age



and intelligence. These may be assigned by the player in whatever manner desired. This allows the player to tailor his individual character to his desires/needs. The process is infinitely more satisfying than having skill abilities assigned randomly or being forced into the mold of a specific class. After the initial assignment of skill levels, skills may be learned

in the course of the game and skill abilities may be increased by use.

The combat system is predicated by the warning that combat is a thing to avoid whenever possible. A single attack could possibly result in the death of a character. While this may turn off the hack & slash gamer, it does add to the realism of the game and can improve the role-playing of the characters. The combat system increases its realism by modifying the combat for a variety of factors—range, movement, visibility, etc. Opportunity fire and critical hits are provided for. The system is less cumbersome than it sounds. It's well organized and logical, and in play goes quickly.

Rather than design a system for random generation of star systems, the designer has opted to provide the players with the stellar generation system from an established game: Tri Tac's *FTL: 2448*. This was a good move, since the system provided is an excellent one that has proven to

be playable.

A major portion of the game book is devoted to describing 21 of the races in the southern hemisphere of the Well World. Players may opt to be one of these races rather than human. In addition, players who begin human may be involuntarily converted by the Well World computer to one of these races.

In brief, the game system is coherent, playable, and enjoyable. The material presented is well-organized and indexed. The editing could have been better—an entire section was left out of the book—but the errata are included in the package and can readily be inserted into the book. The illustrations are clear and the play aids useful.

If you'd like to try a science-fiction game system or want to change systems, this may be your best bet. I recommend it strongly.

Available thru Sleuth (order TAG-W-1000).

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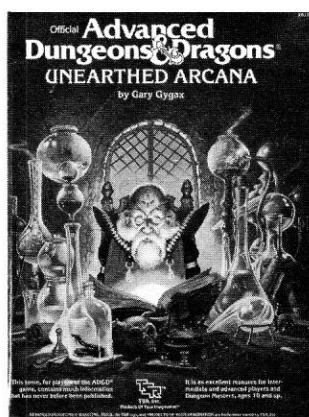
Advanced D&D Supplement UNEARTHED ARCANA

By Gary Gygax (TSR \$12)

Reviewed by Scott Dollinger

I recently told a friend of mine, who is a veteran gamemaster with a long-standing *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* campaign, that I had been assigned to review TSR's *Unearthed Arcana* supplement for AD&D. Valuing his opinion, I asked him what he thought about the new book. "Well, . . ." he said, searching for the right words, "It seems real . . . handy." "Real handy," that slightly understated phrase perfectly captures the feeling one is left with after using this book.

Unearthed Arcana is not a revolutionary work. It does not offer radical new philosophies in role-playing AD&D, nor will it cause gamemasters with established campaigns to make major changes in their respective worlds in order to incorporate reams of new rule revisions. This is not to say that it will not significantly alter AD&D as we know it, it definitely will, but the material presented in the work is meant to enhance current rules and broaden the range of



role-playing possibilities for gamemaster and player alike.

In many ways *Unearthed Arcana* merely exemplifies a shift in emphasis that has been taking place in AD&D over the last several years. More and more gamemasters are moving away from episodic dungeon-type adventures and are creating entire game worlds for their players to discover. In this "total world" concept of gaming, cultural and socio-political information becomes essential elements in the gaming milieu. Character-class information needs to be enhanced so that gamemaster and player

can adjust predictably to new situations that occur when characters leave the dungeon and emerge into the "real" world, and it is this type of information which is presented in *Unearthed Arcana*.

The material is presented in two sections, one for the player and one for the gamemaster. Some gamemasters might complain that by presenting gamemaster-only material in the same book as player material, players may be unnecessarily tempted to read the "forbidden" part and gain an unfair "edge." This is a moot point. Players that read gamemaster texts, with no plans on becoming gamemasters, ultimately cheat themselves of the excitement of discovering how magic items and spells work through role-playing. People who are inclined to do this have, of course, already done it with the previous rulebooks and, if players start using information from gamemasters' sources without justification in game terms, most gamemasters have already devised ways of dealing with such blatant rule infractions.

The players' section consists of information strictly confined to character traits and abilities. A

new personal statistic, comeliness, which is defined as a reflection of physical attractiveness, has been added to the other six personal attributes. Apparently the conflict between charisma and beauty, which existed in a combined way under the old charisma attribute, was strong enough to prompt designers to rethink their original definition, which is good, because, to put it colloquially, Adolf Hitler had tons of charisma but he sure wasn't pretty.

Additional sub-races of standard character races have been approved to use as player-characters. New additions include gray dwarves, dark, valley, and wild elves, and deep gnomes. The

majority of these new sub-races were taken directly from the now classic series of Drow modules and modified slightly for player-character use. Also along racial lines, the class level limits for demi-humans have been raised and demi-humans may now pursue some of the previously closed character classes. Most notable among these are dwarven clerics, elvish clerics, druids, and rangers, and halfling clerics and druids.

Character classes have also been expanded with more information on ranger's tracking skills, high-level druid progression, and a thief's abilities while wearing armor. Three new character classes have been approved, the cava-

lier, the thief-acrobat, and the incredibly tough barbarian. New weapons, armor, and greatly needed spells for all magic-using characters are also included.

The gamemaster portion contains a miscellany of material. Everything from new character generation systems to descriptions of new arms and armor and magic items. Again the emphasis is placed on clarification and enhancement of older rules and presenting new ways of "fleshing out" characters. Tables for determining a character's social class and circumstances of birth help to locate and give substance to characters in the "real world." The inclusion of some much needed

new magic items is the answer to many veteran gamemasters' prayers. All too often players who have successfully managed to get characters to high levels start to suffer from the "yeah, we've seen it all before" syndrome. New spells and magic items will add a breath of fresh air into the game.

Unearthed Arcana is a well-constructed, 128-page hardback book that is filled with top-quality illustrations and very easy to read charts. The materials are all useful to both player and gamemaster and for the price, it's a real bargain.

Available thru Sleuth (order TS-2017). □



Traveller Supplement ATLAS OF THE IMPERIUM

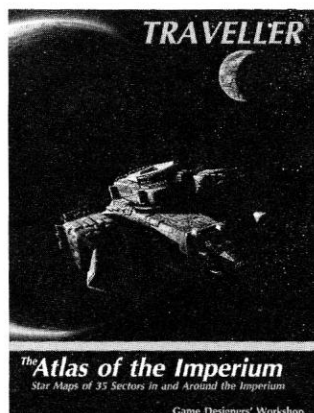
By Marc W. Miller (GDW \$7)

Reviewed by
Frederick Paul Kiesche III

The *Atlas of the Imperium* aims to answer one of the basic questions that many players of GDW's *Traveller* role-playing game have: What does the Imperium (the sector of space where the majority of published adventures take place) look like? The *Atlas* contains 35 sector maps depicting the Imperium. Each sector map shows some 13603.2 light-year squares (squares are used instead of hexes), giving a rough total of some 479041.92 light-year squares of space—putting it mildly, a lot of backyard to build sand castles in! Not only are familiar areas depicted (such as the Spinward Marches and the Solomani Rim), but areas only hinted at in such sources as adventures and GDW's *Library Data: Corridor, Core, Dark Nebula, and others*.

Each map shows basic information on the sector: Worlds with or without water, asteroid belts, naval bases or depots (Imperial or non-Imperial), scout and other secondary bases, population (indicated only if a world has a population rating of 9+, representing billions of inhabitants, and then by showing the name of the world) and hex number (if there is no world present, no hex number is given). With this data, the gamer can plot stellar densities, locations of bases and depots, sources of fuel and possible trade routes for adventures that span the Imperium itself.

With such an overwhelming scope, detail must be sacrificed. Each map is dense—sit down and think about much open space over 13603.2 light-year squares per sector represents—and then



try to depict that space on an 8½"x11" piece of paper. Beginning to get an idea of the problems that the designer faced? Given a choice between releasing a book of (at least) twice this size (and at least twice the price) or giving as much basic information as can be crammed into a page, the designer chose the second route. Some gamemasters may complain at the lack of names on worlds of population below 9+ (i.e., below a billion in size), however, listing all these worlds on the page would probably be confusing, if not impossible, to read.

Other omissions include the absence of trade routes, x-boat routes, and political boundaries. Trade routes can probably be generated by an energetic gamemaster, employing *Merchant Prince*, Book 7 of *Traveller*, and *Trader* computer diskette. Express boat, or "x-boat," routes can be estimated by looking at the major worlds indicated on the map. Political boundaries for the most part are going to be guesswork; however, with the sub-sector maps and sector books published thus far (by GDW, Gamelords, FASA, Paranoia Press, etc.; some of these maps—such as the ones from Judges Guild—have been changed extensively, the rest should be familiar to owners of

those products) and with the help of GDW's master map of the Imperium, one should be able to do a good job.

Perhaps the most detrimental omission is in not listing the Universal Planetary Profiles (UPP)—the fingerprint—of each planet mapped. A planet's UPP provides such vital information as the population, social structure, technological level, size, hydrographic level, etc. Including this information most likely would have delayed the project and hiked the price out of its audience's reach.

Like GDW's two-volume *Library Data*, players of *Traveller* will have to wait for the other shoe drop before getting a true picture of the Imperium. Hopefully GDW will publish the UPP information for the other sectors of the Imperium; coupled with these sector maps one could create truly galaxy-spanning (well . . . partially galaxy-spanning . . . it is a big place) adventures. In the meantime, there are a number of uses to which this supplement can be put. I suggest that you start by photocopying the sector maps and assembling them using the master map of the Imperium on the inside front cover as a guide. You will start to see how the Imperium is structured—not only

by way of stellar density, but where major population centers are, where naval and scout bases are located, where fuel can be found. Looking at various information sources, such as the sector books and other supplements, the *Journal* and various adventures will help you to map in political boundaries (I suggest the use of colored pencils). Using *Merchant Prince*, *Trader*, and other rules expansions found in the *Journal* and other sources will allow you to generate trade routes and x-boat routes.

In conclusion, I suggest that you take a careful look at this supplement before you purchase it. If you're looking for *Everything You Wanted to Know About the Imperium*, this isn't it. But when used as an aid in understanding how the Imperium is put together, or when used in conjunction with other *Traveller*-oriented products (as mentioned above), it should be well worth your time and money. If you and your group are tired of knocking around the Spinward Marches or the Solomani Rim, this will give your campaign a lot of new blood!

Available thru Sleuth (order GD-257). □



For Use with Traveller THE DESERT ENVIRONMENT DUNERAIDERS

Both by William H. Keith, Jr.
(Gamelords \$6.95 each)

Reviewed by Arlen P. Walker

The *Desert Environment* is the third in Gamelord's Environments for Adventure series, the first two being *Undersea* and *Mountain*. These books present special rules for the *Traveller* game system per-

taining to specific hostile environments.

The first section of this book presents "Desert Survival" as a cascade skill of Survival (from *Mercenary*, Book 4 of *Traveller*). The majority of the section is taken up by yet another endurance system for *Traveller*, along with the consequences of endurance loss in the desert.

The endurance system is a weak point in the *Traveller* rules, and it seems everyone who publishes a supplement tries to improve it. But all the new systems involve extra bookkeeping, and this one is

no exception. In most cases the gain is not worth the strain.

This system's extra bookkeeping comes from calculating the endurance points lost and marking them off every game hour. After losing a number of endurance points, you then adjust the character's stats and begin again.

Keeping track of game time to the point of marking the passage of every game hour is tedious for me, and, I suspect, for most other gamemasters. The constant subtracting of stat points and accumulation of endurance points loss risk turning a desert trek into one long, drawn-out combat. The combat analogy may be a good one, for anyone who has hiked in a desert can tell you the trip is a contest between you and the desert, and the desert is not a gracious loser, but extended combat sessions can be boring.

As if one complex endurance system wasn't enough, the designer suggests using his system only for desert travel, using ones presented in other environment supplements for those environments, and using the standard rules for the remainder of the cases. As a gamemaster, I'd sooner forget about endurance entirely than use sixty-five thousand different systems, depending on where players happen to be at the time. Can't somebody, somewhere, come up with a set of

endurance rules for *Traveller* which will work for any environment?

The second section of the book, "Desert Terrain," contains a capsule description of the different types of desert, along with the circumstances which allow their existence. There is also a table giving the approximate percentage of land mass which might be desert, based on the planet's size, and one giving temperature ranges for deserts, based on an Earth-type planet. This is excellent, as too many gamemasters simply plop terrain down on a map with no more rhyme nor reason than children finger painting.

The section on desert survival provides some useful game information, and some useful tips for anyone caught there. There is a diagram of a solar still which anyone could build, and the useful warning that not every plant which stores water is safe to drink from.

The next section, "Desert Dangers," lists a number of hazards one may find while crossing a desert. Some of them are natural disasters, but by far the most likely are the ones associated with endurance loss. The remainder (dust and sand storms, flash floods, etc.) are rare.

The book concludes with a short equipment list, and a collection of ideas for desert adventures,

including the oldest chestnut of them all (but still enjoyable to play) the "lost ruins" surrounded by a desert.

Duneraiders is the companion adventure for *The Desert Environment*. It is slightly different from the other *Traveller* adventures produced by Gamelords in that there is no set plot to follow. Instead it seems to be a "mix & match" module in which you select a villain from Column A and a villainous act from Column B. The events are chosen from Column C, and, by the way, here are some desert nomads (the *Duneraiders* of the title) to throw in as well.

If you get the idea the module lacks coherence, you're right. But it's supposed to. It's more of a sourcebook for an adventure than an adventure itself. The gamemaster can select the events, villains, and causes he finds most interesting (or those which will most likely cause the players problems). There's nothing wrong with this approach to a module, in fact, run by a good gamemaster, those are the most interesting to play. But an inexperienced gamemaster may make the wrong choices, and spoil the entire adventure.

Since the module is so loosely designed, it's hard to give a fair assessment of the plot. There is an overall scheme into which the

activities and villains are supposed to fit, but the only parts of it which are detailed are the ones which do not take place in the desert. It is very possible to have an interesting adventure using this module, but it's also possible to be bored stiff.

Converting *The Desert Environment* to another science-fiction game system will not be as difficult as some other *Traveller* conversions. But the real value of this book to those who play other systems is not in its desert rules, but in the desert terrain and survival sections. Even fantasy gamemasters who despise science-fiction gaming would do well to pick up this book; anyone involved in world creation and design should find this book interesting.

Duneraiders is fairly easy to use with other systems, but I would not recommend it for anyone who wants to buy a full-blown desert adventure. Nothing in this book can hold a candle to *Uragad'n of the Seven Pillars* from FASA, for example. But there are some good ideas for desert encounters and smaller scale adventures which might justify the purchase.

Available thru Sleuth (order GL-1988 for *The Desert Environment* and GL-1989 for *Duneraiders*). □



Superworld/Villains & Vigilantes/Champions Module TROUBLE FOR HAVOC

By Yurek Chodak, et al
(Chaosium \$10)

Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins

Havoc is a loosely bound group of supervillains; members of Havoc appear in all three scenarios in this module. Otherwise, each of these scenarios is complete in itself and they can be played in any order. There are also new powers and interpretations for *Superworld* that are worth reading even if you play one of the other games on the market (all of our local *Champions* gamemasters have adopted the rules for damaging Vulnerable Devices given here).

The first adventure, "Crisis at Caliente," has a fairly straightforward plot about an attempt to steal an experimental nuclear reactor from the Caliente Nuclear Testing Laboratory. There are only two main problems with this scenario. The first is that most of the villains involved are from one of the other two adventures and their stats are given there, so that



the gamemaster either has to copy the characters down or flip to three different parts of the book during play (this is relatively minor because gamemasters can copy this information down). The second is that the gamemaster is warned not to allow the villains to get away with the reactor under any circumstances and furthermore to do all that he can to see that most of the villains escape to participate in the latter two adventures. I feel that this is the wrong way to look at it; if the heroes know that they'll succeed, why should they try as hard? Besides, the heroes I ran through

this adventure were utterly defeated by the villains; for the sake of simplicity, the villains took the reactor and left the heroes because their teleport gate wouldn't accept that many people. The heroes, humbled by their thrashing, still haven't managed to get the reactor back (although a couple of the culprits have since been captured). The scenario would have been greatly improved if advice of this sort had been included, just in case. There is a small reference to what the gamemaster can do if a villain is captured here who is supposed to appear in a later adventure, but it assumes that the expendable villain gets away instead. What if the villains are completely defeated? The gamemaster is once again on his own.

The second adventure, "Return of the Elokians," features a genetic offshoot of humanity that finds itself in the middle of a supervillain's extortion plans. Details of the Elokian race, its capabilities, castes, civilization, and hidden city are all given here, along with various contingency plans depending on what the heroes decide to do. This is an excellent adventure that could serve as a model for would-be

adventure designers with two exceptions: first of all, I feel that it would be better if all the character write-ups were gathered together in one place instead of being scattered throughout the adventure in the place where they first appear in it (the first *Superworld* module, *Bad Medicine for Dr. Drugs*, excelled by having most of its characters collected in a special removable section for easy play). Secondly, it still reads like a *Superworld* module with character conversions to the other systems; things would be greatly improved if they gave stats for the generic Elokians and how breakable things are in all three systems, not just *Superworld*.

The last adventure, "Fourth For Bridge?," features an alien spacecraft that has crashed in the Arctic. When the heroes go to investigate, they find that they aren't the only ones that are interested in it. It is set up for a three- or four-team tournament adventure if the players feel up to it. If you plan on running it as part of a campaign, then be prepared to consider the difficulties of having the alien technology in your campaign (and whatever you do, don't invite the heroes to go along with the aliens if you aren't pre-

pared for them to accept the offer). It also has the same problems as the Elokian scenario. When you consider that this scenario is meant to be used in a tournament, it is hard to understand why the characters aren't set up to be removed from the book for easy play. (And, of course, the strict *Champions* gamemaster will have to create his own stats for the spaceship using the *Champions II* vehicle rules.)

I'm not certain if these multi-system adventures work as they are presented. The different systems have different ideas about character creation that seem to be emphasized when characters are directly translated from one system to another. Perhaps it would work better if the characters were created in each system with no

regard about how other systems had done them. Currently, however, there is a power-by-power equivalence that Chaosium and Hero have set up and stick to even when there are better ways to achieve the same ends (I am not familiar enough with *Villains & Vigilantes* to judge how well their conversions are handled; I imagine that their looser system lends itself well to conversions though).

Despite what I said in the last paragraph, I'd recommend this module to anyone playing any of these systems and looking for a few good adventures. In fact, it's worth translating into other systems if you've the inclination for that sort of thing.

Available thru Sleuth (order CH-2403). □



Software

THE ADVENTURE CONSTRUCTION SET

By Stuart Smith
(Electronic Arts \$50)
Commodore-64 Version

Reviewed by Troy Christensen

The Adventure Construction Set is the most profound piece of gaming software since the introduction of the first shoot 'em up game of the early '70s. With ACS, you can either play in random worlds of science fiction, spy/mystery, or the good ol' fantasy environment. But what is even more fascinating about the game is the ability of the player to create his own world full of his own creatures, objects, and excitement. The program also allows you to design every creature, piece of furniture, and special effect without knowing any programming skills. You can specify the object's weight, strengths, uses, abilities, and even what it will look like.

What I found so ingenious about the program is that I could go into it and erase everything and start from scratch. Within the first couple of weeks I had designed a Vietnam adventure, a fantasy adventure based after a role-playing game (I used the game's maps, spells, and creatures), a World War II game stocked full with automatic weapons, tanks, helicopters, and modern technology, and a science-fiction world where the characters were spaceships instead of living beings.

To design a game or have the computer design a random creation is an easy process. Once the game is loaded and the initial screen is cleared, the computer asks you to pick from a number

of options. One option is "Make an Adventure Disk." The process takes about twenty minutes and requires several disk changes—unless you own a system with two disk drives.

Once the adventure disk is made, you must then go to the "Construct Adventure Mode" and follow the prompts. If you wish to construct your own adventure you will be led into separate screens that will offer you many options, including drawing a world map, drawing encounter areas, redesigning things, and creating new monsters or terrain.

In the game, you can design a world map that can be as large as 40x40 spaces (each space is equal to a type of terrain or the size of a single character). This map can have up to 16 different types of terrain, each which may have the ability to cause harm, to heal, to block entrance, to give a certain object to the character, to block entrance to the square unless a certain object is owned by the character, or to force the character to fight a monster—the character could still run away, however. Within the 40x40 world, you can also install 32 doors, which can look like anything you want, and which can lead into 15 encounter areas (a.k.a., dungeons, spaceships, buildings, special environments, etc.). Each of these 15 encounter areas may have up to 16 rooms, each as large as 15x10 spaces—each space is equal to a single figure, a monster, or an object; however, within the construction phase you can stack any number of objects on top of one another. After you draw the world map, decide where each of your doors will lead, and what each of your 15 encounter areas will contain, you can pick from 500 creatures to stock it with and as many as 300 objects, props,

and special effects. Special effects can range from spells, to messages that can be as long as 8 lines by 32 characters wide or sound effects which include simple thuds, scrapes, and twitters to melodic endless tunes and scary *Twilight Zone* music.

Designing a world, however, is not as easy as it may sound. Even though the only command you would have to know would be "load," the game is so immense and mind-boggling that most people will become muddled for weeks in designing a well-deserving adventure. But do not worry, the computer will pick up wherever you leave off and finish the adventure. The computer, however, is not very smart, and thus, the computer generated games or those games which it finishes will be strewn with objects and monsters with no apparent reason. You, the computer master, are the only person which will ultimately bring this game into its glory. For only in the mind of the computer master will the great mysteries and puzzles evolve. No where else will the strange and exotic beasts, weapons, armors, and objects be forged except in the mind of the creator. Designing a world isn't easy! It will take hours of honest labor and even more time inserting the clues, traps, treasures, and monsters.

No matter what game is played or what universe the characters will be voyaging to, all characters will have the same kind of stats. A character is outlined in the game by five primary attributes, two secondary attributes, and four skills. At the beginning of play, the primary attributes will range from a weak score of 4 to a massive score of 18+. The maximum a primary attribute can go is 31. The secondary attributes start the game equal to their primary counterparts, Life Force, or hit points, will equal the character's Constitution, and Power, spell energy and lesser Life Force, equals the character's Wisdom. The four skills range from 15% to 45%; however, I have seen starting skills as high as 126%—this could be a programming flaw. Throughout the game the secondary attributes and skills will rise and fall depending upon battle conditions and the assortment of armor and weapons being used in the universe. Primary attributes will also rise, but usually at a much slower pace. Only through the use of a magic spell (spells are universal in the game—you do not have to designate them as spells, however) will the attributes rise or fall.

Once characters are out on the world, they are on their own. New characters will be totally

defenseless: they start with no weapon, no armor, and no money. What is even worse is that if a character is attacked he cannot even defend himself since he does not even have a fist to punch with, a mouth to bite with, or a leg to kick with. Because the way the system is set up, any item that can be used as a weapon, including body appendages, must be listed under the "weapons" category of the game, and characters are allowed no weapons when they start. A smart computer master can get around this, however. I started all my characters in a location that activated a spell and gave each person a leg to kick with and a fist to punch with. Characters should try to find real weapons and armor as soon as possible since most games will be full of perils which won't allow for give and take. The computer master can devise as many as 127 objects: weapons, armors, spells, obstacles, custom spaces, and special effects. The objects created can be owned by creatures as well as characters.

As many as four characters can play at one time. Each character is controlled through a joystick and thus it is possible for four players to play at once—two players share a single joystick. When two or more characters are playing, the action jumps back and forth between each character. Because of this, characters can split up and go off in random directions.

"Monster" is a loose term which describes all the possible creatures, vehicles, or hazards that can be encountered in the game. Monsters are detailed just like characters, and each will have its own particular weaknesses, powers, and weapons and equipment. Monsters are detailed also by a number of variables which will set their disposition towards the characters.

With all works there are always faults, errors, and problems. Time and reworks of the program may eventually clear up some of the problems. However, aside from things such as swapping disks when making adventures, the slow and sluggish graphics, the spell limitations, and the occasional fritz that the program will go into for unknown reasons, the game is so innovative that these flaws are hardly worth mentioning. I have found through using the program that anything can be done if enough forethought is used. Planning in the game is crucial and ignorance of the rules and ways of the program are deadly.

The Adventure Construction Set comes with a 44-page manual, a two-sided diskette, one large pre-

constructed adventure where your characters are transported to Egypt during the times of the pharaohs, and seven mini-adven-

tures that will whisk your characters off to places such as the starship *Enterprise* and Alice's Wonderland. □



European Theater of Operations Game WORLD WAR II

By Douglas Niles (TSR \$30)

Reviewed by Robert Norse

TSR's biggest production since taking over SPI in 1982, *World War II* is its mini-monster, grand-strategic coverage of the Second World War in Europe and North Africa. Though considerably smaller than GDW's Europa Series and SPI's now out-of-print *War In Europe*, *World War II* is no Saturday-afternoon amusement. Set-up time alone for all but the introductory scenario runs forty-five minutes to an hour. Though it has only 800 counters, the game's two 22"x34" maps necessitate a large playing area with lots of reaching and circumnavigating. Turns are monthly with additional seasonal production turns four times a year. Each monthly turn has at least six phases and may have three times that many, depending on the number of attacks each side chooses to make. Two shorter scenarios (1939's "Blitzkrieg!" and 1941's "Poised For Onslaught") last six months each (for a total of six monthly and two seasonal turns) with an estimated playing time of ten hours, once players become familiar with the game system.

World War II is not a redo of SPI's earlier *World War II*, a much smaller European conflict game that came out in the early 1970s. Nor does it bear much relation to SPI's unwieldy *Global War*. It is an original production with an economy of rules and interlocking combat systems.

The heart of *World War II* is its ground movement and combat system. As in the Avalon Hill Game Company's *Third Reich*, players purchase Offensives and expend them on units activated for movement and combat. But unlike more conventional combat systems in which "I move and fight, you move and fight, and a new turn begins," *World War II* allows opponents to alternate making Offensives within the same turn, one after another, until both have spent all they choose or can afford. Reminiscent of Task Force's *History of the Second World War* series, players alternate moving and fighting on one sector after another until all sectors are accounted for or the players run out of Offensives to spend.



Each time a player spends an Offensive (or several Offensives if he wishes to engage in a Combined Offensive), the units activated may move and fight up to three times in successive steps. Armor may move briefly, fight, and then, if successful, move again in the Breakthrough step. It, as well as other unused armor and infantry, may move and fight in the Combat step. Finally, armor that has not moved in the Breakthrough step, but may have moved in the Combat step may move and fight again, if stacked with a General. This expanded movement and combat capacity makes for a mobile game of swift advances and unexpected breakthroughs. The shortage of British units and the ability of the Axis player to supply his units by air and through ports in North Africa means the British player is hard-pressed to defend the Suez Canal and keep open his Mediterranean convoy route.

Convoy routes represent Allied shipping and are mostly just a golden opportunity for the Axis player to bankrupt the Allies by U-Boat, Surface Raider, and air attacks. The Allied player for his part can attack the Axis store of Economic Points (EPs) with strategic bombing and interdiction of the German iron route from Narvik. For the first few years, the Allied player has little choice but to watch his EP track drop deeper and deeper into the red; he can limit his losses by voluntarily closing any of the four convoy routes (Murmansk, North Atlantic, South Atlantic, or Mediterranean), but he will still lose EPs steadily.

Control of Resource hexes determines EP collection each seasonal turn. Victory conditions differ from scenario to scenario but generally involve capture of the opponent's Resource hexes

(which is equivalent to conquest of the opponent's country). Constructed units (other than air fields and fortifications) appear in the home country's Resource hexes, which also serve as air bases.

The 32-page rulebook is surprisingly compact and complete (though the designer has issued a page of errata found elsewhere in this issue). Air units are more specialized than those in *Third Reich*, but paradoxically, the combat system is simpler. Air-to-air combat takes place in two rounds of combat at most. Surviving air units can add their combat factor to a ground battle if they are bombers or assure air superiority (and a favorable die roll modification) if they are fighters. Air units can bomb ships, react and intercept in an enemy air phase, or conduct air offensives of their own against ports and air bases.

Naval rules allow individual ship-to-ship combat and a greater use of naval units than I've seen in any strategic European campaign game since *Global War*. The British player must keep his ships out of range of German bombers which can cause devastating losses that may take four seasonal turns to repair, while ships that are sunk are sunk for good. At the same time, he must place his ships within interception range of a possible German Sealion effort. Though British ships are strong and fast, their interception range during an enemy move is limited, and the German player can make the British player move first if the German has the Initiative (that is, if he has purchased more Offensives during the preceding seasonal turn).

Most of the charts required for play are printed directly on the mapboard, though I did find myself thumbing through the rulebook repeatedly in search of the Strategic Warfare, Air-to-Air, Air-to-Ship, and Ship-to-Ship combat results tables. It would be helpful to have these brief charts on the map along with the others. Instead of national boundaries, each country is tinted with a contrasting color. This device, which initially struck me as obnoxiously cosmetic and simplistic, proved useful in further playtesting. The color scheme aids placement of Axis minor ally units and helps distinguish the Finnish unit dispositions in the north where the map is thick with forests.

Armor units have unusual capabilities in addition to multiple-attack. Anytime an enemy unit seeks to leave an armored Zone of Control, the armor can attack the withdrawing unit immediately. Since air units cannot be used to aid the withdrawing unit, a limit-

ed sort of pin is produced, making armor units more formidable. Additionally, armor units can ignore a ZOC for one hex (though it must stop on entering the second hex in a ZOC) increasing their capacity to surround enemy units and cut them off from supply.

Additional features of *World War II* include Weather, Paratroopers, Convoy Escorts, Ice-bound Ports, Partisans, Shore Defense against Amphibious Assault, Air Reconnaissance, Air Transport, Emergency Evacuation, Naval Bombardment, and Rail Movement. Political aspects include provisions for Vichy France, early Italian surrender, limits on French-British cooperation, Lend-Lease, General Zhukov, German Tactical Superiority, the Sitzkrieg, the Winter War, and French Railroad Sabotage.

After mastering the game mechanics by playing the introductory scenario ("Case White") a few times, players should try scenario 4 ("Poised For Onslaught") to get a sense of the unique movement and combat rules. With only six monthly turns in which to win, the German player may be tempted to try an all-out assault both in Russia and North Africa to collect victory points for Cairo, Alexandria, Leningrad, and Moscow. A cagey Soviet player can set up his units three to four hexes inside the USSR instead of the historical "sitting duck" deployment. The German's problem is that though he outnumbers the Soviet in aircraft by a factor of three or four to one, he cannot provide fighter cover for his bombers until he can capture ground and build forward airfields. Also, transferring to a forward base precludes using that air unit for offensive action in the same turn. The German must proceed carefully and methodically in his advances and must avoid the temptation to put all his EPs into construction of armor and air for a quick assault. With worsening weather on his side, the Soviet player can envelope armored spearheads and use his weak but adequate fighters to cripple the German bombers and test air superiority. The German may well end up fighting to hold Bucharest come December of 1941, without a careful and massive commitment of infantry to the Russian Front.

World War II is big and plays slowly at first. It is principally a two-player contest and is not for beginners. But those who have enjoyed *Third Reich* will find this new strategic treatment of Europe in *World War II* a flavorsome meal to attack and digest.

World War II designer, Douglas Niles, has provided the following additions and corrections to the first edition of the *World War II* rules. Further queries should be sent to him with a self-addressed stamped envelope at the following address: Rules Editor, World War II Game, TSR/SPI Inc., PO Box 756, Lk Geneva WI 53147.

WORLD WAR II Game Errata

COUNTERS

Italian Air Unit 6/12 should not have a Quality Rating (front side only). Italian Battleship name Giulio Ces. is misspelled on the front of the counter. French HQ units should have a dotted white line on the backs of the counters. British Battleship counter Revenge is missing (Gunnery 3, Armor 10, Movement 28). Players may substitute the Royal Oak counter for all scenarios starting in 1940 or later.

MAP

East Russia should be East Prussia. GR abbreviation in East Prussia should be GE. Soviet EP Cost Chart should have an asterisk (*) following "Airfield."

ORDERS OF BATTLE

UK 1942: replace "capital ship" with "battleship." US 1943: 4/82/2 air unit should be 4/8/2. German Starting Forces: The Germans begin the Campaign Scenario with 2 Offensives marked on the OFF Track. German 1942: Add Army Group Headquarters F. German 1944: Add 4-3 Inf (x4), not x6 as listed.

RULES

Case 2.1 (Clarification). EP Income and Debits: Enemy Resource Hexes that are captured must be free of enemy ZOC if they are to add their EP value (+2) to the conquering country's EP total. Home country Resource Hexes may be in an enemy ZOC and yet still provide their EP value (+3) if they are garrisoned by a friendly ground combat unit. Case 3.51 (Addition). A Destroyed Installation that is not in sup-

ply can be repaired for a cost of 4 EPs.

Case 3.6 (Addition). The player that has the initiative during the previous 3 Monthly Turns has the option of placing all of his units on the map first or of allowing his opponent to place all her units on the map first.

Case 3.6 (Clarification). Players construct their units secretly and simultaneously.

Case 6.3 (Clarification). Attacking Allied/defending Axis air units are placed in the Allied section of the Strategic Bombing box. Then attacking Axis/defending Allied units are placed in the Axis section of the Strategic Bombing box.

Case 7.1 (Clarification). Add to paragraph 2: STPs and ATPs can be built to the track limits of each country (thus Italy can build no ATPs as she has no track for them).

Case 11.3 (Addition). Naval units may move through coastal hexes, including ferry hexes, regardless of the presence of enemy land units. An enemy controlled fortification, however, adjacent to a ferry hexside, blocks all friendly naval units from passing through the crossing.

Case 11.7 (Clarification). Add to paragraph 1: The player who had the Initiative that turn moves first in the Endphase.

Case 20.3 (Clarification). Change the last sentence to: It must be reactivated to drop or attack, however."

Case 25.4 (Addition). Die Roll Modifiers (Terrain): *Ferry Cross-

ings. If all attacking units must attack across a Ferry Crossing hexside, apply a -2 modifier.

Case 25.6 (Clarification). Add to paragraph 1: Retreating stacks may split up.

Case 25.8 (Clarification). The rule applies only to units moving voluntarily; i.e., not when a unit or stack is forced to retreat.

Case 27.6 (Change). Multiple Exploitation: Movement of all Exploiting stacks is completed before resolving any of the Exploitation attacks.

Case 28.7 (Addition). Iraq Land Transit Box. The box may only be used by the partnership controlling Mosul, in Iraq. Land and Air units transported into the Persian Gulf may, during the Movement Phase they disembark, be placed into the Iraq Land Transit Box. Air units may change base to Mosul (only) during the following Naval and Air Phase. Land units may be placed on any map edge hexes from E5010 to E4908 (inclusive) during the following Movement Phase, but may move no further that turn. If all the above hexes are friendly to the opposing player, land units may not enter the map from the Iraq Land Transit Box.

This procedure is reversible; i.e., Land and Air units in Iraq may enter the Transit Box by changing base from Mosul (air) or moving to one of the listed map edge hexes on one turn and entering the Transit Box during the Movement Phase of a following Turn. If Mosul is captured while units are in the Iraq Transit Box, those units must be transported out of the Box via Sea Transport on the next Naval and Air Phase. If the owning player cannot do this, all units remaining in the box are eliminated.

Case 29.3 (Clarification). There is no rail movement in Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, and Finland) outside of the USSR.

Case 30.3 (Clarification). Armor units can trace supply through march hexes.

Case 33.1 (Addition). Effects of Conquest (on naval units): When

minor country naval units become part of a major-power fleet (following the conquest of the minor country), the naval units are immediately picked up and placed with the nearest stack of friendly naval units. This move is not subject to interception and requires no movement points.

Case 37.1 (Addition). Italian as well as German EPs may be used to rebuild Axis ally infantry destroyed in the same turn.

Case 37.1 (Clarification). The USSR "home country" may include parts of Romania and Finland if the USSR has annexed those regions.

Case 38.5 (Addition). Soviet Minor Nation Conquests. This rule is in effect if the Soviet Union is not at war with another partnership. The Soviet player may invade Bessarabia and the Baltic States (Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania) without making these territories friendly to the Axis. If Poland has been conquered by the Axis, the same rule applies to the Polish hexes east of the temporary border.

None of these areas receive forces; as soon as the invasion takes place, the area is immediately considered conquered. An Axis move into any of these areas is always regarded as an invasion of the Soviet Union if the Axis and Soviets are not already at war.

Case 40.2 (Clarification). HQs, Generals, and Air units cannot be used as garrisons.

Case 42.4 (Clarification and Addition). Italian Restrictions: Italy can actively enter the war when a Western Allied-controlled port hex on the Mediterranean, with the exception of Corsica, is not garrisoned by or in the ZOC of a Western Allied land unit, fortification, or fortress.

Case 45.2 (Clarification). The Axis gets a total of five air bases at the start of this scenario.

Case 46.0 (Clarification). Campaign Game: The Axis player has the initiative during the September 1939 Turn. The Campaign Scenario begins at the start of the September 1939 Turn. □

The Good Ol' Days I



The Good Ol' Days II



FACTS OF LIFE in the MIDDLE AGES

By Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

MOST FANTASY games are set in a background that more or less resembles the European Middle Ages, and yet all too many players of such games play their characters as if they were completely modern.

To some extent this is inevitable; most adventurers in fiction, from Conan the Cimmerian to James T. Kirk, are really very 20th-century personalities living in very 20th-century cultures, for the excellent reason that the readers (or by extension to adventure gamers) are best able to relate to their own kind.

There are, however, some egregious and common anachronisms which show up frequently in play and which could be easily avoided. Avoiding such anachronisms can't help but make the background and events of a campaign seem more consistent. Improved consistency, in turn, makes it easier to suspend disbelief, an essential step in storytelling, whether it be on the big screen, between the covers of a book ... or on a table gridded in 25mm squares.

Here, therefore, is a discussion of some of these anachronisms.

1. THREE SCORE AND TEN

The natural life expectancy of a human being, probably at the very least since Cro-Magnon days, has always been about seventy years—assuming that nothing went wrong.

The trouble was that almost invariably, something went wrong. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—War, Famine, Pestilence, and Death—rarely rode alone. Most commonly they accompanied one another, and frequently they had other riding companions: Slavery, Poverty, Murder ... the list is almost endless.

The result was inevitable. While industrialized nations in the western world enjoy life expectancies approximating or even exceeding the traditional three score and ten years, this is a very recent development. This important fact is frequently obscured because most people have trouble believing that other places in space/



time are much different than their own present. "As is was, so shall it be."

As little as a century ago, as near to us as these very United States, the life expectancy was about forty years. Think about that—forty years. Two score and none. And it had been climbing very steadily throughout history.

On the grassy savannahs where the human race evolved, the life expectancy was probably on the order of 12-15 years. Many thousands of years later, perhaps a couple of thousand years before the birth of Christ, it had probably climbed to somewhat more than twenty years; by the time of the Roman Empire it was probably about 30, perhaps even a bit more.

Then came the European Dark Ages and things got worse for a while.

Some people, luckier or stronger than others, lived out their seventy years, or more—but they were very few and far between. That was why the elderly were treated with respect, as a rule. They were the only ones who remembered what life was like, who

had any conception of what had come before.

How does this all affect the players? Most fantasy games which mention the age of a character at all usually have starting characters beginning their adventuring careers at 18 years or thereabouts. To a person in our culture, that seems reasonable: childhood is over, it's time to choose a path in life.

But in actual medieval society, all the paths led downhill from 18. With a life expectancy of 30 years, an 18-year-old has already lived 60% of his or her life—as if people in our society didn't finish high school until the age of 42!

Most of the people simply accepted their fate. It is likely, however, that many adventurers are motivated to the wandering life by an awareness of their impending mortality. For those of you who remember it, or can catch it on reruns, the old TV series *Run For Your Life* could be very instructive.

2. RELIGION

Religion is where most games diverge most clearly from the European Middle Ages.

Europe at the time was dominated to an incredible degree by one religion, and an unusual one at that in that it denied the existence of all but a single god. That religion had even spread to Africa and the Middle East, when you stop to consider that Christians, Muslims, and Jews all worship the God of Abraham and thus could with some justice be said to be branches of a single religion, or at least of a single religious concept.

If a game background has a Christian religious theme, then to be devout is probably necessary to remain alive. Those who are not conspicuously devout will be suspected of being heretics, especially if they are strangers. Those who openly worship another god are obviously heretics.

Heretics will generally be put to death, the quicker the better. Organized religion didn't go in much for tolerance in those days.

Magic didn't fare any better than heresy. In some places, during some periods, it was possible to be recognized as a "white" sorcerer, aligned with the forces of righteousness. But a single malicious rumor could get the most innocent of sorcerers hung after torture, convicted of Satanism.

In other times and places, the simplest sleight-of-hand was clear proof of witchcraft, heresy, and Satanism.

Of course, you'd be given a fair trial first. . .

A typical test of an accused heretic, witch, or Satanist (most commonly all

three charges were made at once) was the trial by water. The suspect was bound and thrown into a pond or stream. If they floated, they were obviously using sorcery and were guilty.

If, on the other hand, they sank, then they were even more obviously guilty, because sorcerers would naturally conceal their abilities, even under duress, in order to avoid punishment. Of course, in that case, the problem resolved itself when the bubbles stopped rising.

Most fantasy game campaigns are not monotheistic in any event. They more commonly assume that there is a whole pantheon of gods, none with infinite power.

These gods tend to be capricious and characterized by very human personality flaws. They are also closer to everyday life than the Christian god is.

Although the individual gods are weaker, the religion remains probably the most dominant aspect of life. After all, you have to be especially careful of the wishes of all the deities when they might personally take an interest in you.

Which they did, from time to time. When Odysseus returned to Ithaca, Athena not only provided him with disguise and information, she joined him in the final mop-up of the crew that was trying to seize his wife and property. Nor was this something mystical or symbolic, this aid; Athena was perched in the rafters with her bow, sniping.

Not every worshiper gets such special treatment, of course; Odysseus had been an extraordinarily faithful worshiper under very trying conditions for many decades. Still, one never knew.

In a fantasy campaign with a pantheon of gods, while characters should have a god they worship on a regular basis, one related to or favoring their profession, they may also frequently make donations or sacrifices to other gods for special situations. Since these gods are not mutually exclusive, it would not be heresy for a worshiper of Athena preparing for a sea voyage to seek the blessing of Poseidon.

(It might not be heresy, but on the other hand, it would be poorly-advised: Athena and Poseidon don't get along. Always you have to watch out for the personality quirks of the gods in this type of background.)

3. DISEASE AND DEATH

Not infrequently, a player will attempt something like putting wine on an infected wound, or cauterizing it, in an attempt to sterilize it.

Stop them.

The germ theory of disease wasn't proposed until the late 19th century. Prior to that time, all the myriad conceptions about disease, what it is, and how to fight it, had one thing in common: they were wrong.

Certainly some herbal cures were used—against relatively minor ailments. Probably an equal number of patients died because of unsanitary or poisonous “cures.”

Among the many medical facts not known in the Middle Ages, or known to a few scholars and widely disbelieved by everyone else, you could find such tidbits as:

The head, and specifically the brain, is the seat of consciousness.

The heart pumps, and what it pumps is blood, which flows through the body. (Everyone else knew that the heart is the center of the soul—a notion which persists in Valentines even today.)

Rats spread disease.

Fleas spread disease.

Filth spreads disease.

People spread disease.

(Where did disease come from, then?

It varied, but usually demonic possession was at fault. Of course, it could also be an indication that the sick person was a sorcerer, heretic, or witch.)

Keeping a wound clean will prevent gangrene.

Keeping yourself clean will help keep you from contracting or spreading disease. (In fact, baths were widely suspected of causing disease!)

The mind can become ill; the mind can recover from illness. (More possession or sorcery. In fact, any misfortune might be blamed on evil influences. If there was an Inquisitor listening, the village gossip could murder scores of people with a few minutes' talking.)

I'm sure you get the idea. If you want to see what kind of conditions people really lived under, you might like to check out two movies: *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, and *Monty Python's Jabbawocky*. They both portray life pretty accurately.

Except that the Middle Ages wasn't that funny.

4. TRAVEL

It is usually claimed that the average human, throughout history, never traveled more than five miles from home. That's not quite true: invasions and migrations kept things stirred up quite a bit.

It would be more accurate, perhaps, to say that the average human never traveled more than five miles if it could be avoided.

Most fantasy maps are scaled at

about five miles to the hexagon. A citizen of one of those hexes might, during the course of his life, visit a couple of the adjacent hexes, Or he might not.

How far do you commute to go to work every morning? You might walk two or three miles. The bus might carry you five or ten miles.

If you have a car, there is almost no limit. I have a friend who commutes sixty miles, one-way, everyday.

I have relatives who live about 500 miles away. Last week, as I write this, I visited them for a couple of days. Just to say hello; we hadn't seen each other in a while. That's 100 hexes away on the average fantasy map. Most maps aren't that wide.

And where did my relatives live? In an adjacent state. The other side of the country is six times farther away. I have never been there, but my parents have, many times, to attend business meetings, or just to see the sights.

5. POLITICS

Politics at the local level was fairly simple in the countryside—you did what the local noble told you to do, and you did it now.

The noble was, of course, expected to guard and help his peasants—but peasantry was just a step from slavery, and the peasants were frequently no better off than the average slave.

In the towns things could get confusing, with civil leaders (usually selected from the merchant class) at odds with the merchant classes. If this sounds like a shaky foundation, read your morning paper's local section; things haven't changed that much.

Democracy was virtually unknown. If the people ever did obtain political power, the result was, as has been the case throughout history, generally catastrophic. Tyranny at best, anarchy and mass murder more often.

You probably know that democracy was invented in ancient Greece; you have probably read of the Golden Age of Athens. Well, they did have a democracy: all four thousand or so citizens got their say in how things were run.

The two million or so slaves were, of course, not citizens. They were rarely consulted about anything.

That's the secret to running a democracy: deciding who the citizens are going to be. Nor has this changed much. Consider how many people are not citizens in the United States, in the sense that they are not allowed to vote and thus have no say in what their rulers do: everyone under the age of 18, many felons, persons deemed incapacitated for mental reasons, and all “foreigners.”

If you are interested in the theory and practice of limitations on the franchise (the right to vote), I might recommend that you read Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, in which the franchise is a key issue. Heinlein also discusses the subject further in *Expanded Universe*, in connection with *Starship Troopers*. *Expanded Universe* also has discussions of the Soviet Union and of the American educational system which shed light on how the right to vote can be restricted, negated, perverted, or sabotaged.

6. SEX

I saved the best for last.

Romantic love is an historically recent invention, but I shan't bother to lecture you on what society is like without it, partly because I have trouble understanding it myself and partly because romantic love is, in fable, film, book, and game, invariably inserted into the background.

So let's talk about sex. Let's talk about how uncommon it is.

There are no contraceptives. No, let me rephrase that. There are no contraceptives worth anything. There are no other methods of birth control. (Well, there's one other method, but it works so unreliably even today that it's more

of a joke than a methodology.)

This tends to put an amazing damper on things. There are strong social constraints on women becoming pregnant in places and times not approved by law. There are extremely harsh penalties inflicted on males who make the wrong females pregnant.

So in a properly-run campaign, characters—male characters—who combine the attributes of James Bond, Lothario, and Bluebeard should find a deplorable shortage of females for casual alliances—and those that are available will have a chance of becoming pregnant, which will be a disaster for the player-character no matter what he does.

As for female player-characters, pregnancy could ruin the character as an adventurer forever, so naturally adventuring women will avoid sex as much as possible. They needn't be as obsessed with abstinence as, say Red Sonja, but almost.

The best general advice for role-playing a medieval character is to remember that one of the most insidious misconceptions there can be is the belief that everyone else in the world is pretty much like you and your friends.

And the farther away from you they are, in space and time, the more wildly different they will be. □



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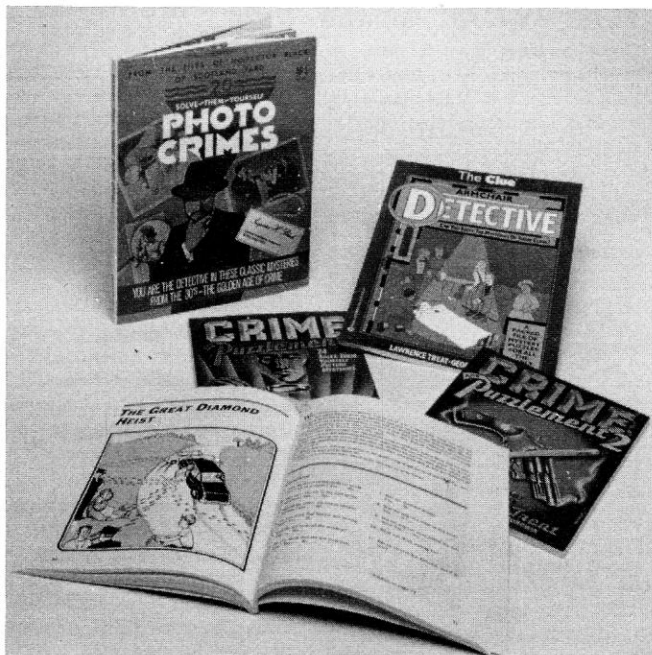
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NEW GAMES

Continued from page 43

tile weapons, defense systems, sensors, tractoring device, shipyard stations, crew, stellar inhabitants, etc.

FOR AUTO-COMBAT GAMES

Street Fighter (Task Force, 32pp, \$7.95) by Aaron Allston. An Autoventures solo module. "Your fare has just led you into the no-man's land of the Old City and pulled an Uzi submachine gun on you. Even if you overpower him, you will be alone and lost among the dangers of the Old City." Available thru *Sleuth* (order TF-1005).

FOR STAR FIRE

New Empires (Task Force, folio, \$8.95) by David W. Crump and David M. Weber. A strategic campaign system for 2 or more players. "Each player manages the economy and military forces of an empire seeking greater wealth and a dominant position in the galaxy." Available thru *Sleuth* (order TF-1032).

FOR STAR FLEET BATTLES

Commander's SSD Book 1 (Task Force, 48pp, \$4.95) by the Amarillo Design Bureau. SSD

sheets of space control ships, exploration ships, police ships, light tactical transports, and medium carriers. Available thru *Sleuth* (order TF-3018).

Supplement 3: Fast Patrol Ships (Task Force, folio, \$9.95) by Stephen V. Cole. "Meaner than fighters, cheaper than starships, but with a punch no starship can ignore." Six scenarios and a campaign game. Available thru *Sleuth* (order TF-3019).

ISC Dreadnought (Task Force, miniatures, \$5.50). Available thru *Sleuth* (order TF-7250).

ISC Star Cruiser (Task Force, miniatures, \$3.95). Available thru *Sleuth* (order TF-7252).

ISC Destroyer (Task Force, miniatures, \$4.95). Available thru *Sleuth* (order TF-7256).

MYSTERY GAMES

Gumshoe: The Hardboiled Detective in the Thirties (Sleuth, boxed, \$35) by Gary Grady. For 1-6 players. You as an operative for the Continental Detective Agency have nine days to solve a series of mysteries which haunt San Francisco. Available thru *Sleuth* (order SL-2000).

Detective Conseil (Jeux Descartes, binder). French edition of *Sleuth* Publication's *Consulting Detective* game.

GAMEBOOKS

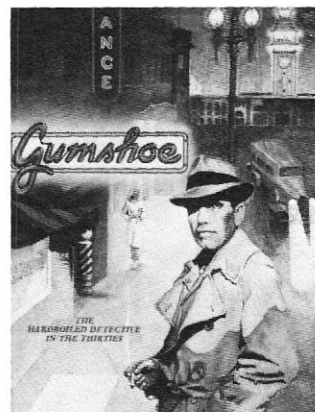
Endless Quest Book 29: Tower Of Darkness (TSR, 160pp pocket-book, \$2.25) by Regina Oehler Fultz. Based on the *Dungeons & Dragons* game. Adventure into a tower which is said to be bewitched and into which more than one villager has entered . . . never to be seen again.

PLAY-BY-MAIL GAMES

Our Time Days (Twin Engine). A time-travel game. Start-up fee of \$15 includes the \$2 64-page rules booklet, the start-up turn, and first five turns.

SOURCEBOOKS

The Palladium Book of European



Castles (Palladium, 48pp booklet, \$5.95) by Matthew Balent. Provides many castle plans with their wall ratings. Available thru *Sleuth* (order PA-410).

1985-1986 Game Buyer's Price Guide (TSR, 300pp pocketbook, \$5.95) by Frank Mentzer, et al. Annotated listings of over 2000 games and game-related products with their highest and lowest prices recorded at auctions.

NOVELS

Dragonlance Chronicles Volume 3: Dragons of Spring Dawning (TSR, 384pp pocketbook, \$3.50) by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman. Conclusion of the fantasy trilogy.

MAGAZINES

The Quill and Scroll 2 (Phoenix Games, 28pp, \$2.50) edited by Matthew Forbeck. Articles include "Gen Con 18: A Review," "Upcoming Game Releases," a fantasy scenario, and a *Panzer Leader* scenario.

The Gamer's Guide to Southern California 1 (Diverse Talents, 16pp, 95 cents). The "yellow pages" of Southern California gaming: clubs, conventions, play-by-mail, buy/sell/trade, retailers, opponents wanted, etc. □

MYSTERIANA

Medical Casebook of Doctor Arthur Conan Doyle: From Practitioner to Sherlock Holmes and Beyond by Alvin E. Rodin & Jack D. Key. This book is the first to deal completely with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as a physician and medical author. Featured are Doyle's medical concepts and writings which represent a valuable contribution to both the

scientific and nonscientific aspects of medicine of the late 19th century. (KR-152 hardback 473pp illustrated \$28.50)

Film Noir: An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style. Meet the cynical and obsessive heroes of *film noir*—a phrase first used by French critics of American film—inhabited by actors like Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre, James Cagney, Joan Crawford,

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Sherlock Holmes and His Creator by Trevor H. Hall. A book of entertaining essays which should be of interest to admirers of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as well as lovers of Sherlock Holmes. An excellent blend of general interest essays and "higher criticisms" of the Holmes stories. (ST-71719-9 softcover 155pp \$5.95)

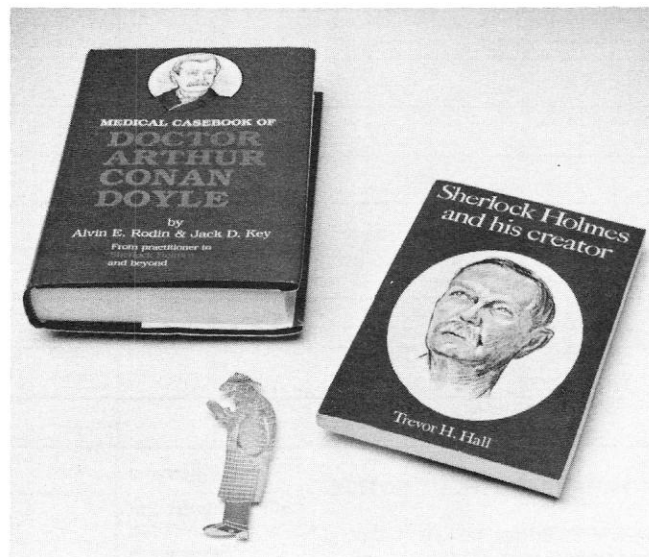
Sherlock Holmes Bookmark. This solid brass silver-plated bookmark is an elegant and charming item with a solid feel and eminently practical. The best way to stay on your trail through the next mystery. (WK-197 \$7.95)

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phrey Bogart as Sam Spade. Weighs over seven lbs. but we'll pay the extra postage. Nearly a foot tall, buy a pair and use them as bookends! (SL-1001-1 \$29.95)

Dashiell Hammett by Julian Symons. From the Continental Op of the *Black Mask* stories to Sam Spade of *The Maltese Falcon* and Nick Charles of *The Thin Man*, the hard-boiled gumshoe was the creation of Dashiell Hammett. In this biography, renowned author and critic Julian Symons presents Hammett as the detective novelist whose precision revolutionized the genre and cuts deeply into the life and literary development of the writer who elevated crime fiction from pulp to a distinguished place in American literature. (HB-623956-6 softcover 178pp illustrated \$12.95)



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NEW ADVENTURE GAMES

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Midnight At the Well Of Souls (TAG, boxed, \$19.95) by Timothy A. Green. Based on the science-fiction novel series by Jack L. Chalker. Includes 150 character races, an introductory scenario, starship blueprints, and a partial map of the Well World. *Available thru Sleuth (order TA-W-1000).*

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness (Palladium, 112pp, \$9.95) by Erick Wujcik. Based on the post-holocaust comic book of the same name. "Contains dozens of mutations, martial arts, ninjitsu, special training, adventure scenarios and more!" Compatible with *Heroes Unlimited*. *Available thru Sleuth (order PA-502).*

The Ysgarth System Book One: Rolecraft (Ragnarok, 24pp + playaid, \$?) by Dave Nalle. First of three books of a revised fantasy role-playing system first published in 1982. Covers characters, skills, and combat.

FOR ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

DL9: Dragons Of Deceit (TSR, 48pp + 28 counters, \$7.50) by Douglas Niles. "Unimaginable terrors await the party as they search the city, seeking a key to the fiery lair of the Dragon Highlord and

his evil minions." Conclusion to the second book of the Dragonlance saga. For character levels 8-10. *Available thru Sleuth (order TS-9137).*

T1-4: The Temple of Elemental Evil (TSR, 128pp + 16pp booklet, \$15) by Gary Gygax. A Greyhawk campaign adventure for character levels 1-8. "... includes the village of Hommllet, the filthy shire of Nulb, and reveals the ruins of the Temple of Elemental Evil and the labyrinths that lie beneath. ... And beyond these ruins even more is revealed." *Available thru Sleuth (order TS-9147).*

Ice Elves (Mayfair, 32pp + insert, \$6) by Bruce Humphrey. "Beyond the dark forests, beyond the ragged mountains, beyond the realm of the humans, lies a forbidding land of ice and snow. ... Your adventurers must trek over the frozen wastes in a quest for the sacred gem. ... A blood-chilling adventure for 4-6 characters of skill levels 7-9." *Available thru Sleuth (order MF-733).*

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Alone Against the Wendigo (Chaosium, 64pp, \$8) by Glenn Rahman. You play a dashing young anthropologist from Miskatonic University on an expedition into the unknown regions of Canada. Solo adventure with 654 entries. *Available thru Sleuth (order CH-2311).*

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Terror From the Stars (Chaosium, 40pp, \$6) by Scott Aniolowski, et al. Adventures to British Honduras and Peru, and "The Field Manual of the Theron Marks Society," a handbook of an underground group of organized Cthulhu investigators explaining all the techniques and tricks they have learned. *Available thru Sleuth (order CH-2313).*

FOR CHAMPIONS

Organization Book 3: The Blood and Dr. McQuark (Hero, 32pp, \$5.95) by Aaron Allston and Patrick E. Bradley. Contains two super organizations, high-tech hardware, base diagrams, background for all important characters, and adventures. *Available thru Sleuth (order HE-21).*

FOR CHILL

Deathwatch on the Bayou (Pacesetter, 32pp, \$6) by Gali Sanchez. Includes two separate adventures, both set in contemporary Louisiana: a tale of the bayou's living dead and the story of an island that claims visitors forever. *Available thru Sleuth (order PS-2013).*

Evenings of Terror with Elvira (Pacesetter, 96pp, \$10) by Mark Acres, et al. A collection of nine adventures, each introduced and concluded with a short narrative by Elvira, TV's Mistress of the Dark. *Available thru Sleuth (order PS-2015).*

FOR CONAN

CN2: Conan The Mercenary (TSR, 32pp, \$6) by Kim Eastland. Players follow Conan in search of the Baron of Aldoc's royal bauble stolen by a lackwit. The trail leads to an underground labyrinth stalked by a band of mysterious masked men. *Available thru Sleuth (order TS-7402).*

FOR DC HEROES

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The Sea Elves (Chaosium, 48pp, \$6) by Elizabeth Cerritelli. Contains the culture and history of the sea elves, their island environment including volcanoes, earthquakes, and Great Waves, magic powers, the creatures of the sea and the archipelago, island plants, and three scenarios. *Available thru Sleuth (order CH-2603).*

FOR LOST WORLDS

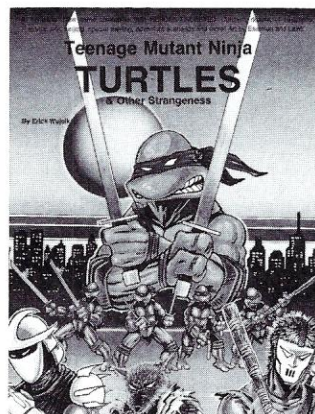
Samurai With Katana (Nova, 32pp booklet + playaid, \$5.95) by Alfred Leonardi. A character with the ability to accumulate "On," a term which combines aspects of honor, compassion, justice, fairness, etc., which is used similarly to Experience Points but is not lost when the character dies but transferred to the next generation. *Available thru Sleuth (order NO-1401).*

Ninja With Ninjato (Nova, 32pp booklet + playaid, \$5.95) by Douglas Huskins. A character with gimmicks: shuriken, caltrops, smoke bomb, itching powder, blinding powder, poison blade, etc. *Available thru Sleuth (order NO-1402).*

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Riders Of Rohan (ICE, 72pp, \$10) by Christian Gehman and Peter C. Fenlon, Jr. "Ride with the Rohirrim as they struggle against hordes of Easterlings and the Orcs of the White Hand." Includes layouts for Helm's Deep, Edoras, Dunharrow, and Harrowdale. *Available thru Sleuth (order IC-3100).*

Thieves Of Tharbad (ICE, 36pp, \$6) by Adventure Architects. Its



broad avenues, public parks and well laid out streets were the envy of the northern cities. . . However, the years have not been kind to Tharbad. . . Although much grandeur remains, most sections of the city have fallen into decay." *Available thru Sleuth (order IC-8050).*

FOR THE PALLADIUM ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Monsters And Animals (Palladium, 168pp, \$14.95) by Kevin Siembieda. Over 150 animals and 90 monsters with notes on the Palladium world. *Available thru Sleuth (order PA-454).*

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Gamemaster Screen (West End, 34"x11" cardstock, \$6). Includes 16pp book by Ken Rolston containing three mini-scenarios. *Available thru Sleuth (order WE-80102).*

Send in the Clones (West End, 48pp, \$8) by Allen Varney and Warren Spector. "Someone is singing treasonous old hit songs over the Alpha Complex public address system, and the Trouble-shooters must track the Commie traitors through—yes—the sewers. . ." For 2-6 players. *Available thru Sleuth (order WE-80104).*

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Gods Of Glorantha (Avalon Hill, boxed, \$18) by Sandy Petersen, et al. Describes 60 major Gloranthan religions for humans and non-humans, for good guys and bad, for men and women, all from an array of different cultures. Provides information for both the gamemaster and the players to accurately portray worshippers of these religions. *Available thru Sleuth (order AH-8577).*

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Stealer Of Souls: A Quest for Vengeance in Ilmora (Chaosium, 48pp, \$6) by Ken Rolston. Based on the Michael Moorcock story of the same name, the scenarios depict a woman's quest for revenge against a deadly conspiracy of merchants in Bakshaan. *Available thru Sleuth (order CH-2104).*

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The Spinward Marches Campaign: Adventures in a War-Ravaged Sector (GDW, 48pp, \$7) by Marc W. Miller. Contains information on the Fifth Frontier War, trade routes, the AI Morai merchant line, 154th Battle Rider Squadron, 4518th Lift Infantry Regiment, bow weapons, and a scenario. *Available thru Sleuth (order GD-261).*

FOR TWILIGHT: 2000

The Ruins Of Warsaw (GDW, 48pp, \$7) by William H. Keith, Jr. and Timothy B. Brown. "Warsaw had been nuked, and nuked hard. Nearly everyone there had been killed. But still, the ruins had things to offer—raw materials such as metal and stone, and protection from the marauders who surrounded it." Includes macro combat rules. *Available thru Sleuth (order GD-503).*

The Black Madonna (GDW, 48pp, \$7) by Frank Frey, Jr. "Silesia, in southern Poland, is the backdrop for a quest for a religious icon of great value. Was the icon taken east by the Soviets? Was it hidden in a cave by Polish patriots? . . . Or, does it rest beneath the ruins of Czestochowa? There is only one way to know for sure. . ." *Available thru Sleuth (order GD-505).*

FOR ANY SYSTEM

The Lexicon: Atlas of the Lost World of Atlantis (Bard Games, 128pp + map, \$14) by Stephen Michael Sechi. The second book of the Atlantean Trilogy featuring detailed maps, information on trade, resources, and the history of the first and second ages of Atlantis. *Available thru Sleuth (order BG-6-9).*

BOARDGAMES

Air Cav: Helicopter Warfare in the Eighties (West End, boxed, \$20) by Tony Merridy. Two-player game of modern and future tactical helicopter warfare with 8 scenarios and 2 campaign games set in either the Middle East or Western Europe. *Available thru Sleuth (order WE-10020).*

Tales of the Arabian Nights (West End, boxed, \$18) by Eric Goldberg. "A Game of Fateful Voyages and Fabulous Stories." For 1-6 players. Features the Book of Tales with over a thousand paragraph-adventures which is the heart of the game. The game involves the use of skills, storytelling, fulfilling quests, trade, etc. *Available thru Sleuth*

(order WE-11003).

Star Trek: The Enterprise 4 Encounter (West End, boxed, \$17) by Bill Eberle, et al. For 2-4 players, each assuming the command of an *Enterprise* and trying to assemble a full crew by rescuing them from adventures, and by taking them from other players. *Available thru Sleuth (order WE-20030).*

4th Reich: Puremen Vs. the Mutants for Control of the World (Task Force, boxed, \$12.95) by Dana Lombardy. For 1-2 players. "Recreate the struggle for control of the world in the far-fetched future. . . The outcome—victory or death—will determine if our future world is mutant or human." *Available thru Sleuth (order TF-2014).*

Musketeers (Task Force, boxed, \$12.95) by R. Vance Buck. For 1-3 players "depicting 17th century France and the adventures of the Three Musketeers. . . The palace and its immediate grounds are the scenes of intrigue and, occasionally, of bloody sword-fights. The famous foursome are fighting for France and the honor of their queen." *Available thru Sleuth (order TF-2009).*

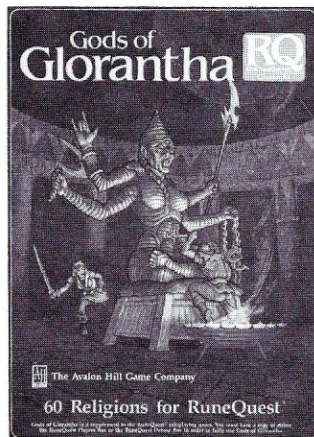
Stellar Conquest: Intergalactic Battle Game (Avalon Hill, boxed, \$24) by Howard Thompson. New edition of a space conquest game first published by Metagaming. *Available thru Sleuth (order AH-859).*

Godsfire: Political Intrigues in the Far Future (Task Force, boxed, \$19.95) by Lynn Willis. A 2-4 player game of interstellar conflict and social reaction in the open star cluster Narym. Blends politics, diplomacy, economics, and war. Ten scenarios. *Available thru Sleuth (order TF-2013).*

Duel For Kharkov (Task Force, boxed, \$31.95) by Jack Radey and David Bolt. A division/regiment level simulation of the 3rd and 4th Battles of Kharkov, 1943, including Soviet Operations "Star" and "Leap" and von Manstein's "Backhand Blow." Six scenarios. A joint project with People's War Games. *Available thru Sleuth (order TF-PG-008).*

Man-to-Man Cavalry Game No. 1: Dragon Vs. Hussar (Balboa, boxed, \$15) by Thomas R. Coveney. Individual cavalry combat in the Horse & Musket era, 1775 to 1830. Rules cover troop types, missile combat, morale & surrender, campaign suggestions, tactics, etc.

Starbattles (Future Combat Simulations, folio, \$12) by Perrin D. Tong. Tactical space combat game. Rules cover acceleration/deceleration, facing, beam/projectile



Continued on page 40

FILM REVIEWS

F/X
YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES
H.P. LOVECRAFT'S HERBERT WEST: RE-ANIMATOR

Reviewed by John Nubbin

F/X

Director Robert Mandel
Producer Dodi Fayed/
Jack Wiener
Screenplay R.T. Megginson/
Greg Fleeman
Music Bill Conti
Photography . . . Miroslav Ondricek

CAST

Rollie Tyler Bryan Brown
Leo McCarthy . . . Brian Dennehy
Ellen Diane Venora

THIS FILM is so dismissable it is barely worth talking about. Once again, corrupt, evil men from our corrupt, evil government, working hand in hand with the mob, set up some poor slob to take the fall for their evil doings. Luckily, for the good-guy ethic this nation runs on, the poor slob being set up is cleverer and tougher than the corrupt, evil government, the mob, and all the agents of chaos they can throw at him.

The poor slob is Rollie Tyler, a special effects genius asked to perform his wizardry on behalf of the Justice Department by making an underworld witness "disappear." He's told the "scenario" involves a fake murder. What he doesn't know is that another killing is being planned at the same time—his own.

The movie is the traditional insult-to-our-intelligence for which Hollywood is again becoming famous. Rollie is that boy who can do everything out of nothing; unlike TV's MacGyver, however, Rollie feels under no obligation to explain any of his tricks. So, if he says he can pass himself off as a corpse to doctors, trick people into gluing their

hands onto a gun so perfectly they can't even tell the gun is glued to their hands, carry explosives around in a truck he parks on the street, and on and on and on, well, one just has to believe him.

The problem rests in the fact that *F/X* is just what it claims to be, a film about special effects. It makes no sense, it has gaping plot holes, poor character construction, and very large lapses in logic, but—it does have great special effects. The idea is that we, the audience, are supposed to be so impressed with the tricks we're watching, we forget all about little things like the plot making sense. Any gamer running such a poor scenario would quickly find himself with no one with whom to play ("Why'd you kill my heavily armed, trained assassin who had the element of surprise?" "Because they aren't as clever as my character." "But there was no way for things to work out the way you have them working out.")



Lt. Leo McCarthy (Brian Dennehy) surprises Rollie Tyler (Bryan Brown) at gunpoint.

Copyright © 1985 Orion Pictures Corporation



Rollie Tyler (Bryan Brown) pretends to shoot Lipton (Cliff De Young) before taking some shots at Rosebud.

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"Yeah—but didn't you have fun watching?"

The answer is "no." The American public is getting a tad tired of films with no story, merely lots of pretty pictures. All entertainment needs a strong story to have any sort of mass appeal—not just *F/X*.

YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES

Director Barry Levinson
Producer Mark Johnson
Screenplay Chris Columbus
Music Bruce Broughton
Photography Stephen Goltblatt, B.S.C.

CAST

Holmes Nicholas Rowe
Watson Alan Cox

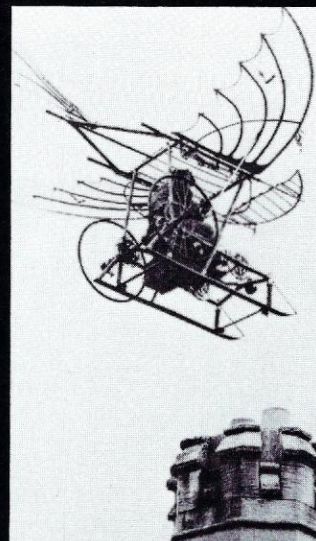
DOES THIS mean that films should abandon special effects? Of course not. Where a movie already has a strong storyline, good effects can only enhance the action on the screen. Such a movie since our last issue was *Young Sherlock Holmes*.

Writer Chris Columbus took the notion of Holmes and Watson meeting in boarding school and ran wild with it. The film makes no hedgings over the fact that this is impossible. It admits openly that Arthur Conan Doyle set that stage for their first meeting during their adulthood. The filmmakers have asked, "Okay—but what would have happened if they'd met years earlier?" and then proceeded to answer that question with an intensely accurate motion picture.

Young Sherlock Holmes is a clever romp through the Holmes Canon. Holmes is not quite what

he will be in the books; he is clever, stuffed with facts, sure of himself, etc., but not on a par with what he will be later. He makes mistakes; he trusts others, cares about others, flies off the handle with the emotions of youth—not at all the controlled super sleuth who will emerge later.

In fact, the film goes to great lengths to show why he is cold and emotionless later, why there are no women in his life, etc. And basically, it succeeds in its undertaking. For gamers, the picture is a lesson in how to adapt fictional characters to their own needs. If you want Doc Savage to go up against the Elder Gods, or Tarzan, or Captain America, or John Carter, or Beaver Cleaver for that



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matter, you have to do your research, and then interpret it. Not only do you have to know everything about the character in his past incarnations, but you have to be able to predict how he or she will act in the new one you have created for them.

Paramount Pictures has done an admirable job with the version of a young Holmes which they freely admit has been cut from whole cloth. Like any good gamemaster, they built a solid premise, constructed nothing but authentic settings for it, and peopled it with characters one has no trouble believing in. Every game of *Traveller* I've played should have been so perfectly drawn.

H.P. LOVECRAFT'S HERBERT WEST: RE-ANIMATOR

Director Stuart Gordon
Producer Brian Yuzna
Screenplay Dennis Paoli/
William J. Norris/Stuart Gordon
Music Richard Band
Photography Mac Ahlberg

CAST

Herbert West. . . . Jeffrey Combs

ANYONE WHO missed this one in the theaters missed a lot. For those who seriously study film, *Re-Animator* was one of 1985's best pictures. A remarkably low-budget film, it has achieved fame and praise from coast to coast and around the world, merely by doing what people have been hoping someone would do with Lovecraft's work for a long time—take it seriously.

Every interpretation of Lovecraft's work to this date has missed the mark by a wide margin. Adapting his stories, which should have been child's play for those involved, has always become a shambles due to the inability of Hollywood to take the material at face value. "Sure, this stuff may have been read and enjoyed by millions, but who's this Lovecraft guy? He never wrote a movie-of-the-week; we'd better fix it." Subsequently, film versions of Lovecraft's tales have always ended as watered-down supernatural thrillers, nothing like the tales that supposedly inspired them. Until now, that is.

Realizing the potential within, the filmmakers here have studied the Lovecraft attitude and made it work before the camera. The picture reeks of Lovecraft's obsessive passion for science, of his understanding of the cold but brilliant researcher type, and of his own unyielding desire for knowledge. The film does take liberties with the original storyline, but not with the story's intent. The ideas Lovecraft wanted to get across come across. No cheap shots have been taken, no artificial laughs interjected for the sake of pleasing that segment of our society which cannot grasp the meaning behind science fiction or fantasy which is taken seriously. Herbert West is presented as a brilliant but obsessed young man who has stumbled on the secret of life-after-death. He is intelligent, reserved, but forceful, and in charge of his destiny. It's about time.

Herbert West: Re-Animator is a picture with a lot of nerve. Completely dismissing the question of

God, it tackles life and death as classroom subjects, capable of being explained in totally academic terms. Religion is pointedly left out of the proceedings. It is too outmoded a concept for what is happening on the screen. There is no redemption at the movie's end; West does not repent his self-centered ways and beg the Lord's forgiveness. God never enters into things as even a possibility. West dies as he lived—as a scientist questing in the unknown for knowledge.

For Lovecraft fans, as well as fans of the Lovecraft-inspired role-playing games, the film is a special treat. The only thing which could be better is the news that the same people are working on a Cthulhu movie. Son of a gun, they are, and if it is as good as *Re-Animator*, it will be a treat indeed, for this crew seems to have learned the central lesson, which is simply to take the material you are working with seriously. It's the only way to run a smooth scenario, or to tell a good story—in any medium. □



Dear Tadashi,

Is *Different Worlds* back on schedule? I hope so. My fans need to read my column on a regular basis or else they'll go into withdrawal.

Merger of the month: Iron Crown Enterprises has taken over the marketing and distribution of the Hero Games line of adventure games (*Champions*, *Fantasy Hero*, *Justice Inc.*, *Danger International*, etc.) as of February '86. ICE has also agreed to continue the publication of Hero's *Adventurers Club* magazine. Hero designers STEVE PETERSON and GEORGE MACDONALD will retain editorial control of the line and will continue to produce support material for ICE to distribute. This allows Steve and George to concentrate on the creative process and leaves ICE to handle the business chores, permitting the twosome to freelance their services wherever opportunity takes them.

Hero's third member, RAY GREER, after considering his options, has chosen to join Steve Jackson Games in Austin TX as an assistant marketing manager. Good luck with the wildcatters.

The other big news: After about a dozen issues, the backing for *Games News* was abruptly pulled and the magazine has ceased publication. Latest news is that publisher DANA LOMBARDY was casting about for new financing. So sad.

Has Mayfair come out with their *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine Game* yet? Mayfair's otherwise optimistic production schedule includes publication of two game modules per month.

Trekkies rejoice! *Star Trek IV* has production with a script rewrite by NICHOLAS MEYER. It's slated for a Christmas '86 release with LEONARD NIMOY directing and co-starring with WILLIAM SHATNER.

NEWS ITEM-LOCAL CHURCHES SPEAK OUT AGAINST ROLE-PLAYING GAMES CHARGING THEM TO BE "SATANIC."



Who's the one that's been spreading the rumor that Sleuth's bought Chaosium?

Rumour reports that Victory's *Dr. Ruth Game* is the bestselling of all the Avalon Hill/Victory Games titles and that it is directly responsible for the substantial rise in Monarch Avalon's stock value. Looks like they had a good Christmas.

But TSR sure didn't. They report one of the worst *Dungeons & Dragons* Christmas sales ever. How depressing.

Paramount is gearing up for a big-screen version of *The Untouchables*—without ROBERT STACK. It will be Eliot Ness vs. Al Capone and all the other gangsters of the '20s but without the original cast members of the vintage series. The new *Untouchables* will feature a screenplay by DAVID MAMET.

Are we ready for this? Universal Studios will release this summer GEORGE LUCAS's feature film based on Howard the Duck. They won't release photos of the critter but they tell me it's not animated.

The Game Designers' Guild is seeking to raise its membership to include all game designers, including computer game designers, play-by-mail game designers, educational game designers, simulation designers for the military, designers of psychological or theatrical role-playing exercises, etc. The Guild's ambition is to become the professional organization for game designers of all sorts and it wants your membership. If

you've had a game published, contact Guild President Greg Stafford, c/o Chaosium Inc., PO Box 6302, Albany CA 94706-0302 for more details.

DINO DeLAURENTIIS is bringing back King Kong to the screen and is now looking for a woman to play the scientist who brings Kong back to life. I don't think he'll bother approaching JESSICA LANGE.

And director MICHAEL WINNER reports that he's having problems securing the services of MARLON BRANDO to play the part of villainous Red Skull in the screen adaptation of the comic book hero Captain America as he now considers acting "trivial and boring."

Can you confirm for me whether DAVE ARNESON is working for Sleuth or not? I'm told he can be contacted there.

A noted anthropologist stunned his colleagues in a speech at UC Berkeley when he declared without doubt that human evolution has turned around and mankind is headed "back to the caves and the trees." When asked how he came to such a fantastic conclusion, the scientist replied, "It was after reading some of the recent published remarks of Attorney General Edwin Meese."

Love,

Gigi



DELTA FORCE

America Strikes Back!™



AMERICA STRIKES BACK!

DELTA FORCE — The role-playing game of an elite anti-terrorist commando unit.

The terrorists strike without warning, without mercy, taking hostages, issuing their demands and threats. Shadowy organizations with names like the PLO, Islamic Jihad and KGB seek to overthrow the West in sneak attacks of blood and terror.

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Delta Force is the role-playing game of a fictional elite anti-terrorist commando unit based on the U.S. Special Forces Operational Detachment — Delta. Whether it's an assault on a hijacked 727 in Beirut, the rescue of POWs from a jungle camp or the destruction of a secret A-Bomb lab in the Libyan Desert, *Delta Force* is trained and equipped to fight the terrorists on their own ground — and win!

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Designed by William H. Keith, Jr.

DELTA FORCE (BASIC SET) — Includes a book of game rules, a book of weapons and terrorist organizations, a book of missions, dice and a gamemaster screen.

Format — Boxed; **Stock Number** — 4502; **Price** — \$7.95; **Available** — May.

DELTA FORCE: TERROR AT SEA — A module which includes diagrams of an ocean liner, a mission briefing, special rules and background on the PLF.

Format — Folio; **Stock Number** — 4502; **Price** — \$7.95; **Available** — May

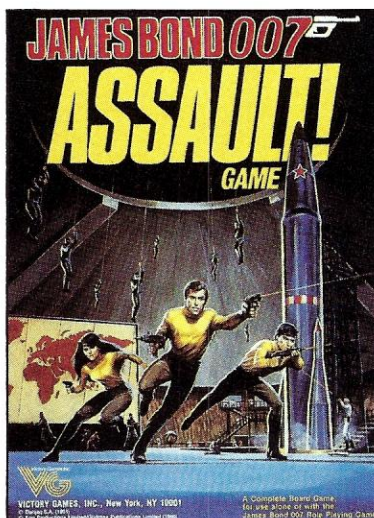
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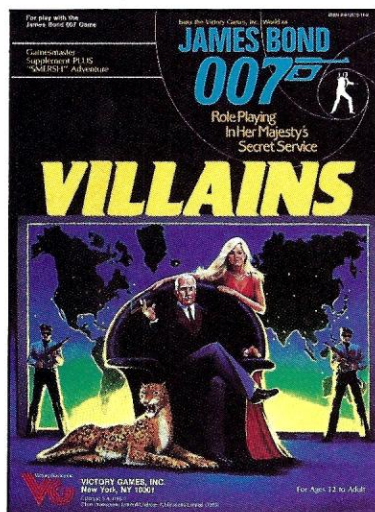
TASK FORCE GAMES, 1110 N. Fillmore, Amarillo, TX 79107

Three New Releases for Spring 1986 for the Award-Winning James Bond 007 Role Playing Game, from **VICTORY GAMES, INC.**

**Now Available!
The Latest Exciting
Additions to the
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This spring, we have expanded the world of James Bond 007 as never before, by adding a complete system for playing out commando combats in *Bond Assault*; detailing 7 complete new Major Villains — and fleshing out SMERSH — in *Villains*; and providing a totally original adventure with *You Only Live Twice II: Back of Beyond*.

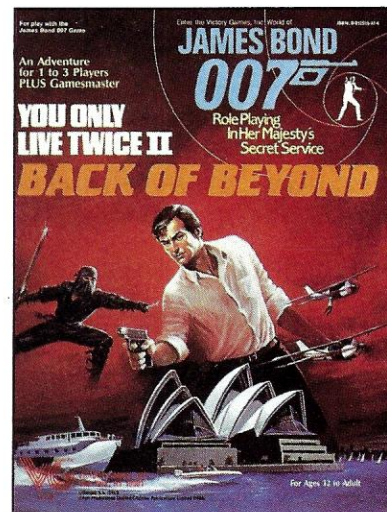


BOND ASSAULT

\$14.95

A Complete Assault System for James Bond 007 Role Players and Simulation Gamers

At last, a revolutionary game system design that allows you to play the most involved assaults! Using the famous assault on the rocket base in *You Only Live Twice*, **Bond Assault** uses individual playing pieces, a grid map, and an easy to understand set of rules to provide an exciting game of commando combat. Bond, Tiger Tanaka, and Kissy Suzuki, together with their intrepid Ninja band, must descend the perilous "volcano" and prevent the rocket launching. **Includes:** Rules Booklet, one 22" x 32" Mapsheet, 176 individual Playing Pieces (plus special pieces), one Range Stick, two Decimal Dice, Counter Tray.



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Are You Ready to Challenge Some of the Deadliest Foes Ever to Threaten the World of James Bond 007?

Energize your James Bond Campaign with seven new and original Major Villains and Bond's long-time nemesis, SMERSH. Each Major Villain presents a new challenge for your players as they try to thwart his plans. Test the intelligence and survival instincts of your players to the maximum against SMERSH, with its fierce motto, "Death to Spies!" **Package Includes:** illustrated 72-page booklet detailing the seven new Major Villains, Fortress descriptions, and detailed floorplans, 10 M.I.6 Dossier Sheets, 32-page SMERSH booklet, including a SMERSH adventure.

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Adventure Module: \$7.95

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Q lab security has been breached! A file containing chemical warfare secrets from Nazi Germany is missing, stolen by one of the most trusted and loyal Q Branch technicians. You must find and plug the security breach, and retrieve the missing file. Your search will take you from the cold death of a wintry London to the merciless desolation of the Australian Outback. Can you come from *Back of Beyond*? **Includes:** illustrated 28-page Gamesmaster's Guide, Agents' Briefing Dossier with 6 Mission Sheets, Stand-Up Screen illustrating Major Villain's fortress.



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