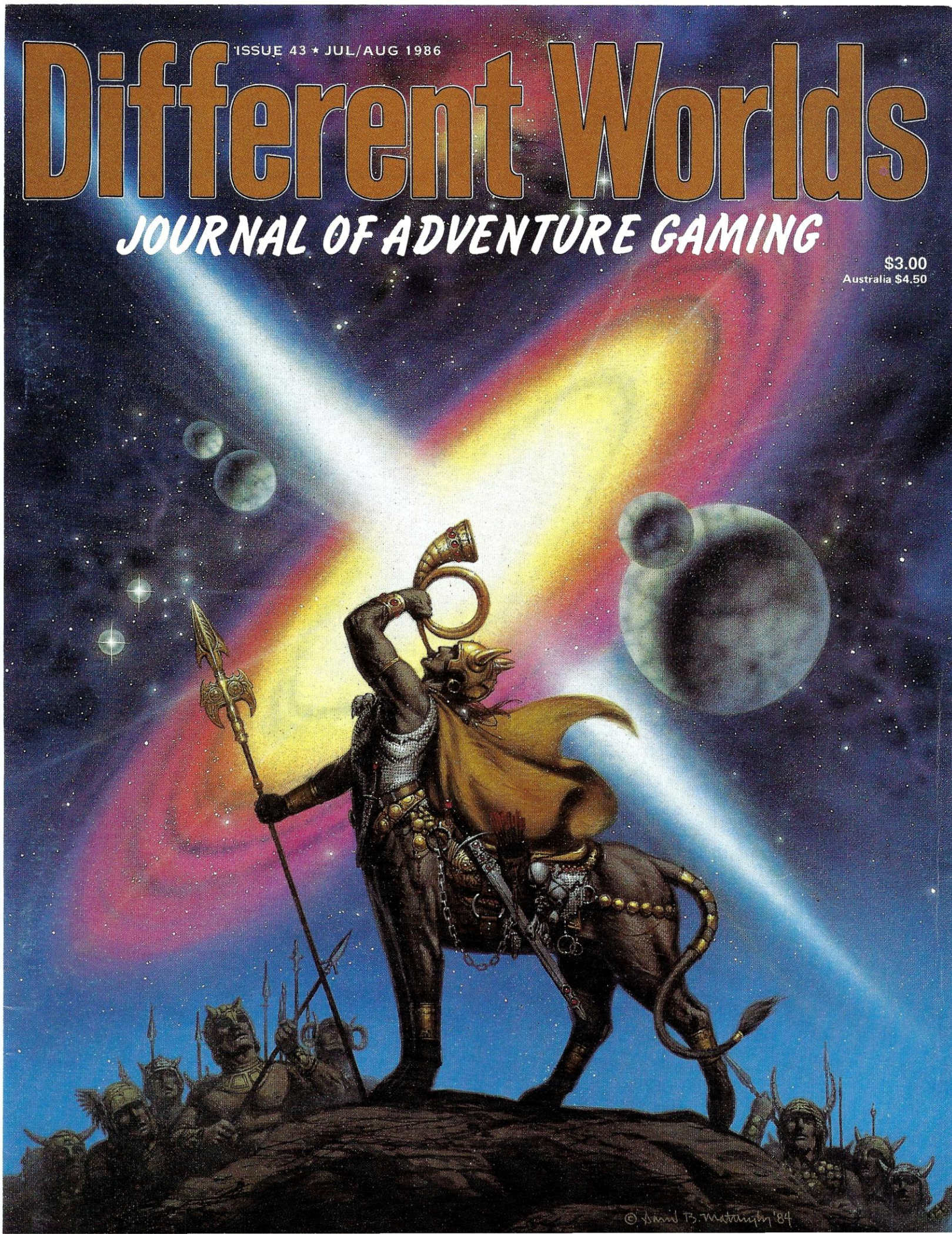
ISSUE 43 ★ JUL/AUG 1986

Different Worlds

JOURNAL OF ADVENTURE GAMING

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DW Poll Results

Poll results of role-playing games and modules can be seen in issue 42. This issue's poll is on page 13.

ABBREVIATIONS: Game Designer's Workshop (GDW), Games Workshop (GW), Selchow & Richter (S&R), World Wide Wargamers (3W).

MAGAZINES

	Title	Publisher	Rating	Resp
1.	Different Worlds	Sleuth	7.67	100%
2.	Adventurers' Club	Hero	6.75	31%
3.	The Space Gamer	Steve Jackson	6.50	77%
4.	Journal Travellers' Aid Society	GDW	6.48	54%
5.	Alarums & Excursions	Lee Gold	6.33	15%
6.	White Dwarf	GW	6.21	85%
7.	The Dragon	TSR	6.08	97%
8.	Stardate	FASA	6.00	33%
8.	The Wargamer	3W	6.00	26%
10.	Game News		5.80	38%
11.	Autoduel Quarterly	Steve Jackson	5.67	38%
12.	Strategy & Tactics	TSR	5.17	31%
13.	Heroes	Avalon Hill	4.89	49%
14.	The General	Avalon Hill	4.87	38%
15.	Fire & Movement	Steve Jackson	4.53	38%
16.	Nexus	Task Force	4.13	38%

Other magazines polled but receiving less than 10% response: Abyss (Ragnarok).

NON-ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

	Title	Publisher	Rating	Resp
1.	Consulting Detective	Sleuth	8.20	38%
2.	Ace Of Aces	Nova	7.65	59%
3.	Cosmic Encounter	West End	7.61	46%
4.	Civilization	Avalon Hill	7.57	18%
5.	Ambush	Victory	7.33	15%
6.	221B Baker Street	Hansen	7.17	15%
6.	Acquire	Avalon Hill	7.17	15%
8.	Axis & Allies	Milton Bradley	7.13	21%
9.	Go		6.79	36%
10.	Rail Baron	Avalon Hill	6.67	23%
11.	Illuminati	Steve Jackson	6.57	54%
12.	Backgammon		6.42	62%
13.	Risk	Parker Bros	6.39	79%
14.	Nuclear War	Blade	6.38	33%
15.	Dragon Pass	Avalon Hill	6.27	38%
16.	Car Wars	Steve Jackson	6.24	64%
17.	Ogre	Steve Jackson	6.21	62%
17.	Diplomacy	Avalon Hill	6.21	49%
19.	Conquest of the Empire	Milton Bradley	6.20	13%
20.	Junta	West End	6.18	28%
21.	Chess		6.12	85%
22.	Squad Leader	Avalon Hill	6.07	38%
23.	Trivial Pursuit	S&R	6.00	79%
23.	Lost Worlds	Nova	6.00	41%
23.	Cribbage		6.00	36%
23.	Kingmaker	Avalon Hill	6.00	33%
27.	Judge Dredd	GW	5.88	21%
28.	Sanctuary	Mayfair	5.83	15%
29.	Monopoly	Parker Bros	5.65	87%
30.	Scrabble	S&R	5.62	74%
31.	Talisman	GW	5.60	13%
32.	Battle of the Bulge	Avalon Hill	5.50	26%
32.	Outdoor Survival	Avalon Hill	5.50	21%
34.	Poker		5.23	77%
35.	Elric	Avalon Hill	5.22	23%
36.	Star Fleet Battles	Task Force	4.75	41%
37.	Fighting Fantasy Books	Dell	4.50	21%
38.	Jigsaw Puzzles		4.30	69%
39.	Bridge		4.25	21%
40.	Canasta		4.18	28%
41.	Dungeon	TSR	4.00	44%
42.	Endless Quest Books	TSR	3.50	62%
43.	Spies!	TSR	2.80	13%

Other games polled but receiving less than 10% response: Star Trek Adventure (West End), Fellowship of the Ring (ICE), Battlecars (GW), Strat-O-Matic Baseball (Strat-O-Matic), Web & Starship (West End). □





CREATE YOUR OWN STORY

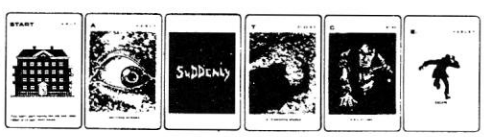
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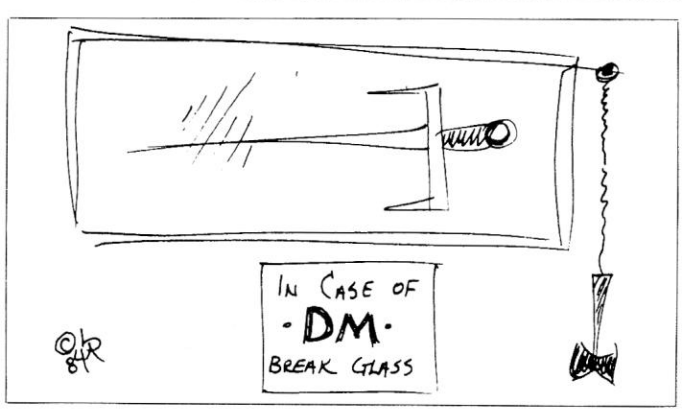
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Example depicts one possible card sequence randomly created from which players would add their own imaginative interpretation in a spirit of fun





Editorial

The Adventurer

THE SAMURAI CAMPAIGN

Gather around me, fellow gamers, and you shall hear of the beginning of a nifty new play-by-mail campaign in which you are all invited.

The plan I have is to create an on-going game campaign where you will initially be given the role of a feudal lord (*daimyo*) who ruled a fief in Shogun Japan, complete with his name, family crest, family history, residence, annual stipend, a map of the realm, a list of all the lords, and the names and addresses of their players. The identity of the player playing the role of the Shogun, however, shall be kept secret and all messages to him will have to be transmitted through the campaign master. There are only 258 positions (but there is always room for more, overflow will play heirs and banner knights).

Future installments of the campaign will cover castles, report on the state of the realm, the use of ninja spies and assassins, etc.

The campaign master is himself Japanese with an extensive knowledge of the samurai era. He has been studying the history of feudal Japan for the past five years, has read over fifty books on the subject, and is eager to learn more. He has made several trips to Japan, visiting many famous sites including the temples of Kyoto, the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, Odawara and Osaka castles, as well as Sengakuji, the temple where the famous avenging 47 Ronin are buried near their master. The campaign promises to reflect accurately the era of the Tokugawa Shogunate, between the years 1600 and 1867.

All who are reading this are invited. Among those who will be extended special complimentary invitations are Dave Arneson, Greg Stafford, and Eric Goldberg.



Entry fee is $5. Send your name, address, and phone number (optional) plus a check or money order for the appropriate amount to: Different Worlds, 2814-19th Street, San Francisco CA 94110. Please indicate whether you wish to remain anonymous and have all communications transmitted through the campaign master.

Please note that an inimitable feature of this game is personalized service, something no other play-by-mail game service can do better. Additional turns (varies in cost) will allow you to make your intentions known to the campaign master (aggressive acts may take several turns to culminate), ask for information (you may or may not get an answer, no guarantees as to accuracy), and make public announcements. Private messages to other lords may be transmitted directly to the player or through the campaign master. Time between turns in the beginning will probably be two months—one month to collate and process the information, and another month to layout the material, print it, and mail out.

Remember: "The best defense is a good offense." "If you do not attack, you shall be attacked."

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ehara □

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By David Mattingly



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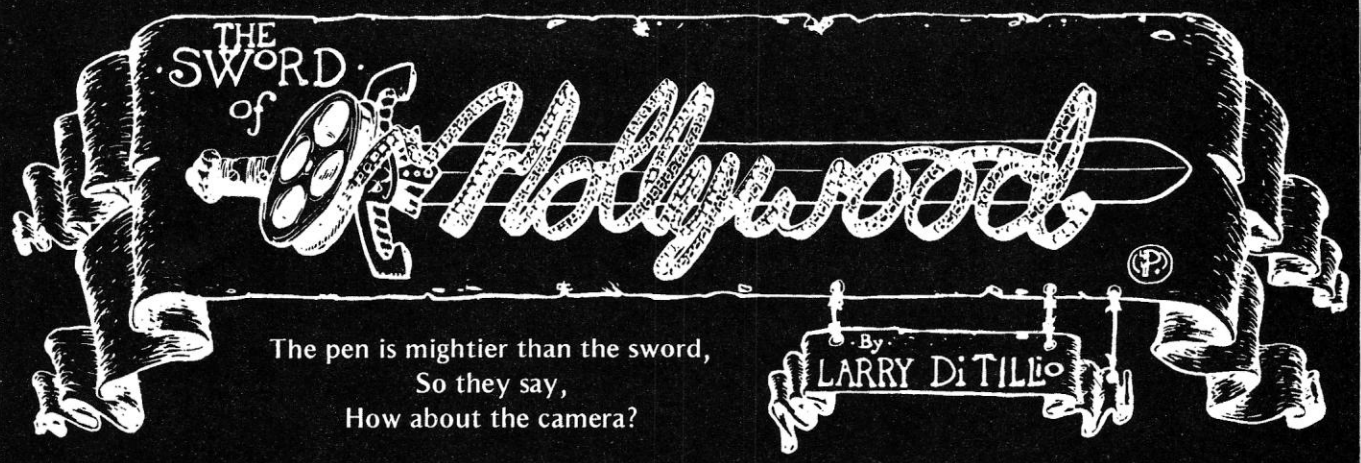
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The pen is mightier than the sword,
So they say,
How about the camera?

Welcome oh slavering scholars of the silver screen. Hope you're all enjoying the summer and those summer flicks. This is the time of the year when the action, fantasy, and science-fiction genre is well-represented on the big screen. Hollyweird's got plenty coming your way and Ye Ol' Sword is gonna whet your appetites a little for things to come. Starting with:

THE DUCK: No, not a *RuneQuest* duck, but the one and only Howard the Duck, a super live-action spectacular from Lucas Films starring Steve Gerber's cockamamie creation. I talked via computer with Mr. Gerber and couldn't resist asking him about the film. Steve informed me he'd read the script and feels that scenarists Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz (the dynamic duo that penned *American Grafitti*) captured the spirit of Howard, though down playing much of the trenchant social comment and "dark side" of the Duck's adventures. For those who are long-time fans, Steve likened the film to one of Howard's lighter adventures such as "The Thief of Bag Mom." As for the Duck himself, he'll be part technology and part person. Steve says there's a lot of weirdness in there, particularly in the opening scene, a scene Mr. Gerber believes will warp qutie a few minds. We could expect nothing less from everyone's favorite fowl. Screenwriter Huyck will also be directing the picture, which stars Lea Thompson, Jeffrey Jones and Tim Robbins. Duck fans, your time has come, get down to your local bijou today and support Howard.

WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?: It ain't the Lone Ranger, but rather everybody's favorite web-slinger, Spiderman. Yes folks, come Christmas we'll be seeing a live-action version of Spiderman swing his way across screen. Other films that will appeal to fans of *Champions*-style action are *Captain America*, *Batman*, and *Dr. Strange*, all of which are in one phase or another of production.

And while we're talking of superheroes, keep your fingers crossed for a live-action TV version of *DNAgents*. Agents scribe Mark Evanier informs me he's on about the fifth version of the pilot and with luck we'll have a weekly series to look forward to in the future.

STAR TREK IV FLYING HIGH: I doubt this is news to anyone, so I'll keep it brief. The new Star Trek film which will be coming your way for Christmas completes the trilogy begun in *Star Trek II*. Our favorite space opera heroes will get a new vessel (and no it's not the *Excalibur*) and the plot involves a bit of time travel. Leonard Nimoy directs, as well as trodding the boards in the role of Mr. Spock.

MORE OPERAS FROM SPACE: *Aliens* is a sequel to the chest-busting terror of *Alien*. In this version luscious Sigourney Weaver, the only survivor of the Nostromo, returns to where it all began to find a whole passel of icky-nasties waiting. It's then battle royal time as Space Marines do their best to stir-fry the creeps before they taint the galaxy.

Next, we have *Starship Redwing*, a tale about a conflict on a mining planet set in the year 2084 and *Space Camp* in which a group of teenage astronauts in training take an unexpected voyage on a space shuttle. On a lighter note, you might check into *Cherry 2000*, in which good guy David Andrews crosses into the lawless zone in the year 2017 to find parts for his defunct lady robot. He finds instead a real live flesh-and-blood lady and their adventures together are the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Also on the robot scene is *Short Circuit*, a hi-tech adventure-comedy in which Number Five, a military weapon robot develops a bad circuit and becomes a living peace-lover. This of course begins a chase as the government and the scientist who created Number Five try to track him down. Steve Guttenberg plays the creator and the whole magilla's directed by John Badham who gave us *Blue Thunder* and *War Games*.

IT IS TO SCREAM: For you sicko types who revel in a good game of *Cthulhu* or *Chill*, there's gut-wrenchers aplenty. Take *Crawl Space*, in which creepy Klaus Kinski (the vampire in the color remake of *Nosferatu*) performs weird experiments on unwilling young ladies in the crawl space of his apartment. When a young female neighbor gets nosy about the mysterious noises in the walls, the result is horrific trouble. Speaking of remakes, Canadian horror-meister David Cronenburg (*Scanners*, *Videodrome*, *Rabid*) is doing a new version of the horror classic *The Fly*. For those of you who have been living in New Jersey all your life, the plot concerns a scientist whose atoms become scrambled with that of a common housefly during an experiment. Knowing Mr. Cronenburg's penchant for graphically gory effects, I'd wager this one will really cause some shakes in horror fans.

Moving from remakes to sequels, you'll want to line up for *Poltergeist II: The Other Side* in which that same poor family moves from California to Phoenix, only to be beset once more by psychic manifestations. Somewhat less classy, but perhaps worth a look-see is *Vamp* in which college frat brothers in search of a stripper wind up at the After Hours Club, a place packed with scintillating females. Problem is, some of them have been around for hundreds of years.

On the futuristic-horror side, we have *Underworld* in which mutants living below the streets of a major city do battle with a criminal underworld. Finally, playing the horror for laughs is *Haunted Honeymoon*, starring Gene Wilder and Gilda Radner in a haunted-house spoof that also boasts funnyman Dom DeLuise as Aunt Kate.

SO YOU STILL PLAY D&D?: Fans looking for fantasy-game ideas could do no better than to check into *Legend*, a long overdue feature directed by Ridley Scott who gave us *Alien* and *Blade Runner*. This time Mr. Scott works on a more primal level as he gives us a tale about a young hermit (Tom Cruise from *Risky Business*) who battles the Evil Lord of Darkness (Tim Curry from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*) to rescue a princess and save the world from perpetual winter. It has goblins, unicorns, faeries, and all that other good stuff. *Legend* should have been released some time ago, but was delayed when the powers-that-be (otherwise known as "those schmucks") decided to change the classical Jerry Goldsmith music score to a more rock-oriented version. We will see the result. Also for fantasy fans is *Labyrinth*, an adventure fantasy about a young girl who must rescue her baby brother from the evil master of the labyrinth played by David Bowie. The catch is, it's a Jim Henson film (Jim is creator of the Muppets) and stars only three humans. Everything else is Muppet technology. It didn't work for me in *The Dark Crystal*, but maybe this time.

Going from big-budget to small, we have *Spellcaster*, a tale about a group of treasure hunters who learn some magical lessons courtesy of a local wizard. This is from Empire International who keeps churning out small-buck fantasy films (*Troll*, *The Dungeonmaster*) which are usually less than satisfying. It was filmed in an authentic Roman castle, so at the very least, it'll give you a glimpse of some real fantasy architecture.

Last in the fantastic genre is *The Name of the Rose*, a tale of death and intrigue set in a 14th-century monastery. It stars F. Murray Abraham (from *Amadeus*) and my all-time favorite, Sean Connery.

A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER: *Pendragon* players have a treat in store when *Lionheart* hits the

Continued on page 32

Have you switched yet to the #1 role-playing system?

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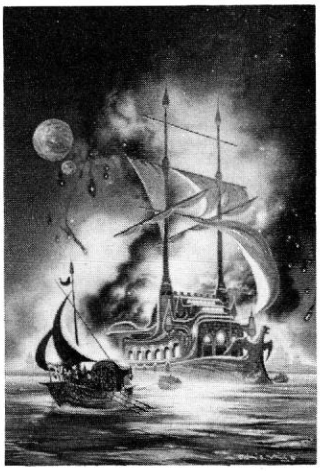
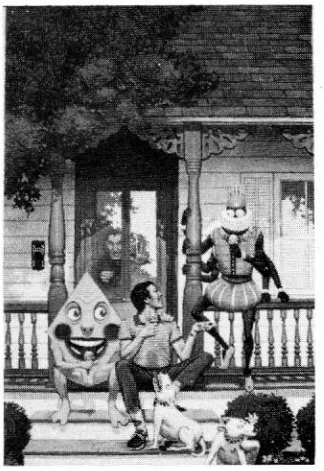
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Cover Artist

The Art of DAVID MATTINGLY

By C.J. Henderson

"Science fiction and fantasy—I love them both; always have."

Not a surprising statement from the subject of this article. David Mattingly's love of both fields goes back a long way. Mattingly was born on June 29, 1956, in Fort Collins, Colorado. His first interest in the fields of science fiction and fantasy came with his discovery of comic books, an interest which developed radically as he grew older. By the time he discovered the big three—Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein—he was already totally entranced by the genres.

More importantly for our purposes, however, his initial interest in art came at the age of eight when he first began both drawing and painting. Serious interest in becoming a professional illustrator developed in his early teens. With that goal in mind, he booked time at the Colorado Institute of Art in Denver upon graduation of high school, and then transferred to the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

After his honorable discharge from the Art Center, he went to work for Howard Ziehn, the producer of the infamous film *Flesh Gordon*. Ziehn's idea was to have Mattingly storyboard the sequel, *The Further Adventures of Flesh Gordon*, which he did much to the producer's satisfaction. Unfortunately, due to a number of circumstances, the film has never been made.

"It was a shame, because it would have been really funny at the time. Now, though, they'd have to change a lot. It was a timely piece, a lot of jokes about how bad disco was—but disco's gone now, so a lot of what they had me design would have to be scrapped and replaced."

His work for Ziehm was not a waste, however. It helped take him to Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California, where he was hired as a matte artist. He married his wife, Barbara, at that time, and then spent the next three years assisting Harrison Ellenshaw.

"Actually," explained Mattingly, "I could have started working at several places then, but I knew I could learn the most from Harrison in the shortest amount of time, so I went with him, instantly—with no reservations."

Together the pair worked on such pictures as *The Apple Dumpling Gang*, *The Cat from Outer Space*, and *The Black Hole*. His work along with that of the rest of the special effects crew on *The Black Hole* was nominated for an Academy Award.

"So then, at 22, I was the youngest full union matte artist in the history of the motion picture industry. After that, there were a bunch of readjustments at Disney, and people left, and retired, and suddenly, I'm 24, and they make me the head of the matte department. That makes me the youngest department head in the history of Disney Studios. I started supervising films at that point, and that got me to wondering. I was making good money, everybody at Disney makes real good money, and I started to realize I was in a trap. I mean, I was set for life; I could have stayed there forever and been well off and content, and all that—but I wouldn't have been doing what I wanted to do, which was to create.

"I was only 24 and I was already moving into management. There were other considerations, too. I don't work terribly well with other people. And the amount of your own work which you could point at in a film and call your own is so small—you had to work off of other people's ideas, with other people—and I hated the staff meetings.

"Basically, I just came to the conclusion that movies weren't for me."

So while working on such films as *The Devil and Max Devlin* and *The Watcher in the Woods*, he began freelancing as well. His first published professional piece was an album cover for *The Commodores' Greatest Hits*. His first professional book cover was *A Wizard in Bedlam* for DAW Books. At Disney, he started the pre-production work on *Tron*, but freelancing had become his consuming interest.

"If we'd have been doing good pictures, I might have stayed, but we weren't. I did twenty, thirty book covers while I was there, and there was just a lot more satisfaction in the freelance than in the 9-to-5."

And so, with a good job and a secure future in his pocket, he resigned from a job thousands of people in Hollywood would have gleefully pushed a grandmother in front of a speeding car for, and launched himself full time into living solely off his talent rather than a corporation's weekly dole.

"It's scary, scary as hell, but I wasn't too worried."

Nor did he have large reason to be. His client list soared over the next few years, capturing the hottest markets in science fiction and fantasy. Ace, Berkeley, and Ballantine Books; *Mediascene/Preview*, *Omni*, and *Cinefantastique* magazines; Lucasfilm; Paramount, New World, and Universal Pictures; Galoob Toys, Playboy Press, Totco Oil, and dozens of others.

Out of all the people who helped him along the way, the artist gives most of the credit to Judy-Lynn del Rey.

"She was an enormous influence on my career. She was extremely hard to work with—she'd never accept anything but my best work. And sometimes, I'd think I'd done my best work, but she'd reject what I'd turned in and tell me to change this or that—she always kept me on my toes.

"But that is the absolute best kind of art direction you can have. I mean, some art directors will point to a canvas you've brought them, and they'll swirl their hand around an area and say something like, 'This part here has to be more cosmic.' What the hell does that mean? The best art directors are the ones who go in and narrow things down to a specific few square inches and then say, 'This blue has to be more intense,' or 'This face is badly constructed,' criticisms you can understand and work with. That's the kind of art direction Judy gave me, and it really, really helped."

Another person who has gained Mattingly's praise is publisher Jim Baen. "I've done more of the best work of my career under Jim than anyone else. He's given me the freedom to expand—to not get

locked into one style of painting."

To an artist today, this is a critical factor. The constant fight over the years has been the struggle between the fine painter and the illustrator. Art directors and publishers have called in artists much the way movie-makers have called upon actors, for a certain talent they happened to like at some time in the past. They call them for a certain look they want, and aren't usually interested in an artist hoping to expand his horizons. Even Frank Frazetta was trapped by the audience's demand for more of the same, so much so that he now feels he might have cheated himself as an artist in his willingness to keep the checks coming.

Such has not been the case with Mattingly, though. His style has changed radically over the years; his latest work shows a new mastery over not only the composition of his figures, but their positioning as well. Where many illustrators fake their way through a painting, Mattingly seems to be going to greater extremes not to. The stiffness of his earliest works has disappeared. The objects and figures which populate his canvases now all belong where he puts them—there is a naturalness to their positions and stances which only comes from continually striving to paint not just correctly, but perfectly.

"I can't help it," he says, "I just hate 'fuzzy' anatomy. I hate artists who fake an area when they don't know how to paint it. I used to work with a lot more photo reference, but that can be deadly. I noticed one day that my covers were coming out stiffer than the color sketches I would do before hand. The problem was, I would do all the color sketches out of my head, and then, after one of them had been approved, I would shoot photo reference for the painting. I found I was following the reference far too closely, and that I was losing the sweeping kinds of lines that got the painting approved in the first place.

"Now I shoot the best photos I can, but I hand them about five feet away when I'm painting so I don't lose the artistry of what I'm trying to achieve."

Nor is it all he is doing these days. One would expect him to be sitting contentedly at home, turning out one painting after another, but such is not the case. Still not satisfied with his work, Mattingly is still taking drawing classes, now at the New York Academy of Art. He's presently taking regular anatomy lessons, while searching for a good dissection class at the same time.

"I need to see how muscles work—what the action/reaction is. It is so important if you really want to do things right."

Doing things right. It's been David Mattingly's motto since the beginning of his professional career. It has led him from relative obscurity to an honored place in his chosen field. Like most artists, though, it's hard to tell when talking to him. If you ask him what he thinks of his own work, he'll tell you he wishes he had Boris's color sense, or Warhola's background control, and a dozen other features he feels he just isn't good enough at yet.

Doing things right. It's the hard road to travel, but for the best, it's the only one available. So far, David Mattingly doesn't seem to be expressing the slightest interest in any of the exits. □

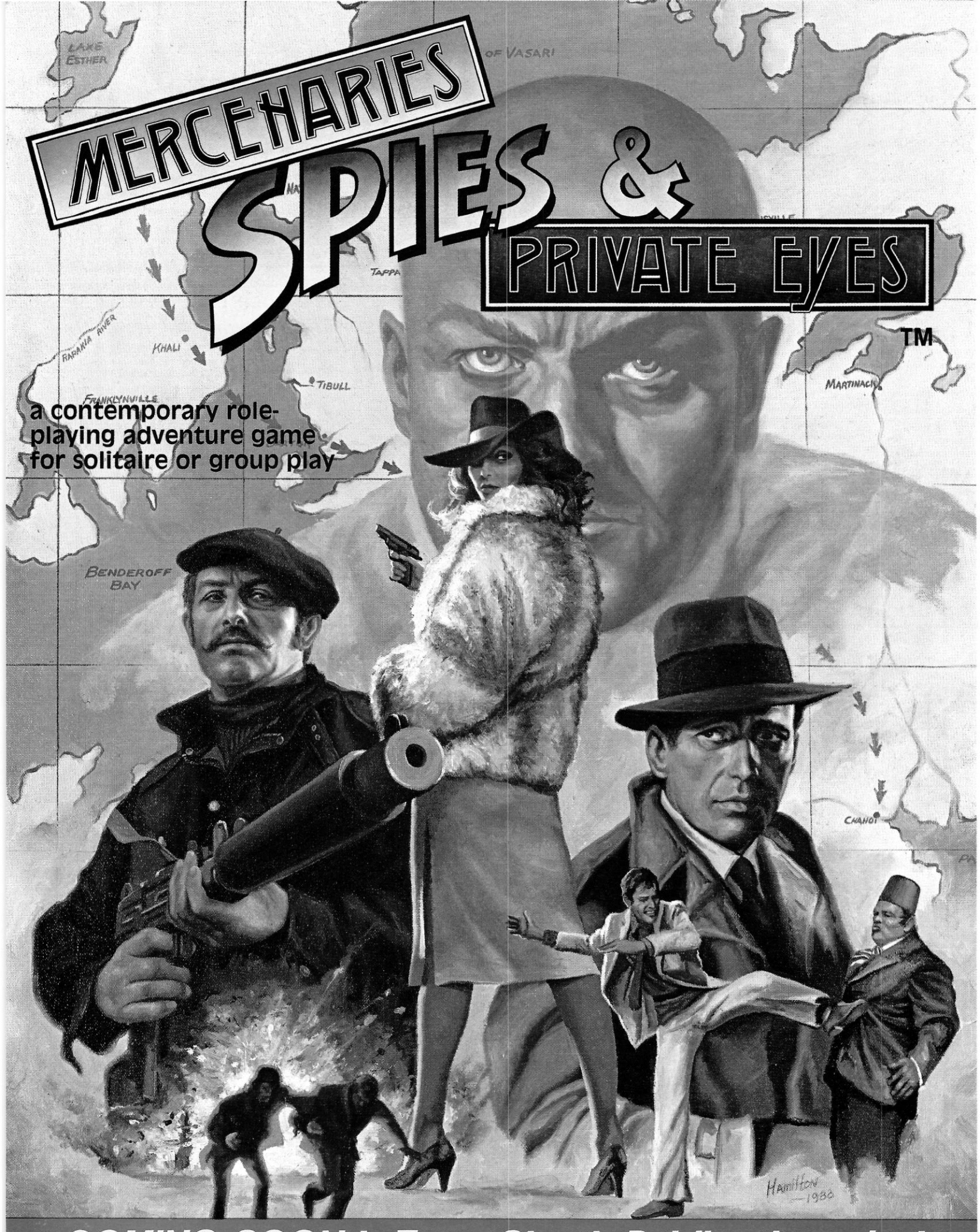


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July 18-20, 1986
At Tulsa OK. Science fiction. Contact (send SASE): OKon, PO Box 4229, Tulsa OK 74159, (918) 622-2225.

SPOKON
July 18-20, 1986
At the Ridpath Hotel, Spokane WA. SF&F. Contact (send SASE): S.A.I.F., PO Box 9582, Spokane WA 99205.

TIMECON '86
July 25-27, 1986
At the Red Lion Inn, San Jose CA. SF&F, adventure gaming, filksinging. Contact: TIMECON '86, 124-H Blossom Hl Rd, San Jose CA 95123, (408) 629-8078.

GEN CON 19 Game Fair
August 14-17, 1986
At MECCA Auditorium & Convention Center, Milwaukee WI. Adventure gaming. Contact: GEN CON, PO Box 756, Lk Geneva WI 53147, (414) 248-8050.

GATEWAY 1986
August 29-September 1, 1986
At the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel, Los Angeles CA. Gaming. Contact: GATEWAY 1986, DTI, PO Box 8399, Long Bch CA 90808, (213) 420-3675.

POLYCON 86
August 30-September 1, 1986
At the Cal Poly State Univ, San Luis Obispo CA. Adventure gaming. Contact: SAGA/POLYCON, Box 168, Julian A. McPhee Univ Union, Cal Poly State Univ, San Luis Obispo CA 93407.

EARTHCON VI
September 19-21, 1986
At the Holiday Inn-Independence, Cleveland OH. Science fiction. Contact: EARTHCON, PO Box 5641, Cleveland OH 44101.

FRONTIER WAR 2.5
October 4-5, 1986
At the Miller Park Pavilion, Bloomington IL. Adventure gaming. Contact: FRONTIER WAR 2.5, c/o Steven Miller, 511 W Mulberry (Apt 2), Bloomington IL 61701, (309) 827-7817.

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October 17-19, 1986
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February 13-16, 1987
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GAMEX 1987
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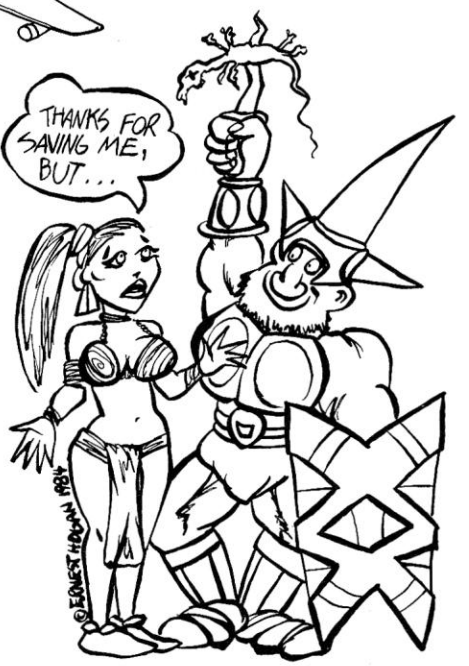
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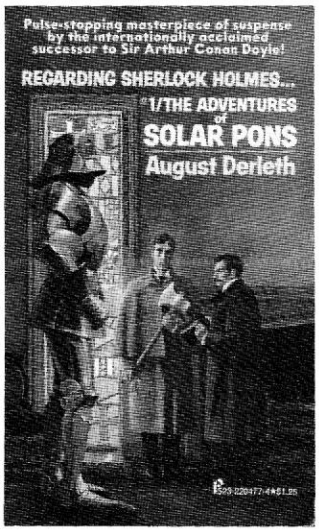


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"Contemporary Ideas about Lovecraft and the Necronomicon"

Don't Miss It!!!

The ADVENTURES of SOLAR PONS



By Michael Szymanski

THE ELUSIVE, fog-shrouded mysteries of Victorian London have given way to the less romantic atmosphere of the early twentieth century. This change was accompanied by the ending of another era for, alas, the great Sherlock Holmes no longer practices the deductive arts from his digs on Baker Street. Yet from within this sad, grey haze there shines a beacon of hope, a ray of intuitive illumination which cuts a swath through the dark realms of the criminal mind; he is the man who some say is rightful heir to the mantle of the Master himself, and his name is Solar Pons.

GREAT BEGINNINGS

In the year 1928, a college student by the name of August Derleth, an ardent admirer of Mr. Holmes's exploits, wrote to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to inquire if further Holmesian adventures would be forthcoming. When politely informed that this would not be the case, young Derleth decided that he would undertake a pastiche of the Canon.

The result was "The Adventure of the Black Narcissus," which was submitted to and readily accepted by *Dragnet Magazine*. The tale concerned the murder of a Mr. Jackson Deming, a stockbroker found stabbed to death in his Paternoster Row office. James T. Rudderford, the young man sought by the police for the crime, appeared at the apartment of Mr. Pons and, protesting his innocence, begged Mr. Pons to vindicate him. Pons had but two clues to work with—a common carving knife inscribed with the words "From Emily" and a single black narcissus, a rare and costly flower which was found lying beside the body. In less than twelve hours' time, Pons had identified both killer and motive, making of Mr. Rudderford a free and happy man.

This story was well received by Holmesian savants, which in turn led *Dragnet* to request further adventures. Unfortunately, the chronicles of the Praed Street detective were interrupted by the economic crash of 1929, which brought an end to *Dragnet Magazine*.

However, in the early '40s, Dame Fortune chose to smile once more. Frederik Dannay, who was half the team which recorded certain puzzles solved by a Mr. Ellery Queen, was preparing a collection of short stories by various authors for an anthology titled *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Once more Derleth submitted a tale, "The Adventure of the Norcross Riddle," and once again it was accepted, receiving high praise. It was this success which eventually led to the first book of Ponsian tales, this titled *In Re: Sherlock Holmes—The Adventures of Solar Pons*, published in 1945.

Soon Mr. Pons was being introduced to a wider audience and gaining notoriety with each introduction. It came out that Pons was born around 1880 in Prague, graduating *summa cum laude* from Oxford University in 1899. He is unmarried, and is a member of many clubs: the Savile, Diogenes, Athenaeum Cliff Dwellers, and Lambs. He established his "private inquiry" practice in 1907, working out of his residence at 7B Praed Street. A true patriot, he served in British Intelligence during World Wars I and II, and is known to be widely traveled. One thing was thus made perfectly clear: From such great beginnings, only great things could result.

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Certainly, the primary reason for Pons's popularity is his similarity to Sherlock Holmes, and indeed, both men have a great deal in common. Both share rooms with doctors of medicine who have taken it upon themselves to record the many intriguing cases solved by their intuitive friends. (Pons's Watson is a charming, loyal fellow by the name of Dr. Lyndon Parker.) Assisting both Holmes and Pons from time to time are bands of deft, quick-thinking street urchins—Holmes's Baker Street Irregulars and Pons's Praed Street Irregulars. Pons's brother Bancroft is very much like Holmes's brother Mycroft, who, though he is more of a deductive genius than his more famous brother, has refrained from private practice to work for the Crown.

Pons and Parker also have a long-suffering landlady, the stolid Mrs. Johnson; and of course, there is that paragon of evil intrigue, the reigning master of the underworld, Baron Ennesfred Kroll, the modern incarnation of the diabolical Moriarty. These similarities extend beyond the characters, though, including Parker's frustrating references to certain cases which have been left unrecorded.

One can find direct Holmesian quotes in many of Derleth's tales.

"Dark waters, Parker, dark waters!" Pons informs his companion as the mystery deepens, or "Come Parker. The game is afoot!" he will exclaim as he closes in on the evildoer.

And with a wry twist of humor, the well-known and oft-uttered "Elementary!" is quoted by the good Dr. Parker.

Pons even has a connection in Scotland Yard, in the personage of Inspector Seymour Jamison who, unlike his Holmesian counterpart, welcomed and often requested Pons's participation on a particularly baffling case.

All these similarities allow the reader to sit back and "fool" himself for a time, returning once more to that grand age when Holmes and Watson stalked the streets of London, and this was Derleth's intention. Even Pons

himself winks mischievously at us from the pages of his exploits as he speaks of his "illustrious predecessor." And indeed, Pons is often referred to as the Sherlock Holmes of Praed Street.

Though popular for its similarities, the adventures of Solar Pons have earned a following also because of the differences they display, both subtle and obvious.

While both Holmes and Pons resided in London, the former rarely strayed from England; Pons, on the other hand, was quite widely traveled, and maintained headquarters in Paris, Vienna, Rome, Chicago, and New York. Holmes always dealt with solid, down-to-earth cases which produced concrete solutions, while Pons was not averse to a journey into the realms of the paranormal.

"The Adventures of the Blind Clairaudient" was indeed a tale of the

The PONTINE DOSSIER

In Re: Sherlock Holmes—The Adventures of Solar Pons

Mycroft & Moran edition 1945
Pinnacle Books edition 1974

"The Adventure of the Frightened Baronet"
"The Adventure of the Late Mr. Faversham"
"The Adventure of the Black Narcissus"
"The Adventure of the Norcross Riddle"
"The Adventure of the Retired Novelist"
"The Adventure of the Three Red Dwarfs"
"The Adventure of the Sotheby Salesman"
"The Adventure of the Purloined Periapt"
"The Adventure of the Limping Man"
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"The Adventure of the Six Silver Spiders"
"The Adventure of the Lost Locomotive"
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"The Adventure of the Five Royal Coachmen"
"The Adventure of the Paralytic Mendicant"

The Return of Solar Pons

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"The Adventure of the Dorrington Inheritance"
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"The Adventure of the Rydberg Numbers"
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"The Adventure of the Stone of Scone"
"The Adventure of the Remarkable Worm"
"The Adventure of the Penny Magenta"
"The Adventure of the Trained Cormorant"
"The Adventure of the Camberwell Beauty"
"The Adventure of the Little Hangman"
"The Adventure of the Swendenborg Signatures"

The Reminiscences of Solar Pons

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"The Adventure of the Hats of M. Dulac"
"The Adventure of the Mosaic Cylinders"
"The Adventure of the Praed Street Irregulars"
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"The Adventure of the Black Cardinal"
"The Adventure of the Troubled Magistrate"
"The Adventure of the Blind Clairaudient"

The Casebook of Solar Pons

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"The Adventure of the Missing Huntsman"
"The Adventure of the Amateur Philologist"
"The Adventure of the Whispering Knights"
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"The Adventure of the Orient Express"
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"The Adventure of the Missing Tenants"
"The Adventure of the Aluminum Crutch"
"The Adventure of the Seven Sisters"
"The Adventure of the Bishop's Companion"
"The Adventure of the Unique Dickensians"

A separately published novella

"Mr. Fairlie's Final Journey"

supernatural, in which Miss Lily MacLain hires Pons to solve her own murder. Two others, "The Adventure of the Snitch in Time" and "The Adventure of the Ball Nostradamus," appeared in an anthology titled *The Science-Fictional Sherlock Holmes*.

In the area of the arts, Holmes was, of course, an accomplished violinist, while Pon's efforts with that instrument can most charitably be described as atrocious; he was, in fact, more of a listener. Holmes wrote several monographs dealing mainly with his detective work, while Pons displayed more varied interests. His works ranged from "An Inquiry into the Nan-Natal Ruins of Ponape" to "An Examination of the Cthulhu Cult and Others."

As to personality, Pons is more critical of Dr. Parker's attempts at deduction than was Holmes with Watson, sometimes growing downright snappish with his friend. Yet this was counterbalanced by a wry, self-deprecating sense of humor, leading one to believe that Mr. Pons didn't take himself quite all that seriously.

Such an equal blending of similarities and differences assured the continued success of the Pons adventures to the point where, in 1966, aficionados of Solar Pons formed the Praed Street Irregulars, whose members swap Pontian lore, contribute to the *Pontine Dossier* (the club newsletter), and vie for the coveted Praed Penny Award.

A further plaudit for Derleth's creation is the fact that certain of the original Mycroft & Moran first editions of Pons's adventures have been sold for small fortunes—pretty good for a fellow who started out wanting only to write a Sherlock Holmes story!

THE METHODOLOGY

One of the great attractions of these stories is that most, if not all, present a mystery which can at least be partially solved by the observant reader. All the salient facts are presented at the onset of the tales, by either the client or Inspector Jamison of the Yard; further information may follow, but usually the reader has all the facts by the midpoint of the story. Then, through Parker, we follow Pons as he gathers clues—often holding them up for our inspection with a twinkle in his eye. Finally, the solution is presented as constructed by those clues, and we can see how close we came to solving the mystery ourselves.

The Pontian tales all present us with a series of puzzles, and half the fun of reading them is derived from solving—or attempting to solve—them before the illustrious Mr. Pons. Derleth excelled at this brand of writing, for this series of short stories were certainly some of his best work, which at the time of his death in 1971 consisted of over one-hundred thirty books—including several collaborations with the master of horror, H.P. Lovecraft.

The peculiar slant of a story also lent a measure of entertainment to Derleth's mysteries. For example, in "The Adventure of the Devil's Footprints" Pons looks into the disappearance of Reverend Ambrose Diall, whose footprints tracked across the snow away from his house and simply stopped—to be replaced by the tracks of some hooved creature!

In another case, "The Adventure of the Circular Room," Pons comes to the aid of a nurse and her elderly patient, who swears that her room is being rearranged while she sleeps, and then is set to rights before anyone arrives to witness the fact, Was it merely a senile hallucination, or something more sinister?

Sometimes Pons was called in on extremely delicate matters of national and international import. And in "The Adventure of the Black Cardinal" he came to the aid of the Roman Catholic Church to thwart a diabolic villain who, posing as a Cardinal, sought to promote a dangerous anti-religious sentiment across the Continent.

Derleth's interest in the realms of horror and the supernatural also colored many of the tales not previously mentioned; the adventures of the Tottenham Werewolf, the Grice-Paterson Curse, and the Haunted Library are perfect examples. But, unlike the adventures of the Blind Clairaudient, the Snitch in Time, and the Ball Nostradamus, these mysteries had logical, concrete solutions in which the villains were considerably more substantial than ghosts.

There have been many other pastiche Sherlock Holmeses, from Sherlock Abodes, Thinlock Bones, and Shamrock Jones to Sheerluck Ohms and Picklock Holes, but most will agree that for a nostalgic return to those adventurous days and dangerous nights on Baker Street, none is more evocative than the hawk-eyed, deductive genius that is Solar Pons. □

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——Stellar Conquest (Avalon Hill)
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——Talisman (GW)
——221B Baker Street (Hansen)
——Web & Starship (West End)

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——Fire & Movement (Diverse Talents)
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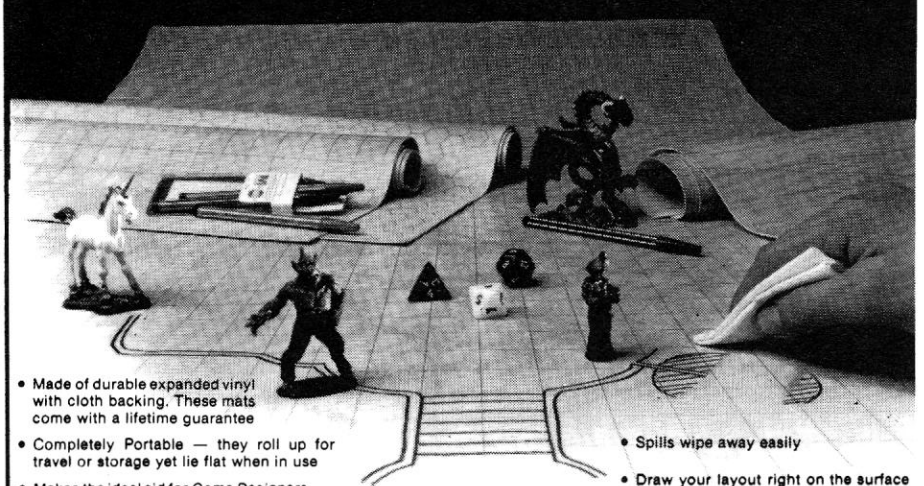
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RandomQuest

Incorporating characters from all different times and worlds into storylines

By Pam Carlson and Rodney Sauer

Blayz Kelly glanced furtively over his shoulder and drew a deep breath. Apparently he had lost his pursuers. He carefully tucked his laser pistol into its holster, fastening the Velcro straps. Those cops had been chasing him ever since they'd raided his starship and scattered the crew. With time to take a breather, Blayz began to ponder the problem of getting off planet. Acquiring a position on another ship would be difficult, as privateers didn't exactly give formal recommendations. He had no cash, and doubted if his Cred-O-Charge would last for long after the police had obtained his identity from the ship's computer. As usual for Blayz, worry induced hunger, and he realized that he hadn't eaten since planet-fall. Stepping into a small drugstore, he lifted a package of Pro-Teen bars.

As he casually strolled out of the store, Blayz noticed a blue-green puddle expanding on the sidewalk in front of him. He became mesmerized by the swirling, opalescent colors within. Suddenly he heard a shout and the squeal of tires. Blayz whirled to see two cops rounding the corner, this time driving a jeep equipped with a heavy assault gun. Mortified, Blayz spun again and raced down the sidewalk, clutching his rosary in one hand and the Pro-Teen bars in the other. Blayz had entirely forgotten the curious puddle—until his foot stepped through the middle of it. The ground gave way beneath him and his stomach flipped as he fell through swirling clouds of blue-green haze. . . .

* * *

One of the beauties of a skill-based game system like *RuneQuest* is the flexibility it allows. We played *RuneQuest* happily for about two years, and then tired of campaigns based in a bronze-age fantasy world. Therefore we simply applied the *RuneQuest* gaming system to a space-age plot and came up with "SpaceQuest," a tongue-in-cheek name for a very enjoyable science-fiction campaign. After that we took it one step further, incorporating characters from all different times and worlds into storylines as varied and exotic as the characters—we called it "RandomQuest."

The characters, all generated from the *RuneQuest* system with slight modifications, traveled between worlds via space-time gates, which they discovered by accident the first time, but looked for thereafter. However, they had no way of discerning what sort of world lay beyond the gate, or even if they would all end up together on the other side. More often than not, the party would lose one character in the gate, and find that they had picked up a new one on the other side.

We used this aspect of the gates to bring characters in and out of the game, for the modular format allowed us to switch gamemasters every time we switched worlds. The new gamemaster's character was lost on the trip through the gate, and the old gamemaster would generate a new one from a new area or time. Sometimes the new character was a native of the new world, the first to meet the travelers, and often essential to the plot. We found the high turn-over rate refreshing after playing the same characters in long campaigns, and it removed the goals of acquiring experience and treasure, so we could concentrate on the role-playing.

* * *

Ketil eyed the mouth of the shaman's cave with apprehension. He was unfamiliar with the long winding path through the cavern which led to the shaman's chambers, and the paintings on the walls and ceilings of the cave made him nervous. However, he had to beseech the shaman to restore his prowess—his woman was complaining so loudly that soon the entire tribe would know of it. He adjusted the wolf pelt around his middle and drew his good flint knife, though he knew that a knife was little protection against evil spirits. Still, men of the Black Wolf clan were never supposed to show fear: he raised his torch and trudged in bravely.

The shadows from the torchlight flickered across the walls so that the painted animals seemed to move, watching, stalking. Ketil picked his way carefully among the rocks and boulders strewn about the cave floor, while keeping a close eye on the particularly deep pools of darkness lurking in the cracks in the walls. He fingered the amulet at his neck, hoping its spells would protect him from malevo-

lent spirits. Now the torchlight was playing tricks with the floor. Ketil sheathed his knife and rubbed his eyes: the strange color was still there. He pressed on anyway, attributing the discoloration to a water stain or a change in the rock. Abruptly Ketil lost his footing and fell down, down, down, while blue-green spirits hissed and whirled around him. . . .

* * *

One of the most interesting aspects of RandomQuest was the character's reaction to the new world and the other characters. Imagine a caveman's first impression of a steam train ("Hide! There's a dragon coming down the valley!") or a space pirate's astonishment at an aircraft made of canvas ("You really trust your life to that contraption?") or an early Englishman's reaction to hearing about later history ("The British Empire? Wasn't that the little empire right before the American Empire?"). And how do you convince the primitive in your party to wear pants, lest his wolfskin draw too much attention? How do you disguise a laser gun? A Sopwith Camel? How do you keep abreast of changing currencies ("Wait a minute, this quarter says 1983. It hasn't been minted yet!").

To make the game more playable, we made language comprehension a property of the gates. When characters travel through a gate together, all members of the party are mutually intelligible, for it seems to a character as though all of his fellows and the natives of the new world are speaking his language. Some second language of the world usually sounds like some well-known second language.

* * *

Clarissa padded into the kitchen wearing her fuzzy pink slippers and her old flowered bathrobe. She absent-mindedly ran through the pockets of the robe, finding small change, rubber bands, pieces of string, a pocket knife, and various other treasures she had rescued from the kids' pockets the last time she did the laundry. Wondering how she was going to get George Jr. to the little league and still make it to the anti-nuclear demonstration on campus, she splashed into a large puddle of water. Skippy, the family dog, had stumbled over his water dish again. He was now at her heels, wagging his feathery tail apologetically.

Clarissa scuffled into the pantry to get more paper towels. Kicking aside piles of neatly folded grocery bags and assorted cleaning implements, Clarissa turned the mop bucket upside down and climbed on top of it. Pausing for a quick once-over of the shelves, Clarissa grabbed the soy beans for herself and a box of Hamburger Helper for George and the kids. As she was reaching for the paper towels, Skippy, ecstatic at the thought that she might be reaching for the Milk Bones, shoved into the closet and knocked Clarissa off the bucket. Cringing at the thought of the impact with the floor, Clarissa grabbed wildly at the shelves, succeeding only in bringing down more items on top of her. However, she never did meet the floor, instead she found herself falling through blue-green mists, accompanied by Skippy, numerous paper bags (still neatly folded), cans of green beans, corned beef, and artichoke hearts, as well as all of her cleaning supplies. . . .

* * *

Despite their visiting different worlds, the characters were allowed to keep the characteristics and attributes that they had owned back home. Blayz had his laser pistol (at least until the Duracells ran out)—with his amulet Ketil was able to cast the *RuneQuest* spells Healing and Mobility (provided he danced in a circle and chanted the proper incantation). Blayz at first thought it couldn't work, since he came from a world that disbelieved magic, he couldn't make magic work. Likewise, Clarissa had advanced training in psychology (a B.A. in fact) which was advantageous in primitive societies.

In an attempt to give the characters direction, we threw in a gamemaster-character, who was a sorcerer from another world who had a map of the gates. (The object of the first scenario was rescuing this fellow from the county jail in Dry Gulch, a decaying mining boom town in the Old West.) The map changed as it traveled through gates—it showed the position and the time of gates which were to open in the near future anywhere on the world, though it didn't say where they would lead. Once the characters have accomplished their aim in the world, usually trying to find the gate back home or just plain saving their skins from hostile inhabitants, they travel to a new universe or time. The gamemaster-character found his home before long, and let the player-characters keep the map so that they could continue to look for their way home.

Note that the sorts of characters described here are not the only possibilities for characters—talking animals from Narnia could join the group, as could historical figures (Cleopatra, Sir Lancelot, or Amelia Earhart come to mind).

This gaming system is proposed to any groups who quarrel over whose turn it is to gamemaster—everyone gamemasters at different times—or to those who want to experience an ultimate role-playing experiment, exploring the interactions between people of different places and times. Lastly, it would be fun for people who just want a temporary change of pace.

* * *

Wing Commander Trevor Bromley wheeled his Sopwith Camel about for another go at the last Hun. Trevor had already downed the enemy's two companions, and expected this one to bugger off at any minute. But wait! This time the Fokker side-slipped under the Camel as it banked, and for a moment Trevor lost sight of the enemy. Then Trevor spotted him again, off his tail to the left, flying at full speed in the other direction. A left wingover put Trevor on the enemy's tail, but the range was too great for a good shot. Trevor threw his own throttle forward and gave chase. The Hun flew into a large cloud and Trevor followed—flying around the cloud would lose too much distance.

The cloud was milky white inside, and Trevor could see wisps of fog flowing around his struts. Suddenly the clouds turned a strange bluish grey, and water droplets sparkled and swirled about him. By the time Trevor had wiped off his goggles, the cloud became white again. In the excitement of the chase, Trevor passed it off as a miniscule rain squall. As soon as he had cleared the cloud, he began to look for the Fokker.

There was no sign of the Hun . . . or of France. Instead, the ground seemed dry and dusty, covered with small, sickly looking shrubs. The only people in sight were three figures wandering about in confusion, amid what appeared to be several tins of food and neatly folded paper sacks. . . . □



"Street of the Gamblers" around the turn of the century Chinatown, San Francisco CA

Secret Societies Part 6

The TONGS Of AMERICA

By Michael Szymanski

THE CHINESE HAVE always been deeply—and often violently—involved in the politics of their nation. Although the emperors were considered to be godlike in their power, they were conversely allowed to rule only as long as they demonstrated not the slightest sign of weakness.

The reign of these emperors could also be abruptly terminated by the occurrance of such natural events as earthquakes, floods, or the inopportune passing of a comet. These events were considered to be ill portents, signaling the weakness of the present ruler, who became instantly unpopular with the masses, and who was eventually ousted from power.

Naturally these ill-fated emperors did not meekly surrender their exalted post, but clung to the throne with a cruel iron grip, surrounding themselves with armies of men whose loyalties could still be trusted. Opposition was fierce—and deeply secret, for discovery meant death for any who dared to revolt against the established order. Thus, innumerable secret societies were formed in these troubled times, organizations which were ultimately able to dethrone the weak and corrupt, replacing them with those who were known to be fair and just. At no time was such opposition more intense than during the cruel dynasty of the Manchus, who were feared and despised by the commonfolk.

During this harsh era about a hundred sects and societies came into being, with names such as the Red Eyebrows, the White Lotus Society, the Heaven and Earth Society, and the more famous Triad Society and the Boxers. When the reign of the Manchus was ended and peace returned once more to the land, the majority of these societies disbanded, their work completed; but a handful remained intact, continuing as protective societies working for the good of the peasant classes. Sadly, these fellowships would almost surely devolve slowly into criminal organizations which preyed upon the very people they had been formed to protect. Eventually a number of them had to be hunted down and exterminated—yet even so a few managed to survive, continuing their lawless efforts in greater energy.

THE NEW FRONTIER

In the 1800's vast numbers of Chinese were drawn to America by tales of gold and fabulous wealth. It is unfortunate that with them went the secret societies, like the Five Companies, which was named for the five districts of China. By 1854 this society had a membership of 35,000—nearly every male Chinese then living in California. By this time such societies had come to be known by their New World name—Tongs.

These Tongs were structured along the same lines as the Mob, or any other criminal organization which preyed upon the vices of Man. Each dealt in gambling, smuggling, and slave girls, and each held a clearly defined territory which was defended by whatever means proved necessary. Nothing was done within the boundaries of these underworld kingdoms without sanction from the ruling Tong—to break this most fundamental rule earn-

ed a brutal, agonizing death for the transgressor.

Each of these Tongs vied constantly with the others to increase the scope of their influence; this competition was far from friendly, and hostilities escalated in the 1860s, erupting into the infamous Tong Wars.

BLOODY CONFLICT

At the onset of the wars there existed over thirty Tongs on the West Coast alone, and the six most powerful of these resided in San Francisco's Chinatown. Each employed their hit men from independent Highbinder Societies, which were known to the Chinese as *boo how doy*. Highbinders were blackmailers and killers for hire, and were never directly associated with any Tong, though individual members could drop out to join the ranks of a Tong with whom they had found favor. Because of their choice of weapons, the *boo how doy* were more commonly known as hatchetmen, and in the fifty years during which the Tong Wars raged, they had ample opportunity to ply their bloody trade.

Across the continent in New York City, a few blocks of that metropolis earned the name of the Bloody Angle. Mott Street was securely held by the On Leong Tong and Pell Street was the sovereign territory of the Hip Sings, while Doyer's Street was a deadly no-man's land with a very sharp turn forming an angle which proved to be perfect for ambush. In fact, this Bloody Angle was later held to be the scene of the largest number of murders in the history New York City, and very possibly the entire United States. Many a high-ranking Tong member met his end on that little street before the wars finally came to a close; such was the brand of violence which marked this moment of American history and, unfortunately, it was not a unique example.

One of the most bloody of the Tong Wars was sparked by a fifteen-year-old slave girl whose name was, ironically enough, Bow Kum—Little Sweet Flower. The conflict flared in 1909, and by the time it concluded a year later, over three-hundred fifty were killed.

Bow Kum was purchased by the wealthy Low Hee for the enormous sum of $3000. Three years after the purchase, the American authorities discovered the girl's plight and rescued her from Low Hee, placing her in a safe foster home. Some time later she met and married Tchin Len, an event which sparked a bitter dispute between Len and Bow Kum's ex-owner, who felt the girl still remained his property.

This dispute eventually involved three rival Tongs—the Hip Sings, the On Leongs, and the Four Brothers. On April 15, 1909, the On Leongs murdered Little Sweet Flower, and war could have been the only result.

This war was fought with weapons both verbal and physical—and at times use of the former would give cause for use of the latter. Case in point, the brief but controversial career of one Ah-Hoon, a stand-up nightclub comic.

Ah-Hoon was a member of the On Leong Tong, and in his act he employed a thin veil of humor as he reviled the rival Hip Sings, who fumed over these ill-concealed insults until they could tolerate them no longer. The Hip Sings publicly vowed that, despite any effort to prevent it, the outspoken Ah-Hoon would be assassinated on the 30th of December.

Naturally the On Leongs responded to the challenge, as did the local authorities, who sought to put a lid on Tong violence. On that fateful day Ah-Hoon was given police protection on stage during his performance. When he was done, he was escorted to his room, whose only window faced a blank wall, so that an assassin could not take a shot from an opposite window. He was locked into this room, and On Leong guards took up their posts outside the door, where they remained for the rest of the night.

No sound was heard from inside, yet when the room was entered the next morning, Ah-Hoon was discovered lifeless in his bed, shot squarely between the eyes. As it turned out, a Hip Sing assassin was lowered in a chair by compatriots on the roof; from the window of Ah-Hoon's room the killer dispatched his victim with a gun specially equipped with a silencing device.

New Year's night saw a grand celebration at a theater on Doyle Street, complete with the ever-present crackle of firecrackers. Hours later when the celebration wound down and the crowd dispersed, five dead members of the On Leong Tong laid on the floor. Assassins of the Hip Sing had used the sound of the firecrackers to mask the shots they fired into the backs of their enemies' heads; by the time the crime was discovered, the killers were long gone and untouched by the law.

And so it went until peace at last settled between the warring factions.

THE WAR ON THE WARS

From all of the preceding one might come to think that the American authorities were utterly helpless—and, to an extent, they were. The situation then was much the same as that faced by police in the '20s and '30s, when gangsters of that era turned city streets into battlefields as rival gangs settled their disputes with tommygun fire.

There were some small victories, though. In 1897, the war between the Sum Yops and the Sue Yops raged with such fury that no one was safe on the streets of Chinatown. Desperate, the U.S. authorities appealed to the Chinese statesman Li Hung Chang for assistance. Chang agreed to help, responding to the situation with the only actions the warring Tongs would appreciate.

Chang ordered the imprisonment of all the families of the Sue Yop Tong members, and threatened to order them beheaded unless a peace treaty was signed straightaway—said treaty was signed in remarkably short order.

Even with such infrequent victories, it wasn't until 1922 that the San Francisco Police Department learned how to apply the right kind of pressures needed to keep that city's Tongs in line.

THE MEN AT THE TOP

The era of the Tong Wars, which also marked the height of Tong power, produced two rather colorful personages.

The first was Fung Jing Toy, or Little Pete, as he was more widely known. Pete began his career as a member of one of the many Highbinder societies, where he soon proved himself to be as dependable as he was ruthless. He showed not the slightest hesitation when he was instructed to chop down a high-ranking member of the Suey On Tong—the target was dispatched swiftly and without mercy.

The Suey Ons were enraged by this attack, and they quickly learned the name of the hatchetman who dared to offend them in such a manner. Four determined assassins were then sent out on a mission of vengeance, and after stalking their prey they were eventually able to corner Little Pete in

a dark alley. Confident of their success, the assassins closed in for the kill.

But these killers for hire were in for a surprise, for when their razor-sharp hatchets descended, the deadly blows merely bounced off an unscathed Pete; Fung Jing Toy was apparently impervious to their attack!

And then it was Pete's turn. With dispassionate skill, the Highbinder slew three of his assailants, sparing but one so that he might spread the tale of Little Pete's invulnerability, which soon set him up as a near godlike figure of the Chinese underworld.

Yet Pete's secret was a simple one—beneath his street clothes he wore a full suit of chainmail armor, while a disguised armored skullcap protected his head from the blows of his enemies. With such an edge as this, the odds were always stacked in Little Pete's favor.

It was this same crafty thinking which elevated him to membership in the Sum Yop Tong, and saw him securely in control of that Tong by the age of twenty-five. And Pete never forgot the importance of personal safety.

The Tong boss slept in a windowless room, wtih a vicious guard dog stationed on either side of the single door—no one ever entered that room unexpectedly, or without express permission from its occupant.

Besides a respectable army of Tong guardians, Little Pete retained three white bodyguards who accompanied him whenever he went out on the town. This was a man very taken up with his own power and influence, and those three occidental watchdogs were his way of displaying that power, and most importantly his influence in the white community. Pete wasn't afraid to spend a little money to attain this lofty social position—he supplied enormous payoffs to various city leaders, in particular one Christopher A. Buckley, one of San Francisco's most powerful political bosses.

This sort of bribery ensured that the police would "go easy" on members of the Sum Yop Tong and, more importantly, that they would come down hard on Little Pete's enemies, such as the Sue Yops. Pete instigated a bloody war with that rival Tong, a war which claimed the lives of fifty hatchetmen and left the Sue Yops thirsting for revenge.

That revenge came in 1897, when Little Pete's phenomenal luck finally ran out—he was brutally chopped down by the Sue Yops, who proceeded to decimate the organization he had so carefully constructed, and it was this violent action which prompted the aforementioned intervention by Chinese statesman Li Hung Chang.

THE LAST GREAT TONG LORD

Without question, the greatest, most powerful of all Tong leaders in America was Mock Duck of the Hip Sing Tong, whose influence was felt from New York City across the country to San Francisco—possibly the largest Tong in the United States. Contributing to his notoriety was a flare for the subtle which all his contemporaries—Little Pete included—were sorely lacking.

A fine example is seen in his dealings with Tom Lee of the On Leongs, a most formidable competitor. Mock Duck desired to oust Tom Lee from his seat of power—and one night when the two met on neutral ground he politely requested Mr. Lee to please resign his station! Lee, as can be guessed, laughed in Mock Duck's face, delivering a few choice insults before the two men parted.

Shortly thereafter, Mock Duck began a campaign of terror designed to break Tom Lee's power and drive him from his post. The police seemed to be concentrating their attentions on On Leong establishments, and members of that Tong were robbed and beaten whenever they let their guard down for even a moment; yet still Tom Lee held his ground, refusing to give in to his enemy's wishes.

It was when Mock Duck chose to emphasize his 'request' that a member of the On Leongs was set upon and murdered—the only part of this unfortunate which remained was his severed head, found contemptuously thrown in the gutter. Outrage at this blatant insult flared and so too, soon after, did war.

Mock Duck was not all that concerned over the outcome of that conflict, especially in light of his alliance with the Four Brothers, another Tong which operated on the same lofty levels of power as the Hip Sings and the On Leongs. And, like Little Pete, he was not particularly worried about personal safety—this had more to do with his style of attack than with any form of protection he may have practiced.

Enemy hatchetmen succeeded in cornering Mock Duck on several occasions during his long career—but once they had him, they couldn't quite decide what to do with him. As his assailants closed in, Mock Duck drew a pair of handguns, closed his eyes and began firing blindly at the charging hatchetmen! This aimless blasting away caused much confusion amongst the assassins for, not being able to tell where Mock Duck would be aiming next, they were hard pressed to dodge his shots; in fact, a number of them wound up "dodging" right into the path of a deadly slug.

To carry out his reprisals against the On Leongs, Mock Duck employed two particularly ruthless and cold-blooded hatchetmen named Sing Dock and Yee Toy, who was also known as Little Girl Face. It was this very girlish appearance which generated a fatal overconfidence in Yee Toy's victims, making it that much easier for him to complete his many assignments. In an ironic twist of fate so common to the society of hardened criminals, Yee Toy killed his partner Sing Dock in a petty quarrel, and was later himself done in by a friend.

The war raged on, and though Tom Lee placed a bounty of $7000 on Mock Duck's head, none was ever able to claim it, and eventually the leader of the On Leongs was broken and defeated.

And then Mock Duck vanished without a trace. Most thought him murdered, but no proof of this was ever presented—and with good reason. After a considerable absence, the nature of which still remains a mystery, Mock Duck returned to reclaim leadership of the Hip Sings. Rumor had it that he had returned to China, renewing old ties to the homeland, but this again is uncertain.

Wherever he went and whatever he did there, Mock Duck is known to have disappeared on numerous other occasions—but he always returned, and was present at the signing of the last great treaty which brought an uneasy but lasting peace to all the Tongs.

END OF AN ERA

By 1930s, the Tongs had lost much of their power, slowly edged out of the spotlight by such nefarious characters as Bonnie and Clyde, John Dillinger, and Al Capone. As of today the Tongs of America are all but gone, but in

their native China they still present a pervasive threat to law and order. Even with all the resources at their disposal, the Chinese authorities are still unable to stamp out these pernicious secret societies.

That is how it stands now, but who can predict the result should the Chinese government, like the emperors before it, show weakness and earn the displeasure of the people. Perhaps then the saga of the Tongs will begin again. . . .

TONGS IN FICTION AND GAMING

The Tongs were a popular threat in Victorian-era adventure and detective stories, and their inscrutable menace was felt far into the twentieth century. This was due chiefly to the writings of Sax Rohmer, who in 1913 introduced the world to the most insidious, diabolical threat that England has ever known—the evil Doctor Fu Manchu.

PERIL FROM THE EAST

He was called the Tongking, a man that was described as "an archangel of evil," whose soulless eyes were a filmy, uncanny shade of iridescent green. Dressed in a simple yellow robe, he moved with an awkward yet catlike gait, shoulders hunched around a countenance whose brow was Shakespeare's and whose face was Satan's. He was sent to England by the New China to engineer the downfall of the western world, and in this the devilish Fu Manchu was very nearly successful.

The stumbling block to the doctor's nefarious schemes was Mr. Nayland Smith, an adventurer with a roving government commission whose life was dedicated to the ruin of Fu Manchu. It is through the medium of Smith's good friend Doctor Petrie that the reader witnesses those dark encounters between East and West on the streets of London.

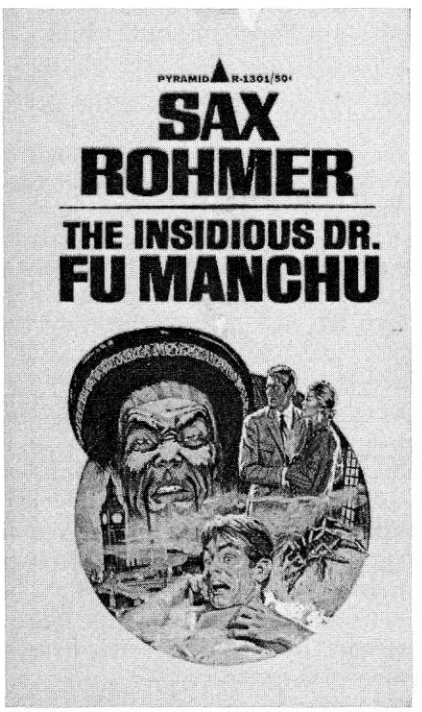
These three books—published now in paperback by Zebra Books—comprise a catalog of strange and exotic means by which a victim might be deprived of his life without leaving any trace of foul play. Venomous centipedes, poison gases and drugs which produce madness or the appearance of death, all are part of Fu Manchu's foul arsenal. But the most horrible of all is a mutated, giant puffball which, when exposed to light, explodes, casting its spores over a wide area. These spores grow at a fantastic rate, and should they fall upon a man, he will soon find himself completely engulfed in a suffocating cocoon of fungus!

The doctor controls his organization of dacoits, Thugs, and Chinese assassins from a number of secret headquarters scattered around London, from a barbershop which is really an opium den to a decrepit-looking boat moored on the Thames and a palatial mansion rigged to burst into flames should its true purpose be discovered.

Fu Manchu and his minions undertook the same operations carried out by the Tongs of the real world—blackmail, murder, drug-dealing, and slavery—but they also intruded into the realms of international espionage. Stolen top secret plans, the murder of a government official, all were part of Fu Manchu's reign of terror, and so subtle were these plots that Nayland Smith sometimes remained unaware of them until it was too late.

The tales related by Doctor Petrie are filled with wild chases, last-minute escapes and near-brushes with shuddersome death. On several occasions the stalwart pair actually fell into the clutches of the dreadful Fu Manchu, but Providence always intervened to provide a way out in the nick of time.

In the first book, *The Insidious Doctor Fu Manchu*, Providence came disguised as a beautiful Asian girl named Karamaneh, which means "slave." And that was what she was, slave to Fu Manchu—and yet, having fallen in love with Doctor Petrie, she risked a horrible fate to pull Petrie and Nayland Smith out of harm's way, ensuring that the struggle against her infernal master would go on. It did, to the delight of readers—and movie-goers—for years to come, even to the present day.



ROLE-PLAYING TONGS

As can readily be seen, the Tongs can easily be adapted for use in any number of role-playing games, such as *James Bond 007*, *Gangbusters*, or even *Champions*—but by far, the Tongs are best suited to *Call Of Cthulhu*, since they share a certain style and a basic timeperiod.

A reading of the Fu Manchu books will provide an enormous inspiration, and will demonstrate the ruthless cunning of such organizations. It is important to remember that, when designing a Tong for use in any game, subtlety is vital.

The use of firearms should be kept to the barest minimum, for they are loud and obvious weapons. Look for the silent, untraceable methods and there you will find the Tongs. This, coupled with a distrust of and contempt for anyone not Chinese will make such organizations difficult to pin down, and even harder to defeat. In fact, the players could very well find themselves being used by one Tong as a weapon against another!

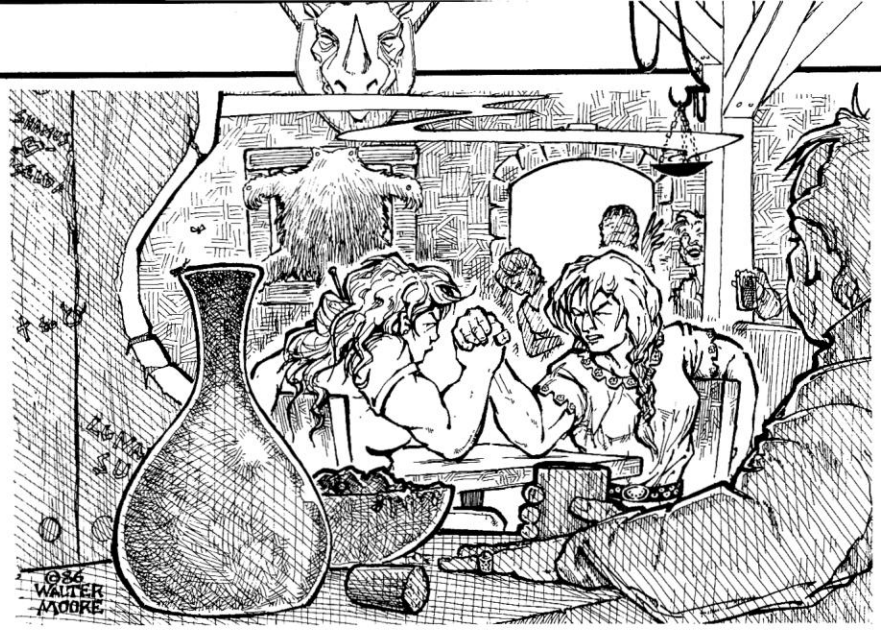
Lastly, use of the Tongs would confront players with an alien culture and a way of thinking that is totally at odds with the western world. In the Tongs we find a callous disregard for life; the individual is nothing, the attainment of a goal is all-important. Death is the great remover of obstacles, and the ultimate insurance of silence. And, of course, in these dark fraternities the concept of mercy is unknown.

A Tong assassin is very much like the modern-day terrorists, who willingly go to their deaths if they can take even a handful of victims with them. Tongs are made up of a harsh, cruel breed with few scruples and no conscience—a worthy adversary for any band of stout-hearted adventurers.

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TALES OF OLD PAVIS

FEATURING GRISELDA IN

"Down Among the Dead Men"

By Oliver Dickinson

ONE TIME it is well on into the evening at Loud Lilina's and Hanufa and I and a few others are engaged in singing, for Hanufa likes to sing almost as much as she likes to talk, and I am fond of a song myself. We are singing that old drinking song that goes, "And he that will this health deny, Down among the dead men let him lie!", which adventurers and mercenaries and such love to sing, and we are giving it a fine rendering when the door is flung open and someone enters, making for the bar with great determination. The door connects with Hanufa's drinking elbow, causing her to shower beer all over us and breaking up the song. Now, to spill Hanufa's beer is one sure way to make her mad, and she starts yelling some most impolite things at the newcomer, who is already at the bar downing a drink. The newcomer turns around, and the joint goes quiet, for this is none other than Ragna the Wrestler.

This Ragna is quite a well-known personage around Pavis, though she is not here too often, for which most citizens are heartily thankful. There can be no doubt that, of all the tough dolls in Pavis, Ragna is the one who most likes to make a show of her toughness, and will take any opportunity to cut up rough and jerk folks around. She is a big doll who is maybe forty or so, and no one remembers her any different from the way she is now, which is with a scarred face, and eyes that are black and cold, and a mouth that seems permanently set in a sneer, and black hair cut short, and she has a pair of large hard hands that she uses to express her bad disposition every chance she gets. It is a peculiarity of Ragna's that she loves to fight barehand, and the chances are she sends many an opponent to the Healers this way, and maybe kills some, for she is claimed to be able to break a neck with the edge of her hand if she hits just right. What she does for a living is a mystery, for she is not known to work at anything, and it is sometimes said that she preys on the unwary, in the Rubble or out on the plains, but you can hear such stories about half the visitors to Pavis. Anyway, most citizens do not bother their heads over Ragna, but consider her one of the unpleasant facts of life, like the government, and the Trolls, and the price of everything nowadays.

Well, Ragna looks Hanufa over and says sarcastic-like, "Do I disarrange your hair?" Hanufa is only in town for a few weeks and knows nothing about Ragna, so she does not quieten down but comes right back at her. "No, you disarranged my beer," she yells, which is quite smart for her, "and I will thank you to buy me another one." Ragna cocks her head, as if she is studying this proposition, and says, "I will arm-wrestle you for it." Now, Hanufa fancies herself at arm-wrestling and accepts at once, before we can explain how unwise this is, and they sit down at a table. Some are speculating that this time Ragna may meet her match, for Hanufa shows a good set of muscles, but the smart money all goes on Ragna. She is very cool, while Hanufa is mad clear through and wastes her strength fast, and then Ragna pushes her arm over hard and gives an extra twist, and down goes Hanufa on the floor. She is certainly suffering as Ragna stands up and gives a nasty laugh. "Down among the dead men, indeed!" she says, and walks out, and here I must explain that the dead men in the song are not actual stiffs, but the empty flasks and such on the floor.

Well, this is all very typical of Ragna, as I explain to Hanufa while she is going to the Healers to get her arm fixed, and I advise her against taking the matter further, but she does not look too receptive. "I will not be doing much with this arm for a while," she says, "but now is the time to see if I have true friends." It does not take a genius to figure out that she means to call on Griselda, and so I stick with her, for a confrontation between Griselda and Ragna will certainly be worth seeing, though I do not see where Griselda is bound to lift a finger for Hanufa. But Griselda is not to be found uptown that night, and so we give up searching.

When I drop into Loud Lilina's early the next afternoon, there is Griselda looking all tuckered out, with her back against the wall and her feet up on a stool. I say to her, "Do you hear that Hanufa gets all crippled up?" "What does she do now?" she replies, sounding very bored, and I begin to explain. When I name Ragna she sits bolt upright. "Tell me about this Ragna," she says, and as I do so it is really remarkable how Griselda loses all sign of tiredness. I am barely finished when

she is on her feet. "Let us look into this," she says, and when I hesitate she looks at me most impatiently. "Come on," she says, "I need you to finger this Ragna for me," and I judge it best to comply, for fingering Ragna is not without risk, but it will be even more risky to disappoint Griselda. She sets off as fast as if she gets a line on someone who owes her money, and we try all the inns and grogshops in Oldtown, but cannot get a word of Ragna, and I am already beginning to feel weary, for I seldom do so much walking, but Griselda is bound and determined to keep going. When word gets around that we are looking for Ragna the Wrestler, much interest is displayed, and before long there is quite a delegation in attendance. We finally come upon Ragna putting on the soup in the Homar's Fish eating place in Riverside, and looking quite cheerful for once, but then anyone will tell you that the fish soup at Homar's is very nice, indeed, if you can afford it. I point her out and Griselda moves in like some wild animal stalking its prey. Ragna cannot help but notice, and she looks up and says, "Something bothering you, half-portion?"

Griselda then says, speaking loudly so that she can be heard throughout the joint, "I travel all over this land for quite a while. I spend time with Trolls, and I come upon Broo encampments and Scorpionman nests and Rubble Runner tunnels, and once I even encounter a Gorp. But I have to say that never do I see or smell such an unpleasant heap of nastiness as sits before me now. In fact," she says, "I am wondering what can give birth to such a monstrosity, but it is no good asking you, for it is a sure thing that your mother is still running after getting one look at you, and never has the chance to tell you what your father is, always assuming," she says, "that she is sober enough to pick out which of her customers is responsible."

Ragna's eyes narrow quite some during this, but she says, "I guess you must be this Griselda I am hearing of here and there. Few others will have the nerve to try and force a fight on me. But I have no wish to fight at this time."

Griselda shakes her head and says, "Well, it takes a while for a yellow streak to show on some people. I guess maybe you lose your nerve. That is the way it is with old folks, I hear—they lose their nerve." By this time all present are deriving much enjoyment from this, even the waiters, but Ragna does not let it faze her. "If you feel bound to take a hack at me, go ahead," she says. "But you will have to do it here, and my guess is that a public act of violence will be pushing your luck too far. If what I am hearing is true, Constable Jorjar will be very happy to get a charge to nail you on. So why do you not sit down and talk over whatever is on your mind?"

Well, Griselda stands for a moment, then shrugs and says, "Maybe you are right," and sits opposite Ragna, and motions me to a place between them. Ragna eyes me in a way that makes me very nervous but says nothing, and Griselda calls for beer. The rest drift off looking disappointed, and the joint gets back to normal. Griselda and Ragna do not speak until the beer arrives and then just give a little nod as they drink, and I begin to feel most uneasy as the silence between them continues. But after drinking maybe half her beer Griselda brings up the matter of Hanufa, and mentions that she is a friend of hers.

"Well," says Ragna, "I do her no lasting harm, though I am entitled to, considering what she calls me. Surely you will not wish to make a really serious matter of this?"

"Maybe not," says Griselda. "You make a habit of fighting bare-handed, I understand." Ragna acknowledges this, and Griselda gets her talking on the subject. Ragna seems to warm up discussing her exploits, and presently Griselda relates some acts of mayhem that she witnesses or perpetrates, and they start acting much more friendly towards each other, as if they perceive they are kindred spirits, and I wish to state that this is a fair description, on the basis of what I hear. In fact, I am greatly horrified by their stories, and the last thing I wish to do is stay and listen to them, but when I make as if to go Griselda tells me to give Ragna my account of her vengeance for her brother, and buys more beer. Well, time wears on, with them continuing to get more friendly, and finally Griselda suggests that we move on to Rowdy Djoh Lo's, and Ragna concurs, as it seems she knows the joint. I can think of many people I would rather spend the evening with than Ragna and Griselda when they are drinking, but Griselda is looking at me in a certain way, so of course I say that I will be happy to accompany them.

When we arrive, Snakefang and his boys are there as usual, playing mumblety-peg, and they give Griselda a big hello, and greet Ragna politely, and one or two even give me a nod, though this nod is so small that it is practically invisible. It seems mumblety-peg is one game Ragna never plays, and she displays great interest, so they instruct her, while Griselda and Snakefang step aside to discuss something, though what it is I do not know, for I have more sense than to try eavesdropping on such characters. Presently Griselda joins in the game and things hot up. She is on form and beats them one after another, and no one will wager more than a few Clacks against her. Ragna comments on this, and Snakefang is returning from wherever he goes just then and says, "Why, this is too much to expect, for Griselda is our all-time champion, and when she is hot that knife practically stands up and sings. Do you remember, Grizzie, how you do that exhibition on Sweet-Talking Shamus? I will never forget the poor guy's face!"

There is much laughter at this, and Ragna has to be told what happens. "Of course," says Griselda, "I have to hold his hand down. It will take more nerve than I know anyone to possess to hold a hand steady for someone else handling the knife." Now by this time Ragna has quite a load on, and she cries out that there is nothing to it, and for Griselda to do it on her. Griselda claims she is tired, and never does such a thing before, but Ragna is most insistent, so Griselda finally says, "All right, but I will need a knife, for my own gets dulled with all the use." Ragna agrees to this and Snakefang pulls one out. Then Griselda gets going, but before she works up any real speed she stops, rubs her eyes, and asks Ragna, who is sweating a little but keeping her hand steady, if she has enough. But Ragna says this is nothing yet, so Griselda continues. She finally hits a fair speed, and Ragna's arm is trembling a little with the effort of keeping her hand spread, when all of a sudden Griselda misjudges and slices her by the thumb. She throws down the knife at once and acts disgusted with herself, saying that she knows she ought not to go on when she is so tired, but Ragna sucks it and says not to make such a fuss, it is only a

scratch.

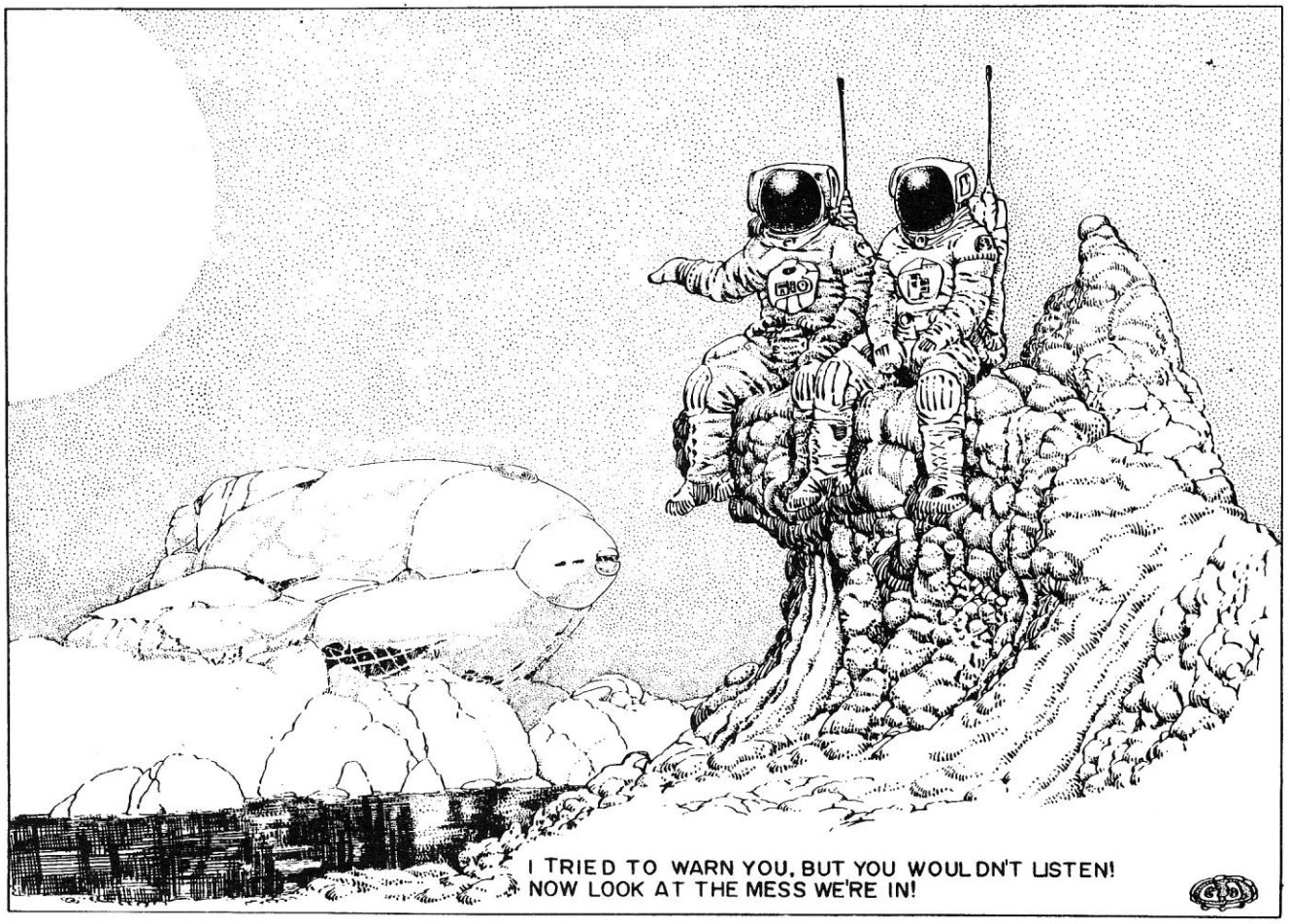
Just as Snakefang is saying that it is the gamest thing he ever sees, Ragna staggers and catches herself on the table. "Are you well, Ragna?" cries Griselda. "Maybe it is reaction." Ragna shakes her head and then looks up at Griselda, with her mouth falling open, and Griselda is smiling just a little in a way that I remember seeing before. Ragna stands for as long as you can count three and then falls flat, and Griselda leans down and says, "Now you are down among the dead men, and for good," and Snakefang leads off with the chorus.

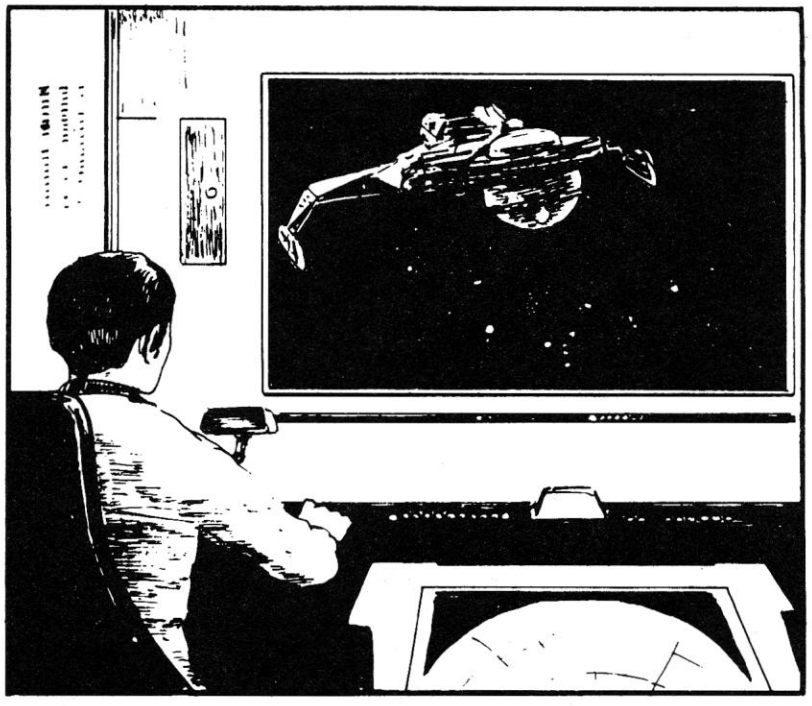
As they are searching the body, Snakefang says, "You give her plenty of chances to back off," but Griselda shakes her head and says, "it is not in her nature." Then someone says, "Hey, what's this?" and we see a mark shaped like a hand on Ragna's chest. "Yes," says Griselda, "this is the very same Ragna who heads up a Cacodemon bunch, and cripples my aunt Gunnvara so badly that she has to retire, though she gets to live because she gives Ragna the best wrestle she ever has. We know all about it in the family, and they will be pleased to learn I close our account with her."

"You mean you put us in danger of having her call Cacodemon in on us?" cries Snakefang, seeming greatly perturbed, and I can understand his alarm, for Cacodemon is the great-granddaddy of all demons. But Griselda just smiles. "It is a very low risk," she says. "She is no Rune Priest, and anyway you know Cacodemon will show up once a week, no matter what." But he is still looking displeased, so she pats him on the hand and pulls out a fat purse. "All yours," she says, "so long as you dispose of the body," and Snakefang brightens up right away, though he shakes his head and says, "Boy, you surely take some chances."

As we are going uptown, Griselda says to me, "He is right, of course, but nothing is certain—you have to take some chances now and then. I am taking one right now, for the purse I hand Snakefang is Ragna's own, which I lift some time before, but I expect he will appreciate the joke, for he has a great sense of humour—as long as there is enough in the purse." □







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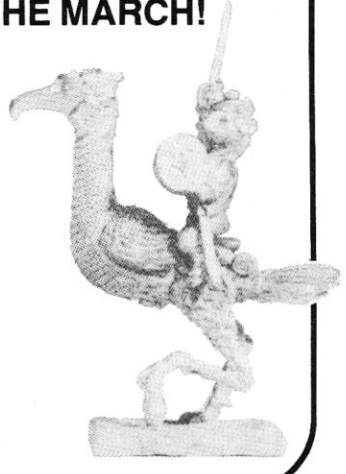


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The Papist Devil, "Ego sum Papa" (I am the Pope). From a Reformation handbill against Pope Alexander VI, Paris, late fifteenth century.

RELIGION AND RACE IN ROLE-PLAYING: A PLEA FOR DIVERSITY

By Tom Grant

ERIC THE Cleric is a priest of a good god, and therefore he is good. In fact, all of his peers within the clergy, from the grand patriarch down to the lowliest acolyte, are all good to the core, and enjoy singing hosannahs to their deity, knowing that He looks into their hearts and sees nothing but goodness in them.

Is this a realistic picture? Of course not. There is an odd belief about clerics in *Dungeons & Dragons* and men of the cloth in other role-playing games that needs to be lain to rest. The assumption that the morality of a priest should reflect completely that of his god is silly. The historical record on religious leaders is proof otherwise, and other arguments can be mustered to show that his simplistic vision of clerics isn't necessarily so.

DIVERSE FOLLOWERS

For the purpose of this article, there is no need to go into a long-winded philosophical explanation of the nature of good and evil, since no such sophisticated philosophical understanding is necessary in role-playing. For the sake of the game and this article, a common understanding of good and evil is all that is necessary.

Let's take a look at the record of the Christian church in its two millenia of history. Christ was a good person, no doubt; he was the paragon of generosity and forgiveness. But what of his followers?

From the inception of the Church one can see religious zeal warping the kinder parts of Christian teachings. At the time of Constantine's accession to the imperial throne, one of the first great schisms had developed, dividing the faithful into two hostile camps. Riots, civil wars, and murders all occurred between the Christians, all motivated by a disagreement over whether Christ was created after Time began or whether he had always been part of God the Father. Debates were settled by the sword and axe, not by discussion; assassination was commonplace, and often one faction would defile the holy sepulchre used by another faction.

Is it evil for someone to kill his fellow man over a disagreement over some tenet which is part of a larger belief system they both hold? Is it wrong for a priest of such a faith to order the assassination of another priest because of a disagreement over doctrine? The answer is yes in both cases, yet fervent worshipers of a good God and a benevolent Christ did this sort of thing. In a world of absolutes, absolute wrongness can be a capital offense, and heresy was far worse than paganism.

Internecine bloodshed in the first thousand years of the Church was common. There were further schisms, centering more often than not on the struggle between organized, revealed truth and personal enlightenment; there were also the Inquisition and the Crusades. The Inquisition killed millions in countless horrible ways over a few centuries. The familiar picture of the Inquisition is fairly accurate: the Inquisition was very often a kangaroo court, offering little chance that an accused person could pass through the grotesque physical and psychological torture of the investigation and still not be declared a witch or heretic. If the accused did not confess his sin, the court would try to force it out of him; in lieu of any confession, the Inquisition still declared people witches and executed them on fairly tenuous grounds. Often, it was enough that a person had eyes of two different colors or a bad habit of talking to him-

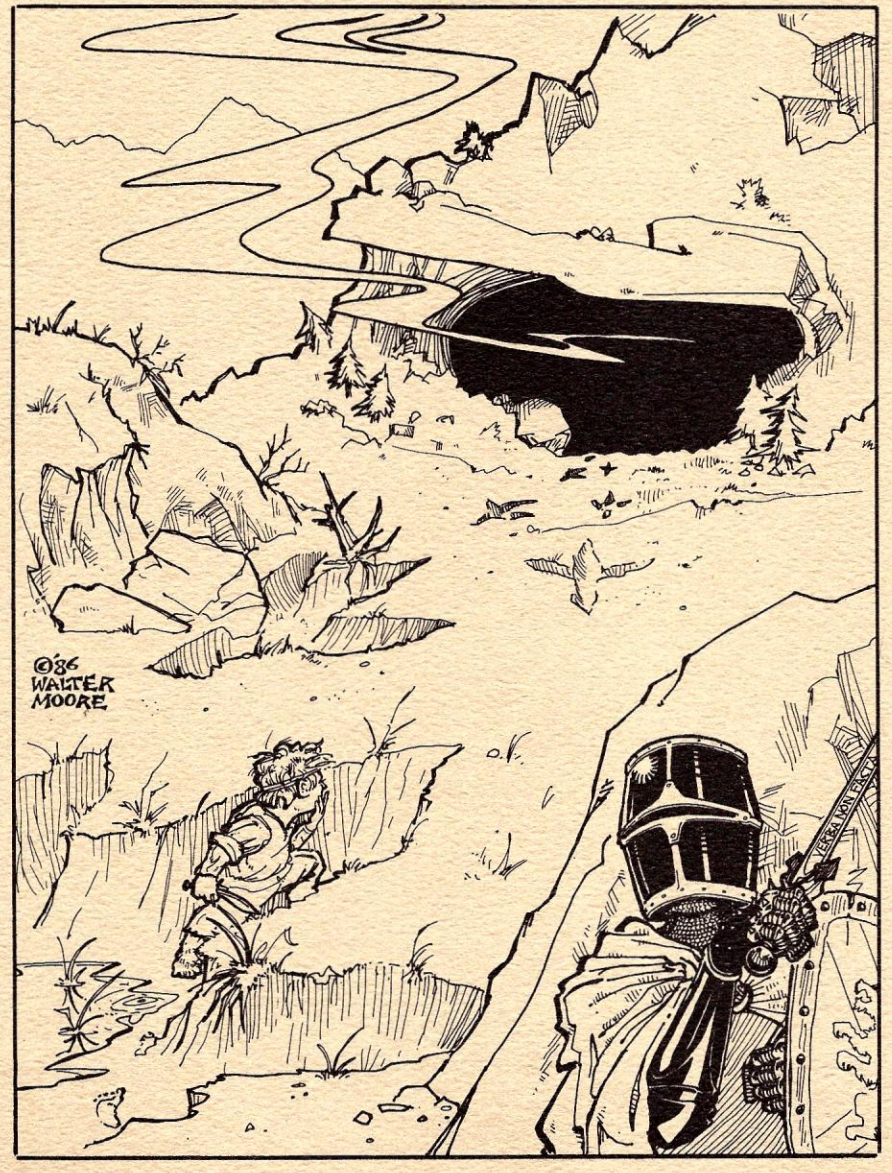
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GARBAGE PITS of DESPAIR Part 2

SPECIAL DIFFERENT WORLDS MODULE

By Dave Arneson
Illustrated by Walter Moore
Map rendering by Helen Doward

THE DRAGON HILLS



THE TREK

The raiders have now had several successful raids. They have also accomplished their diversionary mission. The raiders will now head south towards the Dragon Hills with their prisoners.

Encounters

While following the raiders, the expedition must make the following rolls for encounters using the regular encounter (Basic and Expert) charts.

30 miles of forest (two rolls)
4 small rivers (one at each crossing)
1 major stream (one roll)
20 miles of hills (one roll)
20 miles of mountains (four rolls)
70 miles of open plain (two rolls)

It will normally take the raiders about ten days to make this journey. The raiders will average about 15 miles a day. From a maximum of 30 miles a day on the plains to a minimum of 5 miles a day in the mountains.

The raiders have a small craft available to them at all the water crossings. These crafts are removed once the raiders are past that point. The pursuers will have to find their own way across. The major stream is fordable. The small rivers will require time to search for a crossing (1D6 hours) unless the party can think up some other solution.

The raiders seem to know every small path and byway along the route that they are traveling. Although some

magic is being used to cover their tracks, the raiders do not seem to be taking abnormal precautions to cover their trail. The expedition has no real trouble following the raiders' route.

The crossing of the third small river is just above a small settlement. There is a Councillor outpost in this town which the expedition may wish to contact. The garrison consists of a young Councillor Marshal and his Deputy plus a small company of twenty lancers. The outpost can offer no reinforcements to the party, only supplies. If the expedition contacts the local authorities, the raiders' intelligence network will immediately report that there is an expedition following the raiders.

PRISONER OF THE SLAVERS

Any player-characters that are prisoners may try to escape at any time before the raiders reach the mountains. Treatment is not unduely harsh and the food is adequate, even if it is grey mush.

Rumors

These rumors should be passed on to the prisoners item by item. (No more than one or two items each day that the characters are held prisoners.)

While they are prisoners the characters may be able to discover the following bits of information.

1. The raiders talk as if this raid is their last one.

2. That the raiders are on their way to join with the forces of a Sartrap of the Duchy of Ten.

3. Some of the men do not wish to give up the slave raiding and there is division within their ranks.

4. Someone called "The Boss" is mentioned several times with anything from respect to derision. Negative comments are never made in front of Robert, the leader of the raiders.

5. No one looks forward to reaching the place where the prisoners will be sold. It is referred to as a "Stinking Wormhole," "Pit of Despair," and "Garbage Hole." Considering the level of morals and cleanliness among the raiders this place sounds like it's real unpleasant.

6. Robert rules the raiders with an iron fist and a quick blade. He is not loved but he is respected. He has only one really trusted lieutenant who is not present with this party.

7. Robert may be an undead of some sort.

8. There are no clerics with the raiders.

9. There is one magic user and he has a semi-human apprentice. Both keep pretty much to themselves and the few glimpses of their cowled faces is not pleasant. The two of them examine each prisoner as if they are looking for someone or something in particular. They do not seem to find what they are looking for.

Anyone failing in an escape attempt is drugged by the magic users and slung over a pack horse for the remainder of the journey to the Dragon Hills. All are thoroughly searched for valuables and weapons when they are captured. These items are carried on one of the pack mules.

THE DRAGON HILLS

The expedition members will recall some of the stories and legends about the Dragon Hills. The most notable story is that these hills are the home of one of the offsprings of the Grey Dragon of Blackmoor. This mammoth beast is said to be of such a size that she blots out the sun for an hour when she passes overhead! The smaller dwarf dragons of the Great Kingdom provide tasty tidbits for the Great Dragons of the North. Fortunately, these gigantic beasts sleep a great deal and only the most foolish or insane would dare to disturb them.

Any remaining members of Terrance's Company will vividly recall the Great Dragon of Glendower whose sister it is that lairs in these hills. They will confirm that he was, indeed, a huge beast, as large as a castle. They will also state that this particular beast was honorable and unobtrusive and that his sister is of a similar disposition. At least that is what they have heard.

The Dragon Hills are also thought to be the location of one of the last great orc strongholds in the Northern Marches. Thanks to the presence of a Great Dragon, these foul creatures are stuck underground most of the time. Several members of the party will note that it is quite odd that the slavers are able to seemingly operate so freely in this region.

The Dragon Hills are as high as any mountains and the nights here are quite chilly. The raiders will not have to worry about any encounters while on the way to their meeting. The raiders know this country quite well. Anyone following the raiders will have to take the normal chance of running into something along the way however.

One afternoon the raiders will cross a long high ridge and enter a bowl-shaped valley. Along the southwest corner of the valley there is a sheer cliff that is at least two-thousand feet high. Near the bottom of the cliff can be seen a great cave. A cave big enough to be the lair of a Great Dragon! It is towards this cave that the raiders head with their prisoners.

The slope down to the cave which the slave raiders are using is only sparsely wooded and the expedition will be advised to halt by Billy before they are seen by the raiders.

Further observation will show the raiders entering the cave without hesitation.

It is quickly apparent that a concealed descent can be made through some woods along the south side of the valley. It is also quite evident that there is no other life within this valley except for the occasional insect or high flying bird. Larger creatures have not been here for a long time. The players will also note that the cliff face is dotted with many small cave openings. It is likely that some of these would link up with the main cave.

As the party approaches the mouth of the cave they can see that there are long gouges in the ground outside of the cave entrance that are either random plow furrows or the claw marks of a large creature like a Great Dragon. There is even a slight hint of sulfur-smelling smoke hanging in the air outside of the cave's entrance.

INSIDE THE CAVE

As they approach the great cave those player-characters that are prisoners of the slavers will also note the size of the cave, the smoke, and the apparent claw marks. Additionally, the prisoners will enter the cave with the band of raiders and immediately notice a noisome odor in the air. This is carried upon a slight air current coming out of the cave that they are now entering. Just inside the cave all the prisoners will be blindfolded and tied in a very hasty manner. The raiders then cover their mouths with foul-smelling rags. The salve raiders seem ill at ease within the cave.

Gamemaster Notes:

Roll to see if any of the prisoners are able to adjust their blindfolds and see. If successful the following will be seen by that character:

1. About fifty feet inside of the cave there is a smoldering fire. This fire has three guards tending it. The guards' intention seems to be to produce the smokiest fire possible. Near these

guards is a table on which are half a dozen large jars.

2. The tunnel that the raiders are following is full of sharp twists and turns with several side passages entering at random intervals.

3. About two-hundred feet into the cave the party crosses a narrow bridge over a foaming pool of gray muck. All player-prisoners should make a saving throw vs. poison. If they fail their saving throw they will be unconscious for 2D10 turns. Characters who have also managed to loose their bonds will, if they pass out, have a chance of falling off their horses and into the goop below. Roll vs. their dexterity. If the throw fails there is a one-third chance that they will fall into the Gray Pudding Pool with the usual results.

4. Some 275 feet into the cavern you see a group of six guards standing in front of a side passage. Each holds a torch and several spears with rags wrapped around the spearheads. Just inside the passage can be seen a pale worm-like creature with arms and legs but no head. A burning spear protrudes from its upper torso. These guards wave the party on with the comment that "all is clear."

5. At about the five-hundred feet mark the cave ends and the party emerges into a small canyon with very steep sides. A small river emerges from the northern cliff face and flows off to the west. In the river is a small mercantile barge flying the bloody red banner of the Monks of the Swamp.

7. A slave pen and a few tents are the only human structures in the canyon.

8. Next to the place where the small river enters the canyon is a huge heap of large bones, debris, and miscellaneous junk. The odor from this heap is almost as bad as that from the Gray Pudding Pool.

THE SLAVE TRADING CAMP

All the prisoners now have their blindfolds removed but all are still kept bound. All of them are ushered into the slave pen and a dozen of the slave raiders take up positions near the pen to guard it. The other guards move themselves and their horses downstream around a spur of rocks. There the odor from the garbage piles is probably not as bad as it is here. At hourly intervals the guards around the slaves' pen are changed. Several of the prisoners are overcome by the odor and collapse.

After the first hour three of the strongest male slaves have managed to loosen two of the poles that make up the wall of the pen. They shout for the rest of the slaves to make a break for it while they take care of the guards.

Gamemaster Notes:

Roll to see if any of the characters who are in the pen have managed to notice the escape attempt. The men removing the poles will not delay the escape but will accept help. If the player-characters try to stop the removal of the poles all the other slaves will immediately attack them.

The three men are quickly cut down but several (1D10+5) prisoners and player-characters have exited from the slave pen through the gap. The gap is on the side closest to the garbage heaps. The guards cannot pursue for 1D6+1 turns.

Camp Guards

One Level 3 Fighter (AC 4, 10 HP, helmet, sword, shield) and five Level 2 Fighters (AC 5, 7 HP, mace, helmet). Robert is also present at the big tent. He will rush, on foot, to assist the guards if he has not been killed.

The Slave Buyers Party

Ga'mor'bah'lach
9th Level Patriarch

AC 5, 34 HP, Move 12, no modifiers

WEAPONS: +2 mace, +1 dagger, Protection against Good Amulet

ARMOR: chainmail, armored cowl (helmet)

SPELLS:
First Level: Remove Fear, Detect Magic, Light
Second Level: Bless, Snake Charm, Speak with Animals
Third Level: Locate Object, Speak with Dead, Cure Disease
Fourth Level: Cure Serious Wounds, Dispel Magic

Fra'lach'stane
7th Level Bishop

AC 5, 30 HP, Move 11, no modifiers

WEAPONS: +1 sword, +1 dagger, Protection against Magic Amulet

ARMOR: chainmail

SPELLS:
First Level: Cure Light Wounds, Detect Magic, Remove Fear
Second Level: Hold Person, Speak with Animal
Third Level: Locate Object, Striking

Fins of the Frog
3rd Level Priests (6)

AC 5, 5 HP, Move 9, no modifiers

WEAPONS: staves, swords, +1 daggers

ARMOR: chainmail

SPELLS (all know the same spells):
First Level: Cure Light Wounds, Purify Food and Water

Teeth of the Frog
1st/2nd Level Acolytes/Fighters (6)

AC 6, 4 HP, Move 8, no modifiers

WEAPONS: staves, daggers

Eight Level 1 Fighters

AC 4, 4 HP, Move 8, no modifiers

WEAPONS: sword, spear, dagger

ARMOR: chainmail, shield

Ten Unarmed Bargemen

AC 9, 3 HP, Move 6, no modifiers

WEAPONS: small cudgels

INTO THE GARBAGE PITS OF DESPAIR

The business of selling the remaining prisoners is accomplished within the hour as neither Robert nor the buyers seem inclined to stay in this area very long. The Garbage Pits will take care of the escapees.

Alfred's fiancee, Monaca, will always be in the lead of the escaped prisoners. She is a druid.

Monaca of Dinsbury
6th Level Druid/Cleric

Strength	10	Dexterity	15
Intelligence	13	Constitution	13
Wisdom	15	Charisma	12
Armor Class	9	Hit Points	25

WEAPONS: +1 small dagger, Ring of Protection against Fire

ARMOR: none

The players and the other escaped prisoners will now have to make their way through the Garbage Pits and the caves to the outside and freedom. A map of the caves will show the set encounters. Each hour when they do not make any contact with a set encounter the escaped party will have to roll once on the Encounter Table.

The party will be able to find the entrance marked with an 'X' on the map to enter the caves. It will take about an hour to find this entrance. The party will then make its way into the cave system.

Gamemaster Notes:

The two parties should be in the caves about the same time and may actually find each other!

THE SALE PROCEEDS

If the Watchwings have been lost the Monks will make several deriding com-

ments about the raiders' abilities. Robert will snarl right back at them about slimy bog creatures. After this exchange all will be amenable again.

Within four hours the remaining prisoners are all herded on board the barge. The monks strike their camp ashore and the guards inside the cave and around the slave pen move off to join the other raiders just down the river. The barge then moves downstream about half a mile and anchors in a quiet lagoon out of the odor from the Garbage Pit. The sides of the canyon are even higher and steeper here except for a narrow path along the northern bank. Here the raiders can be seen marching off into the night with their money and their loot.

Robert, his companion, and the two Magic Users that accompanied the raiding band will shortly part with the main body of raiders and head north. They will return to a place near Vestfold where they will meet with the Boss and report in. There is a 15% chance that they will be encountered by the returning party of players on the road north.

THE BARGE

As the prisoners are herded below each is forced to drink a strong thick potion. The effect of this potion is to render the drinker comatose. All player-characters must make a saving throw vs. poison or they will be rendered comatose. Since all the prisoners are supposed to be unconscious the only guards who are present are the ones in the main hatchway leading to the hold. Anyone who has not succumbed to the potion will be beaten about the head with a cudgel while being held by two very strong monks. This will continue until the player-character is unconscious.

If the members of the expedition are not still in the caves, nor have they returned home but have successfully negotiated the cave system then they will see the barge move downstream and be able to note where it has anchored for the night. They can work their way down to the road that the slave raiders took and reach the shoreline opposite the barge after dark.

During the night there is a 1/3 chance that any one member of the Slave Buyers party is awake on deck. All the other members of the Slave Buyers party are asleep under the two tents on the barge's deck. All 2nd Level and higher characters are in the aft tent and all the rest are in the tent at the bow of the barge. There will be at least one guard on duty at the hatch leading down to the hold.

Gamemaster Notes:

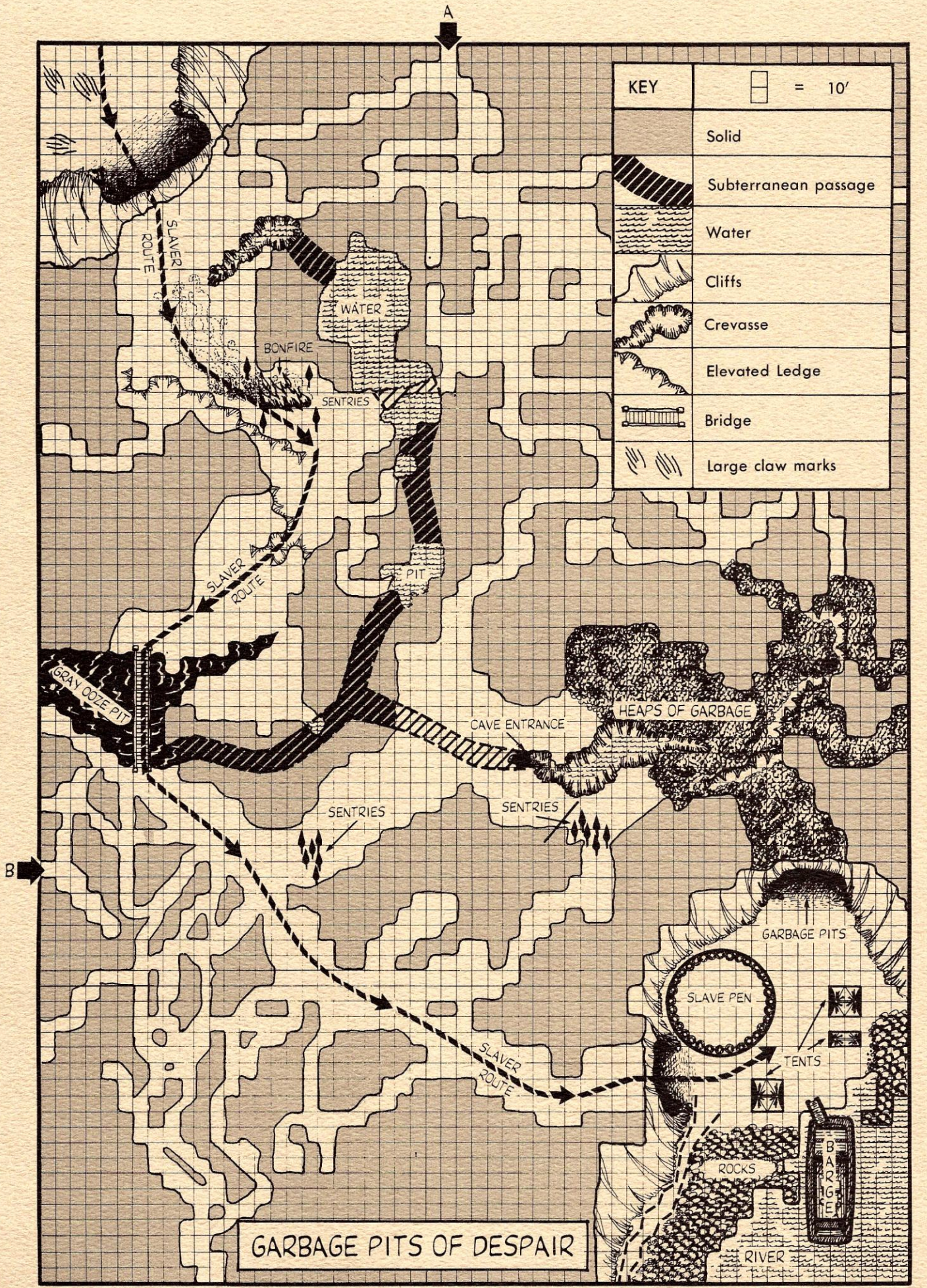
Until a guard is attacked, all the rest will remain asleep. Anyone swimming out to the barge will not be noticed by anyone on deck. When a guard is attacked, both the high-level Clerics will immediately awake and rouse the others.

This will be the only chance that the expedition should have to either escape from the barge or intercept it. After this one night, the prisoners will again be drugged, the guards doubled, and the Clerics will all remain on watch for the remainder of their trip through the swamp to their temple.

If the barge is captured, all the prisoners are freed. The barge is worth about 1200 gold pieces and can hold the entire party including their horses. The return to Vestfold can be made by water in three days (roll for three river encounters and one swamp encounter). The only two documents siezed that are of any importance is one that states that slaves are being bought from someone called the Boss and that Robert of Stone Brook will act as the Boss's agent. It also warns the Patriarch to beware of agents from the City of the Gods attacking him once the barge leaves the Dragon Hills.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

D100	*Description*
01-03	Three Gray Ooze (AC 8, 3 HD, 12 HP, Move 10' (3'), AT 1, D 2-16, S F2, M12, Neutral, XP 50)
04-06	One Ochre Jelly (AC 8, 4+1 HD, 18 HP, Move 30' (10'), AT 1, D 2-12, S F3, M12, Neutral, XP 300)
07-50	Party of Maggot Men (AC 4, 2+1 HD, 8 HP (12), Move 90' (30'), AT 1, 1-6 pts + disease, S F1 (F3), M 10, Neutral, XP 25). Note: One is the leader so use the stats within the parenthesis.
51-60	Carcus Critter (AC 6, 4+2 HD, 15 HP, Move 150' (35'), AT 2 suckers (Paralysis/Life Levels), S F3, M 8, Neutral, XP 85)
61-70	One Black Pudding (AC 6, 10 HD, 32 HP, Move 60' (20'), AT 1, d 3-24, S F5, M 12, Neutral, XP 1600)
71-79	Small party of four Orcs from the Orc stronghold (AC 6, 1 HD, 3 HP (8), Move 120' (40'), AT by weapon, S F1, M 8 (6), Chaotic, XP 10). Note: One Orc is the leader. This is a fairly well equipped party with each Orc having a short ax, dagger, full wine skin, small sack, iron ration, torch, and helmet. One Orc will be the leader with full strength (treat as a Level 2 Fighter).
80-85	One Carrion Crawler (AC 7, 3+1 HD, 12 HP, Move 120' (40'), A 8 tentacles, D (Paralysis), S F2, M 9, Neutral, XP 75).
86-90	One Green Slime (AC none, 2 HD, 6 HP, Move 3' (1'), A 1, D (see pp. 31, *BD&D DMG*), S F1, M 7, Lawful, XP 5).
91-94	One Purple Worm (AC 6, 15 HD, 40 HP, Move 60' (20'), AT 1 bite (2-16), 1 sting (1-8 + poison), S F8, M 12, Neutral, XP 2300).
95-97	Small party of five Zombies (AC 8, 2 HD, 6 HP, Move 90' (30'), A 1 claw (1-8) or weapon, S F1, M 12, Chaotic, XP 20)
98-99	Six Troglodytes (AC 5, 2 HD, 3 HP, Move 120' (40'), A 2 claws (1-4), 1 bite (1-4), S F2, M 9, Chaotic, XP 30). There is no need to make the usual saving throw vs. the smell of these creatures. In these pits their stench is hardly noticeable.
00	The Sundial: You see a small pedestal about 5' in front of you. As you investigate you see a simple garnet mounted on the pedestal. There is a small sundial with numbers and key silhouettes and runes carved around its edge. If you touch the garnet there is a momentary wavering in the air as the other friendly party appears at your location. This item is only good for one such use at this time.


A
B
KEY
= 10′
Solid
Subterranean passage
Water
Cliffs
Crevasse
Elevated Ledge
Bridge
Large claw marks
SLAVER ROUTE
WATER
BONFIRE
SENTRIES
PIT
SLAVER ROUTE
GRAY OOZE PIT
CAVE ENTRANCE
HEAPS OF GARBAGE
SENTRIES
SENTRIES
GARBAGE PITS
SLAVE PEN
TENTS
SLAVER ROUTE
ROCKS
BARGE
RIVER
GARBAGE PITS OF DESPAIR

The other document lists the times when the Great Dragon of the Dragon Hills will be awake and warns the barge to be well clear of the area before this occurs. If attacked by the Great Dragon, he is to regard himself and his crew as being expendable and not to resist the attack lest the beast be wounded and become enraged.

SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE MISSION

Returning from the mission, the party reports what has happened to the Co-Regent, Bakula. He is suitably impressed, especially when the slave raids cease. The Company will be offered permanent employment as Bakula's own household, as something called an 'Emergency Crew.' Undoubtably a fancy 'dirt' term for security guards. But this sounds like a good job and the pay about ten times what you made catching ants for the dragon.

Gathering and bringing back information about the Merchant will shock Bakula and he tells Terrance to keep it 'under his hat.' A quaint bit of phraseology from 'dirt,' meaning that no one is to tell anyone about the information. It could prove to be fatal since the Merchant is well regarded and Bakula cannot protect you effectively.

Reporting that the Temple of the Frog is involved will be met with derision and disbelief. Only a live prisoner will give the story credence. Everyone knows that the temple no longer exists. If there is a prisoner, he dies before he can be questioned. No one will talk about what happened and your story is ignored.

Any living slave raiders that are brought back will gain the captors full experience points plus an award of 100 gold pieces per level of the prisoner. If any of the prisoners are officers, you will get a flat 1000 gold pieces. If Robert himself is caught, you will get 5000 gold pieces. Before Robert can be brought to trial or even questioned, he is killed when a poisoned arrow hits him in the chest. The assassin is never captured. Any other prisoners really know nothing. They receive 'High Justice' and are executed as slavers according to local custom.

If Alfred lives and Bathare's daughter is rescued, Terrance and friends will be invited to the wedding in Vestfold. Bathare is very happy and gives Terrance a special amulet for being such a hero. If Alfred dies, Bathare will not be so happy but his daughter will convince him that Terrance (or the senior surviving male character) is a hero and would make a suitable son-in-law.

Any goodies that are captured in the course of the adventure are allowed to be retained by the characters. Many times a really rare item will be purchased by the Council of Regents.

FAILURE TO STOP THE BARGE

After a night anchored in the lagoon, the barge will proceed down the river until it eventually reaches the Great Temple of the Monks of the Swamp where all the prisoners will be sacrificed to the great Frog god.

AFTERMATH

The former slave raiders make their way to the southern-most city in the Duchy of Ten where they convince the local ruler that they are great warriors. Within the first week all their money is gone and half of the raiders are either dead or in the slave pits. Most of the rest have tired of garrison life and have returned to the Northern Marches and back to their old bad habits. All will eventually meet 'a bad end.'

Robert and half a dozen followers will return to the area around Vestfold to see they can make contact with the Boss. Eventually they will find themselves working as guards on the Merchant's caravans to the Great Kingdom.

CREATURE APPENDIX

WATCHWINGS

Armor Class:	7
Hit Dice:	1/3 (1 to 2 hit points)
Move:	20' (10') on ground 200' (65') flying
Attacks:	1 rake (talons)
Damage:	1 point
No. Appearing:	4-24 (in wild)
Save As:	Normal Man
Morale:	8
Treasure Type:	Nil
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	2

These large gray-colored birds are noted for their terrific eyesight. They have small sharp beaks but it is their sharp talons that are their main weapon. Their sharp talons are quite capable of piercing leather armor and are used to sieze small rodents in the wild for food.

Watchwings fly much like hawks and favor a diving form of attack. Like eagles they can seemingly float in the air while observing the ground below for any movement. When they spot movement, a trained watchwing will return to its trainer and indicate the direction of the intruder. When so ordered, a watchwing will go and hover over the area where the intruder is located. They will also attack any intruder when ordered to do so by their trainer. When a trainer has telepathic abilities, he can also 'talk' with the watchwings and receive fairly detailed descriptions of the intruders. Should their trainer be killed or lost, the watchwings will revert to being 'wild.'

When 'wild,' watchwings will guard their territory closely. They will cover a range of up to a mile and a half from their nest/aviary. They will attack by swooping down on the attackers but should an intruder touch a nest/aviary, the watchwings will instantly attack until either they or the intruder are dead.

Watchwings can see up to ten miles and only a well camouflaged non-moving intruder can avoid their gaze. Watchwings have very poor night vision and will only rarely fly after dark—and then only for short distances. The watchwings' favorite home is in the mountains or near the fringes of plains and deserts.

Watchwings can only be trained when they are hatched in captivity. Attempts to breed them in captivity have not proven to be too successful.

MAGGOT MEN

Armor Class:	4
Hit Dice:	2+1
Move:	90' (30')
Attacks:	1 claw or weapon
Damage:	1-6+disease or weapon
No. Appearing:	1-20
Save As:	Fighter 1 to 3
Morale:	10
Treasure Type:	A
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	25

Maggot men have the body of a maggot with the head and appendages of a man. They are found armed (75% of the time) with spears (30%), swords (25%), or daggers (45%). Maggot men live in deep holes where large amounts of garbage and other organic refuse can be found. Out of every ten maggot men, one is a leader. Except for their leaders, other maggot men are 1 hit dice and save as Level 1 Fighters.

One out of every thirty maggot men will be a chieftain of maximum size. These 'chiefs' will be found only in the main underground lair of the maggot men. In this lair there will be fifty to three hundred maggot men. Carcus

critters are often kept as 'pets' by maggot men.

Whenever possible, maggot men will prefer to drag off dead creatures or attack obviously wounded creatures. In this respect they are very similar to ghouls. A live healthy creature will only be attacked when the odds are about six to one in favor of the maggot men. The maggot men are not very intelligent and as a result they are not very good at counting. When killed, a maggot men will return a zombie-type unless their bodies are burned.

Maggot men will shun fire. Whenever fire is encountered, maggot men must make a saving throw vs. spell. This is why they will not burn their own dead. They do like zombies and will drag them back for food at every opportunity.

CARCUS CRITTER

Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	4+2
Move:	105' (35')
Attacks:	2 suckers
Damage:	Paralysis and Life Level drain
No. Appearing:	1-3 (1)
Save As:	Level 3 Fighter
Morale:	8
Treasure Type:	C
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	125

This large scavenger is about 6' long and 4' high with six legs. Although capable of hanging from a wall, it cannot climb higher than the rear pair of legs. Its mouth is toothless and can only absorb pre-digested or very soft material. Its favorite foods are the various slimes, jellies, and puddings found in the dungeons. A sucker will do one to four points of damage when it grasps a target. When a successful attack is made with a sucker, the target must roll vs. paralysis. A victim will be slowly reduced to a lifeless pulp at a rate of one level per turn per sucker. Once all the victim's life levels are gone, the victim will be absorbed through the creature's mouth.

Rather than seek live prey, the carcus critter prefers something that is already dead or of a soft consistency. Upon release, the paralysis will wear off in one turn. The victim must make a saving throw vs. poison. The poison is very low level and it will take several days to die. The victim will lose one level a day while infected. These levels can be regained by a Healing spell or through the natural healing process. These creatures are generally found where there is a supply of creatures suitable to its taste.

One great advantage that carcus critters have is a natural immunity to the poisons and acids extruded by the various slime, jellies, and puddings that it enjoys eating. This immunity does not extend to the same poisons and acids used by men and other creatures.



"SOPHIE"
The Great Dragon of the Dragon Hills

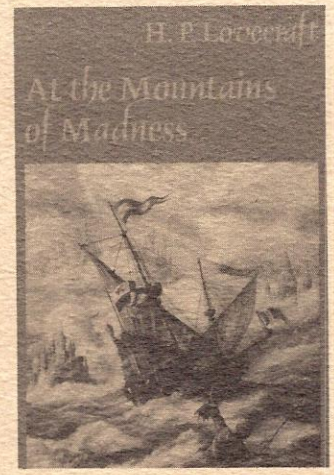
Armor Class:	-9
Hit Dice:	80****** (290 hit points)
Move:	180' (60') 420' (140') flying
Attacks:	Up to 6 (2 claws & 1 bite when swooping)
Breath Cloud:	100'x80'x45'
Damage:	Bite 12D6+8, claws, kicks, wings, or tail 8d4 each
No. Appearing:	One
Save As:	Fighter: 60
Morale:	12
Treasure Type:	40,000 gold pieces 20,000 silver pieces 20 'general' treasures
Alignment:	Lawful
XP Value:	317,250
XP with Spells:	499,500

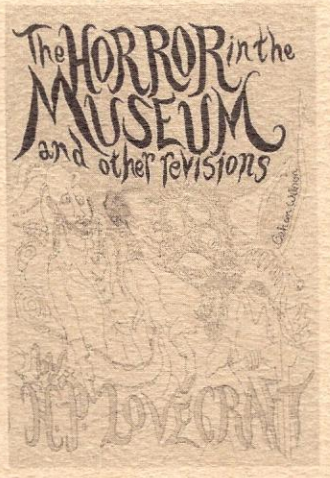
Sophie has a crocodile head with bovine-like ears and green scales with a shell-like back. She has wings and tiger-like front feet and webbed rear feet so she can both fly and swim. She has the equivalent intelligence of 30+ but is very dull. She is interested in artwork and is quite greedy. She is also a 'breeder' dragon and may have eggs or young. Great dragons that are breeders are quite rare (say 5%).

When disturbed in any way there is a 55% chance that she will immediately attack the intruder.

Sophie is a very young dragon. Chronologically, she is less than twenty-years old. Thanks to the Wizard of the Wood, she is the equivalent of almost three-hundred years. Plus, she grows at twice the normal rate for great dragons. □









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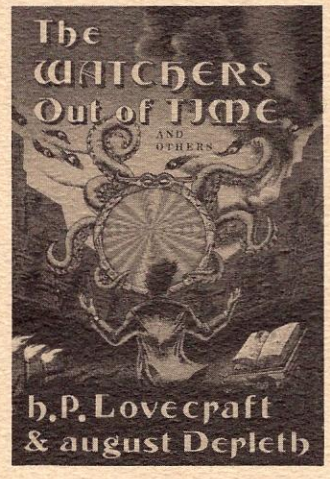
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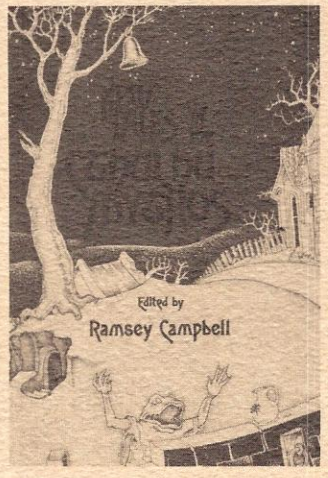
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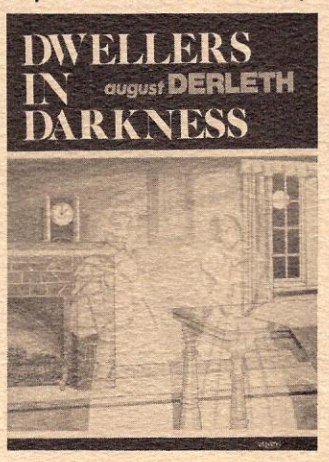
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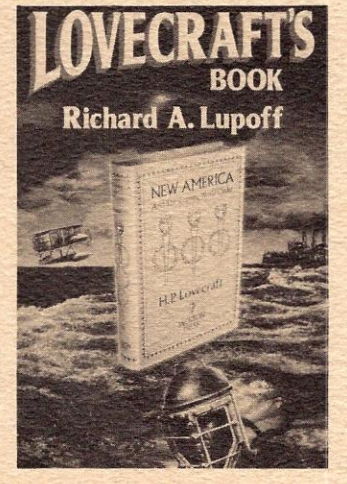
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self to "prove" that he had the mark of the Devil. There were other church-inspired atrocities, including the actions of the warriors of the Church in the first Crusade, who killed thousands of Jews on the way to Constantinople. In other crusades, it was hardly uncommon for crusaders to sack and pillage towns and cities, including Constantinople, the city they often were sometimes sent to save, along the way.

In the past millenium there has been the Thirty Years War, the Salem witch trials, and Papal courts which sometimes resembled the seraglio of a caliph rather than the austere quarters of the head of the Roman Catholic Church. These are only the most sweeping and obvious cases of nasty acts perpetrated by followers of the Church; the devout and the clergy often broke their own sacred commandments in less history-making ways.

Again, all of this evil was committed by the followers of a god who required absolute virtue and goodness of a soul before it was allowed into heaven. Not only have there been evil Christians, but also evil Christian clergymen. Where, then, is it true in human nature that the individual who pays lip service to or honestly believes a doctrine of goodness will be a good person? Or the opposite, for that matter, does a Satanist really have to be an ultimately bad person?

It is this kind of stereotyping which turns role-playing into bad melodrama. Another example of this is the description of all members of a given race as being all of a certain alignment. Dwarfs are lawful neutral, elves are chaotic good, orcs are chaotic evil, and that's that.

Hogwash. This kind of thinking sinks to the level of the statement, "All blacks have natural rhythm." Why can't there be a kind-hearted orc? An evil elf? An eccentric, unpredictable dwarf? One could argue that there is a "modal personality" which best describes the average member of a race or culture, but even this can be an insulting stereotype. Do all Frenchmen wear berets and ride bicycles? Do all Russians love drinking vodka and singing sad songs? Do all Japanese bow a lot and have exceptional skill in mathematics? Of course not. Similarly, there is no reason why goblins have to be the Steppin Fetchits or elves the Dudley Dorights of role-playing games.

Any society will have a wide range of diversity of individual behavior, within certain vaguely-defined cultural boundaries. How many of your friends are typical Americans, whatever that means? Were the flower children of the sixties, or the Ku Klux Klan, or the Jehovah's Witnesses part of the cultural mainstream, or have there always been offshoots from the main body of "normal" behavior? Are the lifestyles of the very rich and the very poor at all alike, and does this have an effect on their outlook? It seems that *Dungeons & Dragons* unfairly limits diversity to human beings; other races must be all of a certain type, cultural, and ethical automatons with minor but not major individual differences.

Gamemasters, have pity on your non-human races. They deserve more than an ugly stereotype. And while you're at it, do the same for the clerics in your campaign. Even Billy Graham occasionally says "Goddammit!"

VARIED GODS

There is an obvious counter-argument to all this: All of the previous argument is based upon observations of our world. Our god or gods (you pick), if such creatures exist, does or do not intervene in conspicuous ways in our mortal affairs. Burning bushes and parted seas are *passe*; the real action is in the moral drama faced by us all. But what about other worlds, in which the gods enjoy playing an active part in events?

Granted, given such a situation, the followers of gods, faced with frequent first-hand evidence of their god's existence and willingness to act against believers and non-believers alike, would probably have more incentive to conform to their god's outlook far more closely than humans in this world. This is not a prescription for absolute conformity, however, for one minor and one major reason. The minor one is simple: There will always be deviants, and depending on the god's willingness to swat around his followers when they stray from the golden path, that individual may or may not be able to continue his deviant behavior. The heroes of Greek mythology often violated their patron god's commandments, and occasionally they even got away with it. Much of this depends upon the personality of the god and how much that god intervenes in day-to-day affairs.

The more important argument springs from the nature of the gods themselves. Why should gods be flat, stereotypical characters any more than their followers? Thor often had extremely nasty moods; Hades had kinder moments; our Christian God is jealous and merciless in the Old Testament and loving and forgiving in the New Testament. A god may be virtuous, but he also might have weaknesses. Face it, when you're a god, there are very few checks on your baser (or better, depending on the god) impulses except other gods. It's not surprising therefore that the Greek gods acted like overgrown children, chasing after hapless mortal women and pulling their heroes around by the hair.

What then is a follower to do? If his god is capable of failings just as he is, then what comprises conformity with that god's nature? Making the same mistakes? Perhaps the answer should lie in what that god represents. Gods are embodiments of principles, and it is up to a god's worshipers to uphold his principles. Depending on the society, a follower might have to devote himself to the teachings of one god, or he may have to conform to the ideals of many; the latter has been the case more often than not. A follower of a pantheon has many cross-cutting loyalties, and all too many conflicts of ideals are irreconcilable. What happens when urgings toward absolute truth and absolute justice conflict? How does one balance punishment for wrongdoers and compassion for all men? Because gods reflect principles doesn't mean that tangles of these principles are any less knotty.

My message is, "Realism." No matter what the genre, fiction is made interesting by the human drama. Conflict and hard choices are the stuff that good plots and characters are made of; without some of this, role-playing collapses into characters without characters and conflicts without any real conflicts. Role-playing without some acknowledgement of the complexities of life is as soulless and uninteresting as a video game, and it is far easier and less time-consuming to learn Pac-Man than it is to be a good player or gamemaster in a role-playing game. Role-playing offers vistas that boardgames and computer games do not; we should take advantage of the potential for real drama in fascinating settings offered by the hobby. □

Game Reviews

Golden Heroes/Flashing Blades/Parisian Adventure/
Man To Man/Orcslayer/Battle System/Vampires/
Death On Tour/Vargr/Trader Captains and Merchant Princes/
Fragments Of Fear/Riddle Of The Ring

☆☆½

GOLDEN HEROES

The Role-Playing Game of Super-Heroes

By Simon Burley
and Pete Haines
(Games Workshop, $13)

Reviewed by Quentin Long

Golden Heroes should be better known as "*Villains & Vigilantes* with a British accent."

The Game: Comes boxed with the Players Book, the Supervisors Book, 3D6s, and 2D10s.

What hit me about the interior was the format it was printed in—for some unknown reason, I found it so awful that I literally could not bring myself to read it at first. Since this revulsion quickly passed and has never recurred since, the problem (whatever it was) had more to do with me than the typeface. Heavily illustrated—most of the art is pretty mediocre, the two Bolland illos being a notable exception. Overall, the visual aspects of *Golden Heroes* is tolerable.

Character Creation: Roll them bones, to quote Fritz Leiber. There are four stats: Ego, Strength, Dexterity, and Vigour (the designers obviously felt that the players should supply their own Intelligence, Charisma, and all that) which 3D6 is rolled for each. Roll the number of D6 equal to the character's Vigour score twice, once to get Stun Hits to Coma and once to get Body Hits to Kill. There are also various other bits of figuring to do. Then roll for powers . . . You get 4+INT((2D6+1)/2) Power Rolls, which are used for (a) rolling a power off the table, (b) upgrading one of your powers, or (c) rolling on the Advantageous Background Table (which includes Rich Industrialist, Immortal, Contacts-Government, and so forth, each of which has its own pecular advantages). After getting this random list of powers and whatnot, you get to invent a Rationale (a.k.a. an "origin") which



includes as much of the list as possible—anything the Rationale doesn't account for gets thrown away. There is a short helpful section on Example Rationales, consisting of a list of seven different powers and eight different Rationales for eight different heroes built around that list. There is some mumblage about rolling up Advantageous Backgrounds only after you roll your powers, to avoid incompatibilities 'twixt your background(s) and your powers, but why, since only your Rationale determines what is incompatible and it's devised only after all the dice have stopped rolling? One interesting point—the D100 Superpower Generation Table not only has no entry for the number 49, it doesn't even have the number 49 at all! A minor quibble, perhaps, but it does not speack well of the proofreading of *Golden Heroes*. Overall: Too much die-rolling, but it seems alright save for that.

The Superpowers: Chosen randomly off a table. There are quantum levels of effectiveness, called "Grades"—some powers have only one Grade, some have as many as three, some have potentially infinite Grades. In some cases, there is no discernable logic or pattern behind the additional capabilities granted a power by higher Grades of it. The general usefulness of the powers varies wildly—the most lethally effective power in *Golden Heroes* is Transmutation (under "Psi Powers"—you can change anything into anything, with only the minimal limitations), and the most trivial one is Solidify, which makes a character invulnerable and immobile. This is why Stone Boy (of the Legion of Substitute Heroes) is such a putz. . . Then there are the redundant powers: Armour (as in "suit of") and Tough Skin (which can be tougher than any conceivable Armour), or Larger (multiple Grades, but permanently on) and Growth (only one Grade, but can be turned on or off). Skills are included under superpowers—not surprising, since they're defined along the lines of "The character can do X with no possible, probable chance of failure whatever." Overall: Ungood, maybe ungood plus.

The Combat System: Needlessly complicated. To illustrate, here are the game-mechanical guts of the description of the Energy Attack power:

"All Energy Attacks have 20 metres normal range, 40 metres extreme range, are Weapon Class 3 and reduce the target's Damage Dividers by 2 apiece. The Grade 1 Energy Attack is 15D6 which can be doled out however you like over 5 Rounds, except that you can't fire off more than 10D6 in any one blast and the difference between the number of Hit-To-Kill dice and the number of Hit-To-Coma dice can be no greater than 2 for any blast."

You figure it out—I'd rather roll up a *Chivalry & Sorcery* mage, thanks.

Time is ticked off in Rounds—each Round ("approximately 3 seconds," says the Supervisors Book) is divided into 4 Frames (we Americans would say "4 Panels"), with most actions taking 2 Frames. Most supertypes have 4 Frames per Round. Some powers can reduce this number but only megazoid Magneto-level villains can have more than 4 Frames, and they get an arbitrarily large number of them. Only Speedsters can subdivide time into half-Frames, and then solely for moving half their "normal" movement rate. To sum up, they took the *Dungeons & Dragons* combat system and complexificationated it. Overall: Poor, with occasional interesting spots.

Other Things: The *Golden Heroes* monetary system is based on the Golden Pound, GP for short (did someone mention *D&D*?), which is equal to one pound sterling. Presumably Haines and Burley had reasons for this minor and over-cutesy renaming of the pound sterling, but their reasoning is not clear to me. There's a lot of other bookkeeping-type stuff, having to do with how much free time a hero has (Daily Utility Phases), how much money and equipment he can get his hands on at any given time (Financial and Material Resources), and various campaign ratings of uncertain usefulness (Public Status, Detective Points, Personal Status). There was a heaping lot of similar bookkeeping-type stuff in *Champions III*, but how many people will ever bother using it? Any gamemaster and players worth their salt don't need to become accountants to achieve the stated purposes of these rating things. There's also a couple of pages about how to improve one's powers, equipment, and whatnot. Overall: Poor.

The Supervisors Book: Deserves a separate mention because the Scenario Supervisor (a.k.a. the "gamemaster") is clearly the *raison d'etre* of this game. Gamemasters, being the Lord High Everything Else, have always had the power to do whatever they liked at whatever time they liked and in whatever fashion they liked, but no game I know of enshrines gamemaster control to quite the extent *Golden Heroes* does. Information is distributed in the two books on a need-to-know basis, which explains why the Supervisors Book is half again as thick as the Players Book and why the Supervisors Book has the occasional note about not letting the players look at what's in it. There is a sample of combat which includes the annotation "the SS (an appropriate abbreviation) has already decided that the Thugs will drop unconscious when struck by a hero's major attack, regardless of the actual damage that it did." There are three pages of superpower notes, giving data "of which the players should not be aware." Some of the helpful examples from the Players Book are found in the Supervisors Book as well, except—surprise, surprise!—the supervisor versions are far more helpful and detailed than the player versions. There is a prefabricated introductory scenario which includes a rough plotline and suggestions on how to horsewhip the action back onto the plotting in case the players don't do the things they're supposed to. I think I need not go on. Yes indeed, the SS is in command. . . Overall: Depends on your attitude towards gamemaster control of games. Me, I think it's grossly excessive. . .

Conclusion: I don't like it. The

GAME RATINGS

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

good bits (as few as they are) are not enough to make up for all the bad bits. Buy it only if you're a rabid completist or if you enjoy tinkering with rules from obscure games. □

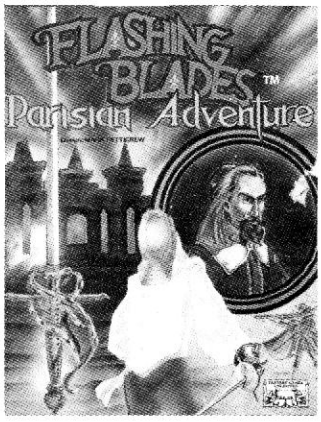
☆☆½

FLASHING BLADES PARISIAN ADVENTURE

Both by Mark Pettigrew (FGU, $12 and $5 respectively)

Reviewed by Sean Holland





Flashing Blades is a game of adventure set in 17th century France—not the France of our historical past, but the France of the Three Musketeers, the Man in the Iron Mask—an age of swashbucklers, pirates, rogues, and colorful adventures with equally colorful heroes.

Generating a character in *Flashing Blades* is simple enough. 3D6 are rolled for each of the six attributes: strength, dexterity, endurance, wit, charm, and luck. The player is allowed to choose either the height or build of his character, but the other is determined by a random roll. The character's attributes can be modified by a random roll. The character's attributes can be modified according to his height and build. At this point the player is given the choice of lowering some attributes to improve others.

Once this is done, hit points (how much damage a character can take before dying) and encumbrance (how much weight a character can carry) are figured for the character.

Now the character's background is decided from among the categories of Nobleman, Soldier, Gentleman, or Rogue. Each character starts with 10 points to buy skills. Bonus skills such as Cut Purse for a Rogue or Horsemanship for a Nobleman cost 1 Skill Point, a normal skill 2 points, and a skill from a different background (such as a Nobleman choosing Cut Purse) will cost 3 points.

Next the character's martial skills are chosen, ranging from the School of Hard Knocks (allowed only to Rogues) to Fencing Schools and the Fraternity. Soldiers are given martial training by their company type.

After all of that is done the best part (before play) happens, the player is allowed to choose an advantage and a secret. The nine advantages range from a Title (for Noblemen only) to Wealth, a Contact, Gentleman's Lackey, or even a Favor from those in high places. There are an equal number of secrets such as Sworn Vengeance, Blackmailed, or being a Compulsive Gambler. Each character should have one advantage and one secret, though at the cost of 2 Skill Points the player may choose to have only an advantage, or gain 1 Skill Point and have only a secret.

Finally the character's yearly allowance of money is determined by a random roll, and it is never enough what with taxes, tithes, and having to maintain one's social rank. The character starts with money equal to a yearly allowance and after the character is equipped, he is ready to play.

Admittedly this may sound time consuming, but once you are familiar with the system a character can be generated in 5-15 minutes.

Since I have covered character generation I shall now explain the play of the game.

Skills in the game are handled quite simply; the character must roll equal to or less than the attribute that controls the skill on a D20. The chance of success is modified by circumstance, and the gamemaster decides the exact modifiers for any situation. If the character is a Master of the skill he gains a +3 bonus to his chance of success, and if he is a Master Superior he gains +6.

Combat is done in rounds representing 12 seconds of real time, and in each round a character can take normal actions (such as attacking with a slash and then use a parry to defend against his opponent's attack) or a long action (such as a lunge attack or reloading a flintlock). The chance a character has to hit is rolled on a D20 and based on his skill with the weapon. Someone unskilled with a weapon will hit on a 4 or less, a character trained with a weapon will hit on a 11, while a Master Superior will hit on a 20 or less.

If a character is hit, a roll for the location of the hit is made. Damage is based on the weapon type and skill of the opponent. For example if a character using a sabre hits with a slash he does 3 points of damage, but if he hits with a thrust he does only 1. If a character hits by less than half of his chance, he inflicts a serious wound which causes weapon damage plus a D6.

Armor deflects damage. Padded armor reduces damage by 1 point, while a cuirass will reduce it by 3. Against firearms armor only deflects half its normal amount, rounded up.

There are also rules for brawling, dirty fighting, and information on the Dueling Code.

Perhaps the most important rules in the game are those about social status and how to gain it. The base for this system is the social rank ranging from 1 (peasants) to 20 (the King). There are rules for the privileges of power, as well as its responsibilities. These rules are clearly written and cover advancement in the Military, the Clergy, the Royal Bureaucracy, Banking, and Moneylending, as well as several others. The rules on social rank and advancement are golden, and could well be applied to several other games in a modified form.

There are rules for characters who go on military campaigns, embezzle Royal Funds, and make investments.

The last part of the rulebook contains rules for experience, taxes, and tithes. A useful appendix contains a glossary of weapons and armor, a map and information on Paris and France in the 17th century. It also includes a timeline and information on the French kings and cardinals of the 17th century.

Also included in the box is a book of three introductory adventures and encounter tables. The first adventure is "Tavern Brevage Noir," a short adventure in one of the worst taverns in Paris. In "The Man Behind the Mask," the second and longest adventure, the characters are hired by the mysterious Archduke DeMainz to recover a number of valuable objects in Florence and return them to Paris. Simple enough to do, except for the fact that the Cardinal, the Royal Dragoons, and spies from Savoy want them as well. All in all, quite a challenge, but the favor of the Archduke is worth the risks involved. The last adventure, "Monsieur Le Droit's Secret," is an adventure revolving around spies and political intrigue, and the players must stop the Red Brotherhood from selling the state secrets of France to the Spanish.

The boxed set of *Flashing Blades* includes a rulebook, a book of adventures, a character sheet, a gamemaster's screen, and dice.

So, in summary, if you like the adventures of the Three Musketeers, and other swashbucklers, buy the game. If not, at least take a look, it might change your mind.

Parisian Adventure, the first adventure pack for *Flashing Blades*, contains four adventures, a guide to Paris, the Rumormill, and a list of exotic items.

The first adventure is "The Fencing Master" which concerns an attempt to find and rescue the master swordsman and head of the Fraternity Sainte-Didier who has been abducted by his arch rival.

In the second adventure, "The Grand Theatre," the characters are sent to recover stolen documents now in the Grand Theatre of the Comedy Francaise. The King's Musketeers are pitted against the Cardinal's Guard in this light-hearted and swashbuckling adventure. The characters swing from theater ropes, take flying leaps, and brawl backstage as the two sides race to recover the documents while a play is in progress.

"The Great Marksmanship Tourney" is the backdrop against which this adventure is played. The characters may compete in the tourney and may even win but are more likely to become involved in one or more of the sub-plots. I will not reveal these interesting sub-plots for fear of spoiling the adventure.

The last adventure, "Scavenger Hunt," is perhaps the most humorous of the four. The characters must try to collect three birthday presents for the mistress of one of them. The dangers are not to life and limb but to one's dignity and clothing.

The Paris of today is much changed from the Paris of the Three Musketeers and Cardinal Richelieu, but the guide to Paris gives us the information necessary

to recreate the glory and adventure of those bygone days.

The Rumormill contains a list of twenty rumors, each of which is accompanied by a short idea on the things that the rumor can lead to. The rumors can be used as starting points for adventures or to simply add color to the game.

The list of exotic items contains a list of items inspired by inventions of the period, and by fantastic inventions and items suggested by the swashbuckling movies. The items are most interesting and they add flavor to the game.

All in all, if you play *Flashing Blades*, *Parisian Adventure* is a good buy, and an exciting addition to the world of *Flashing Blades*. □

☆☆☆

Fantasy Combat from GURPS

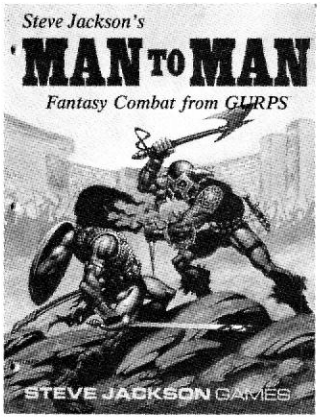
MAN TO MAN

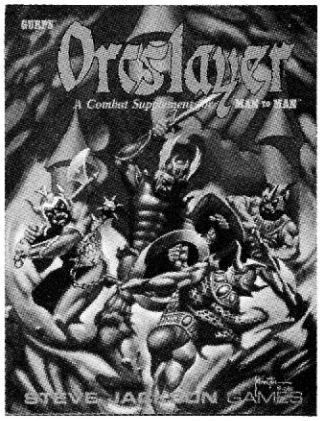
By Steve Jackson (Steve Jackson Games $9.95)

ORCSLAYER

By Warren Specter and Steve Jackson (Steve Jackson Games $5.95)

Reviewed by Dale L. Kemper





Steve Jackson has come out with two fairly interesting additions to the fantasy role-playing market. *Man To Man* and *Orcslayer* are the first publications from Jackson's *Generic Universal Role-Playing System* and if these two booklets are any indication, it should be quite a game.

Man To Man is one of the most comprehensive fantasy combat systems that I have seen in a long while. It goes into greater detail than fantasy role-playing games that simply have a chapter on fantasy combat; it is a book in itself. The cover art and playing pieces included (cut from cardboard stock with scissors) are the usual colorful achievement that Jackson is noted for in his *Car Wars* games.

I thought the rules were organized quite well. A basic and advanced section is provided as well as chapters on hit location, close combat, ranged weapons, injuries and fatigue, and special combat situations. This system seemed to me to be more realistic than most other fantasy combat systems and the ease of play a welcome surprise. Each turn is one second of real-time and turns seem to flow easily, once you get familiar with the system. There are only four of the ever-present attributes for characters: Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, and Health (energy & vitality—and how many hits you can take!). The other rules are organized in a flexible add-on fashion. In fact, the rules are such that not just role-players can enjoy them.

With many varied tactical rules of the advanced game *Man To Man* can be played as a combat boardgame, ignoring the role-playing connection. I'm sure this is one of the big reasons that Jackson decided to release it separately.

With the large replay value and fun factor of this authentic combat system, I think that any fantasy role-player would welcome it as an addition or replacement to his or her already existing combat rules in his/her favorite fantasy role-playing game.

Orcslayer is the first supplement produced for *Man To Man*. In it you will find a new fantasy world which up to six players can explore as they battle in various situations. The interesting thing about this supplement is that it is not just an adventure book. *Orcslayer* leads the players through nine combat scenarios, linked by role-playing interludes (which can be ignored if you only want to fight battles). It is very easy to run, similar yet simpler than some pre-programmed adventures. This combination of boardgame and role-playing elements is what attracted me to the book first. Innovation is something we rarely see in fantasy gaming any more and the diversified uses of *Orcslayer* really add to its value.

The book welcomes you to the land of Caithness, a kingdom threatened by a blight of nasty Orcmen. The group of characters are set on a mission to find the extent of the orc-threat to Caithness and their lord's castle at Durham. To achieve this goal they go through a series of battle situations, learning more from each one until they succeed on their mission or are killed. It is a good situation to introduce newer gamers to fantasy role-playing games and can be used as the introduction to a larger campaign.

Orcslayer is a good companion to *Man To Man*, and Steve Jackson Games have promised more supplements to aid in the exploration of the Kingdom of Caithness. The organization of the supplement is one of the great things it has to offer—there is never any problem finding what you need in it. There are also ample areas where a creative gamemaster can embellish the situation to his heart's content. Hopefully it will not be too long a wait to see what other supplements come out for *Man To Man*. □

☆☆½

Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

BATTLE SYSTEM

By Doug Niles (TSR, $19.99)

Reviewed by Scott Dollinger



It is not surprising that, since fantasy is an epic-oriented genre, many gamemasters have created their own tales of heroic battles to help explain the history and unique socio-political dynamics of their worlds to players. After running a campaign for a few years, gamemasters often find that their players' characters have achieved levels or abilities which make them prime candidates for becoming legendary figures themselves and are often tempted to play out an epic battle of their own device. Unfortunately, many role-playing games do not have melee systems adequate to deal with the special problems encountered in running a combat with hundreds or even thousands of participants. One game company, TSR, has recently released a product that attempts to deal with the problems of large-scale combat for its extremely popular *Dungeons & Dragons* games.

It's called *Battle System* and that is just what it is, a combat system designed for large-scale battles. It is not a fantasy wargame; one must have the *Dungeons & Dragons* or *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* rules in order to use the material presented in *Battle System*. In fact, if one is a gamemaster of *D&D* or *AD&D*, and has ever played any sort of simulation game that uses chits or miniatures, the rules in *Battle System* are superfluous.

I was running a large-scale battle in my *AD&D* campaign at the time of *Battle System*'s release and when I bought a copy to review I decided to compare the rules presented in *Battle System* to those that I had been able to derive from the regular *AD&D* rules. I have only played simulation boardgames four or five times in the past ten years and consider myself a novice in that particular area, yet I found that the rules that I had derived from the standard rulebooks differed only slightly on two minor points from those in *Battle System*.

Battle System comes boxed with a rulebook, several sheets of cardboard counters or chits, a booklet on how to paint lead miniatures, a lead figure to paint, and a scenario module. All of the items are of good quality and are useful in their own right. Unfortunately, in this case, I feel that the whole does not equal the sum of its parts.

Experienced players of simulation games can easily use chits from other games, the miniature was not the best possible, and the scenario could have been released separately. The emphasis in *Battle System* should have been on the rules and frankly one can derive those rules from the standard rulebooks without spending twenty dollars.

In my opinion TSR should have released *Battle System* in book form or as a module-type package. Perhaps an enlarged rulebook with more information concerning general tactics in a magical

war, a different saving-throw system and some suggestions on fortification designs with an eye toward defending against magical or monster attacks could be combined with an introductory module and sold as a package. One last possibility is that the rules could have been shortened slightly and added as part of the new *Unearthed Arcana* supplement that TSR has just released.

In any event, two good things did come out of *Battle System*. The first is that TSR is now producing some fine modules for large-scale combats. Even if one does not use *Battle System* the modules have a great deal of appeal for those individuals who enjoy simulation games as well as the role-playing variety. Second, the areas left undeveloped in *Battle System* make great article ideas for impoverished writers such as myself. □

☆☆

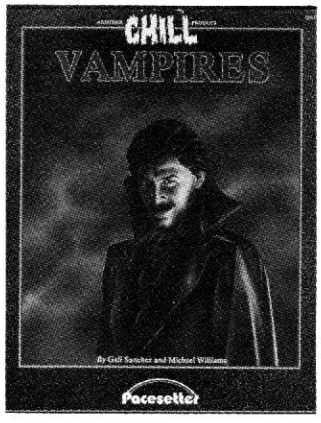
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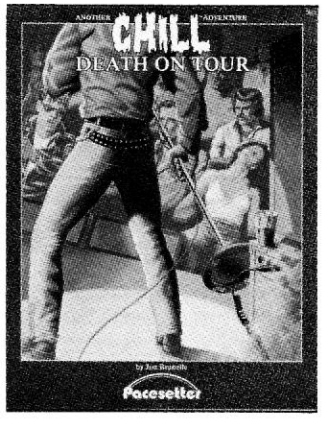
By Gali Sanchez and Michael Williams (Pacesetter $10)

DEATH ON TOUR

By Jon Brunelle (Pacesetter $6)

Reviewed by Russell Grant Collins





Vampires are everywhere. These creatures of the night have inspired songs, books, movies, comic books, and even games. Many role-playing games features some sort of vampire as one of the creatures that players can come up against. Now Pacesetter has done all these games one better and produced a 96-page (including index) supplement for *Chill* on that subject alone.

There are nine vampires in this book, ranging from Count Dracula through Indian and oriental vampires to a rock & roll vampire (who is also featured in *Death On Tour*). Each presented in an article written as if from the files of S.A.V.E., the organization in *Chill* dedicated to eradicating all creatures of darkness such as vampires and werewolves. There is also a literary sidebar featuring an appearance of the vampire and a page for the gamemaster for each vampire.

Since the game stats are separated from the rest of the material, much of this can be enjoyed by other players as well as the gamemaster, although they should resist the urge to read the pages for the gamemaster only if they plan to run in his campaign (but they probably won't—I know of many *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* players who have their own *Monster Manual*s). And it is generic enough that gamemasters of other games can figure out how to adapt these vampires to their campaigns, where appropriate.

The biggest complaints I have with this supplement are that it seems arbitrary what objects repel or ward off different vampires and how they have to or can be destroyed. It is hard to believe that some of these haven't been invented just for this supplement. A good bibliography would have been welcome. While it is clear that Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is a real book and the interview with the rock vampire was invented just for this supplement, most of the rest could be from real sources, but this isn't clear.

Death On Tour features the rock vampire and various other horrors in the music business. The players must find these creatures and stop them.

I found this to be a pretty good module if you overlooked the fact that there's a *deus ex machina* provided in case the players need it (this has become somewhat standard these days, so I can't really complain, but it certainly loses something when the menace is defeated by something other than the heroes).

This module could be adapted to other game systems fairly easily since enough detail is given on most of the more unusual monsters to allow the interested to create equivalent creatures in their system (assuming that he could figure out the various Evil Ways from their names alone). And on the other hand, there isn't a lot of repetition for those with the original game.

The biggest problem with this module is that if the players are familiar with the section in *Vampires* about the rock vampire (even just the player's section or the name of the vampire, which is the title of the section), the first part of this module is a lot less mysterious, since the culprit is fingered from the start. If possible, run this one before letting your players see *Vampires* at all.

In conclusion, *Vampires* is recommended to any gamemaster with an interest in the subject, because even if he uses a vastly different system, he should get a number of ideas from it. *Death On Tour* is less recommended because after all you can only run it once, whereas there are many variations on the theme in *Vampires* (and with the article in *Vampires*, you have the major concept). Still, if you run *Chill*, it is not a bad module. □

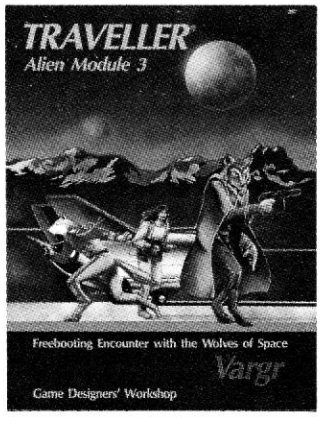
☆☆½

Traveller Alien Module 3

VARGR

By J. Andrew Keith, et al (GDW $7)

Reviewed by Tony Watson



GDW has been paying a lot of attention recently to aliens for the universe of their *Traveller* science-fiction role-playing game. The Alien Modules the company has produced have been some of their best and most imaginative works as of late. *Vargr* is the third in the series and follows the precedents set in the previous *Aslan* and *K'kree* supplements.

The Vargr, as seasoned *Traveller* players will know, are a race of lupine aliens with an interesting heritage. The mysterious Ancients transplanted canine breeding stock from Terra millions of years before the time period in which the game is set and, through a process of genetic manipulation, created an intelligent and tool-using species. The Vargr eventually developed a technologically sophisticated, if politically fragmented civilization, and independently discovered the principle of the jump drive, qualifying them to be counted as one of the Six Major Races. The Vargr are unique among the sophonts of *Traveller* in that the wolf-like race represents the result of genetic experimentation rather than a process of natural evolution toward sentience.

At first the idea of upright, intelligent canines as an alien race seems pretty silly, the sort of thing one sees in bad science-fiction games that approach the subject of alien races from the standpoint of "let's have some aliens that are bear-people and some that are lizardmen and others that are like sentient cats and dogs." That is, a design approach that is no more imaginative than taking something familiar and giving it a twist and presenting as something very original. GDW, however, has always been pretty serious about how they do science-fiction (even when they have relied on space opera for inspiration) and the Vargr are no exception. The tack taken here is intelligent and plausible (as far as these things go)—the Vargr are more than just a pack of sentient bowsers, but an intelligent alien race despite their familiarty.

The module has three major parts: the text and rules, the tables and charts, and an adventure outline. The first two sections are those that the *Traveller* gamemaster is going to purchase the volume for, while the adventure provides him with a way to integrate Vargr characters into his campaign.

As in the alien modules preceding it, *Vargr* has a number of essays detailing various facets of Vargr physical and psychological makeup, society, and history. Vargr psychology is clearly the dominant influence on their history, culture, and norms of social interaction. The concept of charisma is crucial to understanding Vargr society—leaders lead through their charisma, rather than through wealth or formal channels of political power. Followers attach themselves to those

who radiate courage, competence, and success. Furthermore, charisma is a fluctuating commodity, falling and rising with each success and failure. At the same time, there is constant competition within groups and organizations for dominance, as members seek to see who, quite literally, will be "top dog." Vargr society is, as a result, volatile and fragmented. Consensus is difficult to create or maintain and long-term relations based on loyalty are even less possible. This dominating factor in Vargr social life is well explained in the text and extended logically in the notes on how to role-play Vargr and use them correctly as gamemaster-characters.

In addition to these notes, there is an extensive section on the Vargr language and a system for creating Vargr vocabularies, if that degree of detail is needed. For those interested in starfaring, seven common Vargr ship designs are included (vessels such as traders, scouts, and frigates) bereft, unfortunately, of the illustrations prepared by William H. Keith for similar material printed in *The Traveller Adventure*. Other sections deal with the Vargr military and world generation.

By far the most extensive section of the rules is the one dealing with Vargr character generation. Vargr characteristics are pretty close to those of humans, save that rather than social standing, Vargr have a rating for the all-important charisma. There are the usual tables and charts for prior service, acquired skills and mustering out benefits. (Nearly all of this material has been reprinted from *The Traveller Book*'s section on Vargr characters, by the way.) Service options for Vargrs are similar to those for humans save that instead of Marines and Scouts there are the Corsairs and Emissaries. The latter category is especially interesting, being a natural outgrowth of Vargr society—emissaries act as go-betweens and arbitrators to resolve disputes between Vargr groups. There is one new skill, just for Vargrs, Infighting, a sort of claw and tooth version of brawling. For those wanting more detailed military characters, a set of tables based on the *Mercenary* and *High Guard* character-generation systems are included as well as one dealing with Corsair characters. The latter represents a rather interesting blend of mercenary ground troops with space forces. All of the character-generation tables place an emphasis on charisma—it can be used to try for desired assignments and is affected by the per term success rolls.

The adventure included in the module, "Gvurrdon's Adventure," is really no more than a framework, a general plot line to be followed rather than a detailed synopsis with gamemaster-characters, encounter charts, and setting descriptions. The adventure is a search through the Gvurrdon Sector of the Vargr Extents (a detailed map is provided) for the abandoned trading base mentioned in an ancient Vargr myth. The players will have to decipher the text first—a copy of the text in the archaic Vargr language of Arrghoun, notes on grammer, a vocabulary, and a translation are included. The actual course of the adventure is up to the gamemaster. A sector is a big area to roam around in and the player group will have to call on a number of planets so the possibilities for subplots are considerable. Interestingly enough, this has been designed to be played primarily, if not entirely, by Vargr characters and will work well in that mode, given players who are willing to take on the task of role-playing Vargrs correctly.

Vargr is a good buy—intelligent, well-designed, and interesting. For the *Traveller* campaign that needs a sound treatment of alien races, this supplement is a fine choice. However, a good portion of this material has appeared elsewhere. Those who already have *The Traveller Adventure* have access to much of the basic information on Vargr society and the basic Vargr character-generation tables, the most important aspects of the book. Nevertheless, for those campaigns in which the Vargr figure prominently, this is an excellent choice. □

☆☆☆

Supplement for Star Trek

TRADER CAPTAINS AND MERCHANT PRINCES

By Fantasimulations Associates (FASA $6)

Reviewed by Frederick Paul Kiesche III

Some of the most memorable characters in Star Trek—next to the Klingons—were the traders. Traders and merchants such as Cyrano Jones and Harry Mudd made life for the crew of the *Enterprise* and Captain Kirk more than slightly interesting. Life in the Star Trek Universe would have been much poorer if it had not been for these idiosyncratic rogues, darting from planet to planet, in search of the perfect deal.

Trader Captains and Merchant Princes is a supplement for FASA's high-quality *Star Trek: The Role-Playing Game*. It provides rules and background material for the creation of merchant-player and gamemaster-characters, people who operate



independent of the Star Fleet merchant ships mentioned in the basic rules set. The supplement also provides information on a larger number of items—ranging from the economic system to product information to notes on the running of merchant campaigns.

This supplement is quite detailed and is put together in an intelligent and organized fashion. The authors have given us a supplement that not only acts in concert with the original rules, but acts as an interesting, independent and different way of playing *Star Trek*. Indeed, *Merchant Princes* is probably the most detailed examination of this group of people available for any science-fiction role-playing game. It would make an interesting piece of background information for other science-fiction games, including *Traveller* and *Space Opera*.

Merchant Princes opens with the character generation system, using one Simon DeWitt as an example. The authors show us how one acquires skills, gets "starting money" to buy your first ship and cargo, and other details. Also covered are the merits of "going through the ranks" vs. merchant school and the possibility of Star Fleet personnel transferring to the private merchant service.

The next section is a discussion of items that are available for trade—from forms of transport to weapons, medical equipment to luxury items. This is followed by an explanation of each item—a general description of what each item is and a vague listing of its capabilities. A problem here is that the descriptions are too vague, leaving many specific questions unanswered. For example, let's look at the All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV). We are told that the ATV will carry two passengers, costs 2500 credits, that it has very little cargo capacity, and that it is powered by a small fusion plant. What we are not told is what the mass of the ATV is, how much volume it takes up in your cargo hold, how fast it can go, what the range is before fuel must be added, etc. In the case of the first two factors, we are told (in the rules) that the weight of an item does not really concern a merchant, that the engines of the ships used are so powerful that a particular weight is not important in cargo-carrying calculations. This is well and good, but the rules also discuss how much cargo a ship can carry using what are known as Standard Cargo Units.

Standard Cargo Units translates to a discussion of how much volume something takes up in your cargo hold. We are told what base prices are per SCU and what the base consumptions are per SCU on general classes of items, but nowhere in the rules are the specific SCUs of specific items listed. Without knowing how many SCUs an ATV takes up, we do not know how many ATVs a cargo ship can carry! The other factors I mentioned—speed and range and items of that nature—could be vital in the course of play. While it is true that a gamemaster could make many decisions on these items, it would have been nice if the designers of the supplement had taken the time to do this for us, especially in the case of the Standard Cargo Units.

The next section of the book shows nine different ships for use by merchants. Deck plans are given for several of the ships. The designers include all essential data that one would need for using the ships (weight, range, cargo capacity, etc.). Although the ships are a bit on the small side, it is mentioned that you can use the FASA supplement on ship construction to design larger and different ships.

The final sections of *Merchant Princes*, "Trade and Commerce in the UFP," "The Merchant Campaign," "Merchants in the Star Fleet Campaign," etc., are the really useful sections of the book. Whether or not the players in your *Star Trek* campaign wish to play merchants, you will find these sections helpful in fleshing out and expanding your particular *Star Trek* universe. The designers discuss several procedures and factors which help determine such things as how good a break in price one can get on items, what happens when the market is flooded, how population affects

demand, how your persuasion techniques help or hurt your prices—a very thorough and complete discussion of the various factors involved in trading. This allows you to game a "fluid" marketplace. Prices change from planet to planet, and, may even change from time to time that you visit the same planet. Other items discussed are pirates, bribery, smuggling, hijacking, taxes, tariffs, finances—the "dark sides" of trading, to be sure, but a very necessary side of the whole business.

The book concludes with a discussion on the merits of a merchant campaign run from the Star Fleet and independent merchant viewpoints, discusses maps, the tone of campaigns, the backgrounds for adventures, gives us an excellent "Warp Speed Conversion Table," and finally, gives you a complete description of a typical area of Federation Space—the Twilight Nebula sector. The book winds up with a few brief discussions of stock markets, pay scales, and some familiar characters from the Star Trek Universe.

In conclusion, I feel that the designers have done an excellent job on this supplement. With the exception of the lack of specifics on cargo, everything was well thought out. The book is filled with many nice touches (artwork for example). I recommend this book for anyone who runs *Star Trek* and wishes to flesh out his or her universe or even to those running other science-fiction campaigns who are looking for an interesting background supplement on traders. □

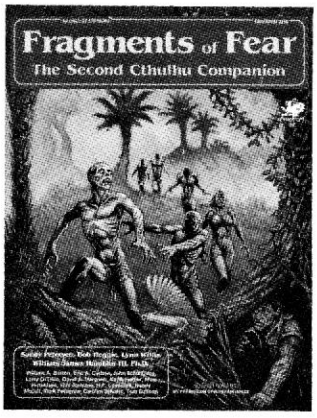
☆☆☆

FRAGMENTS OF FEAR

The Second Cthulhu Companion

By Sandy Petersen, et al (Chaosium $6)

Reviewed by Michael Szymanski



This 48-page booklet comprises Chaosium's second Cthulhu Companion and, like the first, it presents a wide variety of new information for Keepers and players alike.

Six new Mythos creatures are introduced by Sandy Petersen, all but one of which are taken from J. Ramsey Campbell's book, *The Inhabitant of the Lake*. The most interesting of these new additions are the two Lesser Independent Races, the Insects from Shaggai, and the Beings from Xiclotl, who will surely inspire Keepers to new heights of horror.

For added visual effect in the game, a four-page fold-out depicts the comparative sizes of all the major Mythos beings—those ominous silhouettes are drawn with human figures nearby to provide a proper scale. Most impressive by far is the Large Dhole, which extends, we are told, 18.5 inches beyond the fourth page of the foldout, across which its mammoth form reclines!

Along similar lines, there is a very useful comparative size chart, which equates actual weight in pounds and tons of the game's SIZ characteristic; among other things, this allows players to get a better picture of what their characters—and their enemies look like in terms of size and bulk.

The greatest achievement of this companion has to be the Cthulhu Grimoire, which lists and describes all new spells that were created for the previous seven supplements for the game. The spells are presented in alphabetical order and follow the same format as the listings in the rulebook, making this an excellent time-saving reference for those Keepers who wish to create their own scenarios.

For both players and Keepers, a section has been devoted to answering some of the most often asked questions concerning game mechanics, from learning a language to getting 'used to' some of the more common type of monsters; this section could have been longer, but it does solve a few mysteries.

Rounding out the information portion of the companion is a list of ritual curses, an Innsmouth street map, a poem by H.P. Lovecraft, and an expansion of the listing of mundane animals from several continents.

Two scenarios have been included in *Fragments Of Fear*. "The Underground Menace" offers sinister goings-on on the shores of Lake Superior, where someone is attempting to create a haven for the creatures and human servants of the Mythos.

"Valley of the Four Shrines" is a longer, more complicated scenario which takes the players to the Belgian Congo and a confrontation with a Flying Polyp. This is an excellent adventure for experienced Investigators, and it will certainly make them work for their rewards.

Overall, *Fragments Of Fear* is an excellent supplement; though some may argue over the inclusion of certain pieces, everything in it can be used in one form or another, either to enhance the game or to provide for smoother play.

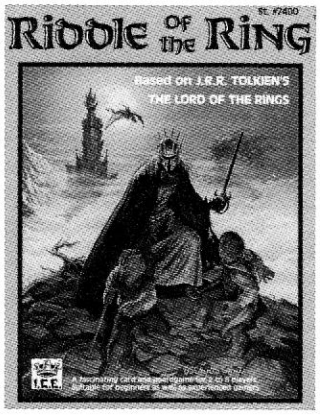
The book was well thought out and put together in an orderly manner. *Fragments Of Fear* displays the brand of quality we've come to expect from Chaosium, and this supplement is a definite step forward for a very unique game. □

☆½

RIDDLE OF THE RING

By John Califf III and William A Walker (ICE $20)

Reviewed by Larry DiTillio



Riddle of the Ring is a cardboardgame based on the familiar mythos of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Specifically the game deals with the Hobbits trying to destroy the Ring of Power at the same time as evil Black Riders are trying to grab it for their nefarious master Sauron. This is accomplished by first finding The Ring and then carting it over the board to either the Cracks of Doom (Hobbits) or Barad-Dur (Black Riders).

Riddle of the Ring is designed for 2-8 players, each of whom plays a character from the Tolkien mythos. Hobbit lovers can take their choice of Frodo, Sam, Merry, or Pippin. Those who prefer to dabble in evil have their choice of any one of four Black Riders (only two of which are named in the game). Whether playing Hobbits or Black Riders, *Riddle of the Ring* is strictly an individual enterprise, i.e., only one player can win, though optional rules do allow team play.

The game turn in *Riddle of the Ring* consists of only two requirements, the player must move at least one space on the board and must exchange one card at random with any player whose token he stops beside or on. The board is a map of Middle Earth divided into hexes showing Good, Evil, or Neutral Cities and varying types of terrain—forest, river, road, etc. Movement is accomplished by the roll of a six-sided die and/or the use of cards. All players begin in the Shire, placing their tokens on the board as their first turn begins. Outside of the two required activities of a turn, players may also make two "Power Plays" (basically the play of cards other than movement cards) and pick up additional cards (either by ending their movement on a city or by play of another card). If cards are picked up in either way, one card must be discarded. The picking up of cards always ends a player's turn.

Card play is the essence of *Riddle of the Ring*, virtually all game activity happens through resourceful play of cards. The deck consists of 90 cards total, divided into four types: (1) Travel Cards—Boats, Ropes, Cloaks, Horses, Eagles, and Flying Beasts, all of which enable a player to move faster or thru specific tertain (e.g., a boat enables a player to move on water, a cloak enables one to traverse a forest at normal rate). (2) Army Cards—Good, Evil, and Neutral forces used in battle against enemies. (3) Character Cards—Cards which show various characters from *The Lord of the Rings* including those played. Character cards are divided into Good, Evil, and Neutral characters and provide a variety of benefits. In addition, if a player acquires the card for his specific character, he can use it and hold it for the rest of the game (in general, such cards are always discarded after use). (4) Special Cards—These include the 3 Elf Rings, the 3 Palantirs, 7 Spies, 5 Riddles, and of course the Ring of Power itself. The Elf Rings, Palantirs, and Spies enable a player to look at another player's cards. The Riddles enable a player to draw one card blind from another player's hand and make a guess as to what card it is. If correct, the

player gets to keep the card, if not the other player gets a card from him. The Ring of Power can be used to resist Elf Rings or Palantirs and of course must be in a player's hand for that player to win.

All cards carry directions on how they are to be used and outside of Elf Rings (which can only be used on a player within six hexes), Spies (each of which is tied to specific Cities), and the use of Army or Character cards in battle, cards can be used on another player no matter where that player is on the board.

Cards are acquired by ending a turn in a City, exchanging a card with another player, or using a card to draw more cards. A player may hold no more than ten cards in his hand at any one time and cards are not replaced when used. The acquiring of cards is top priority in *Riddle of the Ring*. Most of the early game is spent obtaining them, the real action starting only when a good number of players have a few. Interaction between players is dependent on these cards, as are battles.

Battles can only be instigated by the player whose turn it is (known as usual as the attacker) and each battle counts as one of the two allowable Power Plays. Battles are fought between players whose tokens are on the same space or adjacent. The attacker can only use forces opposite in kind to the defender, e.g., a Hobbit may only be attacked with Evil or Neutral Forces, a Black Rider with only Good or Neutral Forces. The defender uses only forces of his own kind.

Besides cards, appropriate types of Cities (Good or Evil only) may be used in battle if either combatant is on or adjacent to such Cities, e.g., a Hobbit on a Good City may count that City in a battle. Battles are resolved very simply, the attacker plays a battle force, either a card or a city worth a certain number of battle points (Cities are worth one point, cards are worth one or two at most). The defender must then match the total battle points with cards or cities. The battle is over when the attacker presents more battle points than the defender can counter or when the attacker has played a total of 5 battle points. Only the attacker can win a battle. Winning entitles the attacker to one card from the loser's hand. The loser is also sent to the "Halls of Mandos" space. The loser spends up to three turns there, unless he can escape earlier thru a die roll or use of a card. Being sent to the Halls is a terrible set-back for a player, though not necessarily a fatal one.

Riddle of the Ring is broken into Basic and Advanced Games. The Advanced version adds four variations to enrich the strategy of movement and card play. There are also optional rules for team games (Hobbit team vs. Black Rider team), shorter games, and other permutations. Moving to the Advanced Game is simple enough for even inexperienced gamers as is incorporating the optional rules.

Now that we've examined how *Riddle of the Ring* is played, let's move on to some critical analysis. Graphically the game's cards have a strong Middle Earth flavor and are a mix of many colors. Their text is very helpful in play, unhappily the print is in script and very small and the colors somewhat dull, so play in good light or your eyes may rebel. The cards are nice and sturdy and should last thru many plays.

The board is the familiar map of Middle Earth, rendered nicely but suffering from being enclosed in a large-hex grid that gives it a "wargame" look inappropriate to its more fantastic milieu. Moreover, like the cards, the board's colors are very flat, one wishes for much richer hues. On the plus side a synopsis of the basic game turn and the terrain key is printed on both sides of the board, readable from most player positions, and the board is puzzle cut, six pieces fitting together like a jigsaw so that it always lays flat.

Absolutely the worst component of the game is the player tokens—tacky plastic rings in a variety of colors that are quite simply awful.

The rules of *Riddle of the Ring* are simple enough to understand, however they are written in an annoyingly redundant and patronizing fashion that prevails throughout, e.g., "Play proceeds in a clockwise direction, that is the player to the left of the first player has the second turn, the player to his left has the third turn, etc." Etc., indeed! Clarity is to be applauded in rules, but reading these can give you the idea that the game is slanted toward submoronic three-year-olds.

The subject matter of *Riddle of the Ring* is perhaps too familiar to be completely objective about, a fact that accounts for some of the player hostility I encountered toward it. Most of my initial playmates (all veteran gamers) felt the game was too simple-minded and all balked at Hobbits attacking other Hobbits using Evil forces (this is obviously contrary to Tolkien yet necessary for game play). The former is not quite true, very subtle strategies are possible in *Riddle of the Ring*, unfortunately it will take several games to discover what they are. Until this discovery is made, games tend to devolve into long, somewhat tedious sessions of find The Ring, then block the win, something the card play lends itself to all too easily. The sad fact is one gets the idea that there is a better game lurking somewhere in there, unfortunately most of my game buddies were not interested enough to find it.

In summation, *Riddle of the Ring* may appeal to you if you're fond of lots of card play and Tolkien and are willing to give it a couple of tries before passing judgment. □

HOLLYWOOD

Continued from page 4

screen. *Lionheart* tells the tale of a young knight who regains his lost honor by leading an army of orphans and circus performers against the vicious Black Prince. It stars Eric Stoltz, the boy from *Mask*.

UH, WHICH GHOSTBUSTERS?: West End's recent role-playing version of *Ghostbusters* gets plenty of support from animated TV this fall in no less than three incarnations. The first, *Filmation's Ghostbusters*, is a syndicated series bearing virtually no resemblance to the movie outside of the title. The second and third are *The Real Ghostbusters* from DIC, which will hit your screens as both a Saturday-morning network series on ABC and as a syndicated version on local channels five days a week. The DIC versions are based on the movie and feature all your favorite characters, including a resident spook named Slimer (remember the green thing that slimed Bill Murray?). The pilot script for the syndicated version was written by friend and fellow scribe J. Michael Straczynski and it's a dandy. J. Michael and co-story editor Mel Gilden have done a fantastic job on creating *The Real Ghostbusters*, a job that has attracted such stellar-name writers as Harlan Ellison and David Gerrold. I predict it's going to be the hit of the fall season, at least if the animation matches the writing. Watch for it.

Phew, that's about it fans. So much to talk about, there's no time for a mini-seminar on gaming and film but next time around I'll try to offer a few sage words on imagery and how it can improve play. Until then, roll those bones and may you never be critted by an irate friend whose paladin was destroyed by a feebleminded orc. Adios! □



SHERLOCKIANA FOR SALE

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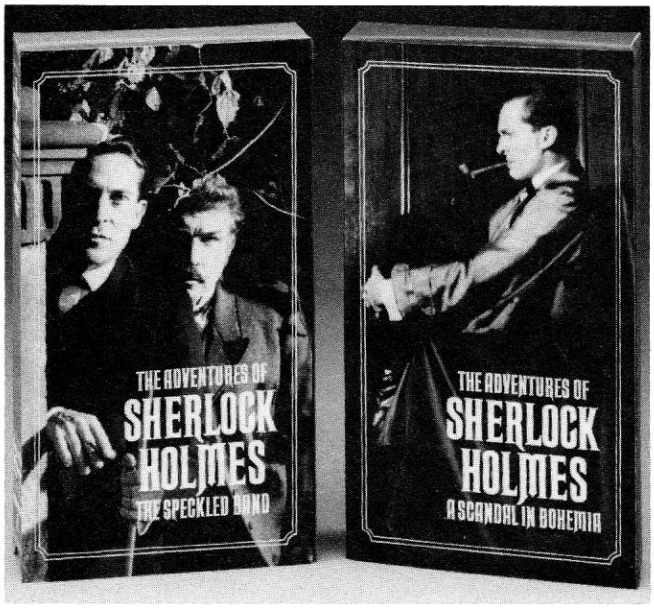
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VIDEO HOLMES

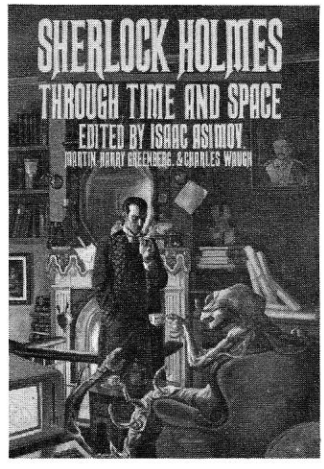
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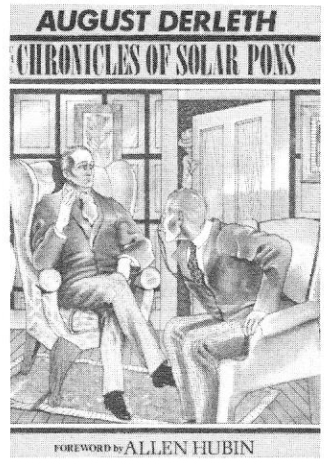
"Jeremy Brett makes a truly splendid Sherlock: vain, arrogant, imperious, rude."—*The New York Times.*



Sherlock Holmes Through Time and Space *edited by Isaac Asimov, et al.* Critics and readers alike agree that Sherlock Holmes was the greatest detective the world has ever seen. In this collection of stories, Holmes and Watson, and sometimes their spiritual descendants, enjoy a stimulating and edifying variety of adventures. Some adhere strictly to the Canon, others range far afield. All retain the excitement and verve of the master's creation. *(BJ-94400-4 hardback 355pp $14.95)*

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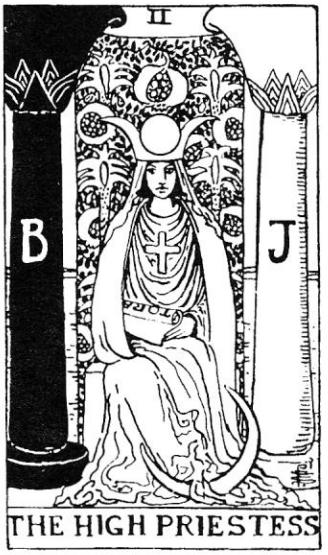


SOLAR PONS

The Solar Pons Omnibus *by August Derleth.* In his inverness cape Solar Pons steps briskly from No. 7-B Praed Street onto the mist-shrouded cobblestones of old London's alleyways. Once again, the game is afoot! The superb craftsmanship of Derleth, successor to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, fills this beautifully-made 2-volume boxed set with 69 stories about the "Sherlock Holmes of Praed Street" as told by his loyal biographer, Lyndon Parker. *(AR-300 two-volumes hardback slipcased $39.95)*

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AN OCCULT WHO'S WHO FOR THE 1920'S

By Richard Kaczynski

ALLAN BENNETT
a.k.a. Frater Iehi Aour
ca. 1871-1920's

Allan Bennett was one of the most spectacular members of the Golden Dawn, yet is one of the least remembered. He was as respected as Mathers (head of the order), and feared even more. While once at a party, Bennett got into a discussion on magic with a man who repeatedly belittled the art; to this, Bennett removed his little pocket wand and pointed it at the gentleman. It took doctors, the story goes, fifteen hours to revive the man.

Bennett was a highly observant man with remarkable insight. When Crowley, at a time when he was toying with black magic grimoires, first met him, Bennett approached him and remarked, "Little Brother, you have been meddling with the Goetia." When Crowley timidly denied this allegation, Bennett replied, "In that case, the Goetia has been meddling with you."

Despite his skill in magic, Bennett lived in a tenement in London's southern district. However, Crowley soon offered to share his luxurious flat with him on the condition that Bennett be his guru, or tutor. Bennett agreed and soon began instructing the young Crowley. It was Bennett, who took opium (which was legal then) for his asthma, who introduced Crowley to the use of drugs in magic, claiming, "There exists a drug whose use will open the gates of the World behind the Veil of Matter." And it was Bennett who, in his Qaballistic studies, started what became the first numerological dictionary of ancient Hebrew.

Although adept at magic, Bennett's true interests were Buddhism and oriental philosophy. One day, Bennett and Mathers had gotten into an argument about the god Shiva, the destroyer. Mathers refused to believe Bennett's contention that chanting Shiva's name long enough would cause the destruction of the universe, so Bennett decided to prove it. Sitting in the lotus position, he proceeded to chant the name "Shiva" *ad nauseum*. After about half an hour, Mathers became furious. When Bennett refused to shut up, Mathers pulled out a revolver, prepared to blow Bennett's brains out. Fortunately, Mathers's wife intervened and prevented a tragedy.

Bennett suffered from spasmodic asthma and the British climate eventually became unlivable. This, combined with his love of Buddhism, led Bennett to Ceylon around 1900, where he became the greatly revered Buddhist monk Bhikku Ananda Metteya. In 1920, when Crowley came to study yoga under Bennett, he discovered that Bennett had been meditating in his bungalow for three days without food or water; rushing to investigate, Crowley discovered him hovering in the air at eye level until the draught from the door blew the monk about the room like a dry leaf. Bennett was responsible for introducing the Buddhist Sangha (brotherhood) to the west.

ANNIE BESANT
1847-1933

Annie Besant spent the first half of her life in England indulging various passions. She was strenuously Anglo-Catholic and, in 1867, married Rev. Frank Besant, an Anglican clergyman. She eventually drifted toward atheism and, receiving no sympathy from her spouse, left him in 1873.

In the same year, she joined the National Secular Society, a radical free thought organization, and rocketed to the top, becoming its vice-president in two years. She and other members were prosecuted in 1877 for selling "obscene literature" (*The Fruits of Philosophy*, which advocated birth control), but was acquitted. In 1878 she was less fortunate, and lost custody of her daughter Mabel to Frank Besant, who accused his ex-spouse of advocating atheism, associating with Charles Bradlaugh (leader of the NSS), selling obscene literature, and, therefore, being an unfit mother. In 1884, she met George Bernard Shaw and, in 1885, joined the Fabian Society, of

which executive committee she soon became a member. Besant led the match-girls' strike of 1888, and was one of the first women to enroll in London University. In 1889, she split with Bradlaugh and announced she had become a Theosophist.

Besant first met H.P. Blavatsky in March, 1889, and this may have influenced her conversion. Blavatsky saw Besant's potential and admitted her to the Theosophical Society's inner counsel almost immediately. Besant learned occultism rapidly and, after Blavatsky's death in 1891, she eventually succeeded as leader of the Theosophical Society.

In 1908, Besant and C.W. Leadbeater (another member of the society) adopted a Brahmin youth named Jeddu Krishnamurti and, believing him to be an incarnation of the god Vishnu and the new messiah, raised him to be a good and proper savior. He became the society's authority figure but, by 1929, grew tired of this manipulation and resigned his messiahship.

In 1913, Besant became involved in India's politics, and founded, in 1916, the Home Rule for India League. She was interned by the authorities in 1917 but, upon her release, became the president of the Indian National Congress. Her influence in India did not last long, however, as Mohandas K. Gandhi quickly became India's national hero.

Besant continued as head of the Theosophical Society until her death in 1933 at 85 years of age. Further information may be obtained from her autobiography.

ALEISTER CROWLEY
1875-1947

Aleister Crowley was a controversial and contradictory man. He was a scholar and voracious writer, yet he was also a skilled mountaineer, setting records which remain unbroken to this day. He mastered the disciplines of yoga, yet often indulged in sex (taking on numerous mistresses) and drugs (which were legal at the time). He knew great secrets of antiquity and attracted many students, yet wrote in veiled language and urged his pupils to be skeptics. He was much misunderstood and often maligned by the press, even being dubbed "The Wickedest Man in the World". This notoriety earned him a place on the cover of the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* album in a collage of "people we like."

Born Edward Alexander Crowley to a father who was a local beer baron and pastor of a strict British sect, he soon changed his name to Aleister because he believed the combination of dactylic and trochaic syllables would help guarantee his fame. He was an outspoken little troublemaker, and his mother often claimed he was the great beast prophesied in the Book of Revelations. Both his parents died young, and Crowley inherited a sizable fortune, which he squandered on publishing his own works and traveling.

His early books consisted of poetry (some of which is considered to be fine literature) and a book entitled *White Stains*, believed by collectors of erotica to be the single filthiest book in the English language. Crowley's interests soon turned to the occult and, in 1898, he was introduced to the Golden Dawn. His progress was meteoric and, after an unsuccessful attempt at gaining control of the politically volatile Golden Dawn, he left to study magic on his own.

In 1903, he unexpectedly eloped with Rose Kelly, the sister of a close friend. They spent time traveling in Europe, Egypt, and the Far East. In April, 1904, they stopped off at Cairo so Crowley could study the various indigenous religions. Rose began acting peculiarly, muttering dreamily "They are waiting for you," and "He who is waiting is Horus." To test her, Crowley took Rose to the Cairo museum to have her identify the Egyptian god Horus, and she pointed to a stele across the room, its details obscured by the distance. Upon closer inspection, he discovered she was correct; moreover, the stele bore the catalogue number 666. Most remarkable was that Rose knew nothing of magic or Egyptian mythology whatsoever, and all this apparently came about in a trance-like state.

Following Rose's instructions, he went into the hotel room and, at noon, he heard a disembodied voice dictating to him for an hour. This continued for three days, and the result was a short manuscript entitled *The Book of the Law*. It contained—in extremely veiled and elaborate language—powerful magical secrects revived from the dawn of time. This was the law for a new age of mankind, the Aquarian Age. The law was *thelema* (Greek for "will"), and was embodied in the statement from the book, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." For Crowley, any change in the world in conformity with one's will is an act of magic. He devoted his entire life to the study and promulgation of this law, honestly believing it to be from the mouth of the gods.

Crowley also spent his life studying and practicing every form of magic in an attempt to discover a universal system. He began calling himself the Great Beast 666 because he believed the beast in the Book of Revelations was a prophet who would deliver a new law to mankind. This, coupled with his indiscretions in sex and drugs and his love of outraging people, earned him reputations of being a black magician, a Satanist, and the Wickedest Man in the World (none of which were true).

Despite the hype, Crowley—who also went by the pen names Frater Perdurabo and the Master Therion—made an enormous contribution to magic and comparitive occultism, and made accessible the mysteries of the orient. He ran two major occult organizations—the A.A. (a revival of the Golden Dawn) and the O.T.O. (a survival of the Knights Templar). He had made remarkable students and associates. He penned several classic books on occultism, and is unquestionably the most influential figure of the occult in this century. Here is a list of his major works and their publication dates:

The Equinox no. 1-10 (1909-1913): an occult digest published twice annually (at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes). Very rare and valuable.

777 (1909): a comparison of all major belief systems in tabular form.

Book 4 (1911, 1913): an introductory work on magic and yoga, published in two parts.

The Book of Lies (1913)

The Equinox vol. 3, no. 1 (1919, Detroit).

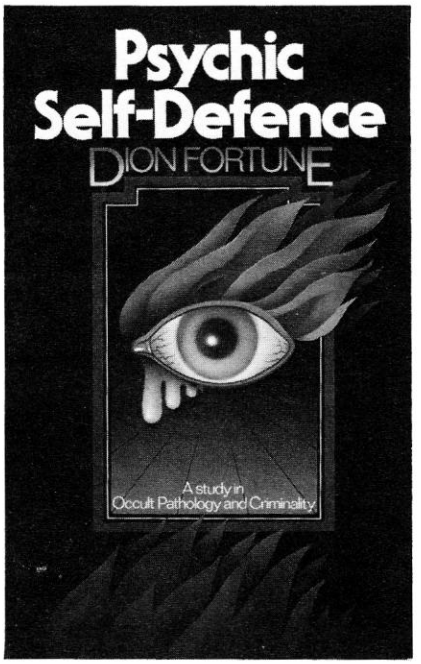
Liber Al vel Legis (1926, Paris): the definitive book on the subject, although it makes difficult reading.

The Book of Thoth (1944): acknowledged to be the best book ever written on the tarot.

For further biographical information, see *The Great Beast* by John Symonds (a critical interpretation), *The Eye in the Triangle* by Israel Regardie (a sympathetic account) or *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* (the "autobiography of a saint").

DION FORTUNE
1891-1946

Dion Fortune was the pen name of Violet Mary Firth, a British psychoanalyst. She displayed psychic sensitivity at an early age, and spent much of her childhood daydreaming. At age 20, she unwittingly antagonized her employer, a malevolent woman who had studied yoga in India for many years; this woman psychically attacked young Violet, leaving her body and mind shattered. This was a major event



in her life, as it directed her to psychoanalysis and occultism, culminating in the publication of her 1930 book, *Psychic Self Defense*.

Fortune learned a great deal about the mind and astral body at this point, but not until her initiation into the Golden Dawn was she fully healed from the psychic attack. She mastered their system of magic, and went on to form the Society of Inner Light in the 1920's. She spent her last sixteen years writing books and novels to communicate her theories, and spent some time corresponding with Aleister Crowley.

Fortune's activity in the 1920's centered around her psychoanalytic work, as well as research into the diagnoses and cures for magical attacks. Her books include *The Mystical Qabalah* (1935) and *The Sea Priestess* (1938).

CHARLES STANSFIELD JONES
1886-1950

Charles Stansfield Jones was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, and became interested in the occult at the early age of 20. He set out to study the Mysteries and spiritualism with the intent of disproving them which he was unable to do, and he soon became a serious student of magic. In 1909, he was initiated by Aleister Crowley into the A.A. under the motto *Unus in Omnibus* (VIO) and eventually became head of the Canadian O.T.O.

In 1916, he discovered the key which unlocked the semantic riddles in *The Book of the Law*, a feat which Crowley himself failed after twelve years of study! Impressed by this, Crowley named Jones to be his successor. Jones's progress was dramatic, and Crowley decided to publish his diaries in the third volume of *The Equinox* (only the first issue of which was ever published, in 1919) as an example of how a normal person could attain great initiations. Crowley eventually changed his tune when, in the late 1910's Jones claimed to have surpassed his master in the Great White Brotherhood's hierarchy. Crowley responded by ridiculing Jones's initiated insights and renouncing him as his successor. The men parted ways, exchanging occasional formal letters as a futile gesture of civility.

Jones—who went by the names Parzval, OIVVIO, and, most commonly, Frater Achad—seems to have had nothing but respect for Crowley. In his books, he often cites and speaks deferently of his teacher; Crowley, however, was bitter and left a legacy less kind. In a letter dated April 8, 1948 (shortly after Crowley's death), Jones declared that, on April 2, the new age ushered in by Crowley's *The Book of the Law* had been surpassed by a newer age, and that this date was the true beginning of the Age of Aquarius.

Frater Achad's books and publication dates are as follows:

Liber 31 (1918): extant in manuscript form only.
The Chalice of Ecstasy (1923)
Crystal Vision through Crystal Gazing (1923)
The Egyptian Revival (1923)
QBL (1923)
The Anatomy of the Body of God (1925)

For further information, consult Kenneth Grant's *Outside the Circles of Time*.

VICTOR NEUBURG
1883-1940

Victor Neuburg was a British poet and critic with a weekly poetry column in the *Sunday Express*. He was nervous, clumsy, and sickly, and suffered from scoliosis and other maladies. He met Crowley while a student at the latter's *alma mater*, Cambridge University; a mutual acquaintance suggested Crowley look up Neuburg because they shared an interest in the occult. The result was Neuburg's initiation into the A.A., where he went by the mottoes *Omnia Vincam* and *Lampada Tradam*.

Neuburg had two natural talents in spiritualism. First, he was a practiced medium, i.e., he could successfully open himself up to possession by spirits and other entities; this was a valuable skill but, unfortunately, one that also led to his downfall (according to Crowley). His other great talent was as a materializing medium, i.e., he could give physical form to spiritual entities by donating a portion of his protoplasm. One incident typical of Neuburg occurred during a ritual on Victoria Street in England. The participants were dancing in a darkened and thickly incensed room when they suddenly became aware of a stranger's presence. Several people counted one head too many but, when one of the frightened neophytes switched on the light, there was no sight of the stranger!

Neuburg served as Crowley's assistant in two magical workings. The first of these is described in *The Vision and the Voice*, which is a record of the visions of the notorious thirty Aethyrs of Dr. John Dee seen in 1909. Crowley gazed into a crystal, and Neuburg scribed the vision and any other peculiar phenomena. At one point, he was even tormented and attacked by the great demon Choronzon. This book contains some of the most sublime symbolism in magical literature.

In the Paris working (1914), Neuburg played a larger role. He was Crowley's partner in a series of 25 evocations of the gods Hermes and Jove via sexual magic. At the climax of the rite, Neuburg would lapse into a mediumistic trance-like state, at times describing mystic visions and at other times being possessed by the devil himself (at which point he'd be interrogated by Crowley).

For a non-objective biography, see Jean Overton Fuller's *The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg*.

AUSTIN OSMAN SPARE
1886-1956

Austin Osman Spare was born to a lower-middle class British family and, at age 16, earned two distinctions: he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art, and received a National Gold Medal in mathematics for his treatise on solid geometry. He also befriended an elderly woman named Mrs. Paterson. She was a witch, descended from the Salem lot, and initiated Spare into the Craft, teaching him to generate familiars and contact elementals. At age 19 (1905), he published *Earth Inferno*, a book of drawings recording his occult views.

He lived in the slums outside of London, making his living by painting portraits. In 1910, he joined Crowley's A.A., but soon left due to conflicting ideologies. His was a complex and powerful magic, based on the properties of *Zos* (the whole person—body, mind, and soul) and *Kia* (the atmos-

pheric "I") in ecstatic interplay. Like Crowley, sex was the fulcrum of his magic, and pleasure (or self-love) was part of a process called *atavistic resurgence*, where sex and visualization in combination led to automatic drawings and contact with spirit guides. And, like Crowley, he changed mistresses frequently.

A remarkable incident occurred to Spare in 1955. At this time, some O.T.O. members—one of whom was a witch who had just recently defected from her coven—were conducting a ritual to invoke the goddess Isis into the witch. During the ritual, she bolted up out of her trance and stared intently at a window in the chamber's north corner. She claimed that the curtains had parted, an icy wind had bore down upon her, and a shadowy bird with great webbed talons attempted to carry her off (all in the astral world). This window, which was frosted over at the time, turned out to show unmistakable claw marks, and the sill was covered with an aquatic slime which pulsated as if breathing. Spare finally admitted that he had made for the high priest of the coven in question a talisman for the return of stolen property, unaware that this property was the new O.T.O. member; bound to this talisman was an elemental he described as a "sort of amphibious owl with the wings of a bat and the talons of an eagle."

Spare died in England as he had lived . . . destitute. His books—though out-of-print and extremely difficult to obtain—are as follows:

Earth Inferno (1905)
A Book of Satyrs (1907)
The Book of Pleasure (1913, privately issued)
The Focus of Life (1921)
The Anathema of Zos (1927)

For more biographical information, see Kenneth Grant's *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*.

RUDOLPH STEINER
1861-1925

Rudolph Steiner, born to a modest Austrian family, was a remarkable child. He was a sensitive clairvoyant, and had several psychic experiences in his youth. While studying science at secondary school, he taught himself the classics and tutored in the humanities. His wide-ranging interests led him to Goethe and, at 23, Steiner edited his scientific work for publication. He worked at editing literary journals, but his interests in meditation and spiritual life eventually brought him to the Theosophical Society, which he joined in 1902. He became general secretary of the German branch of the society, but lectured only on his own investigations, namely anthroposophy. Steiner was also a Freemason, and Francis King argues that he was even a member of the O.T.O. for a short time.

In 1909—opposed to the Theosophical Society's declaration of a new messiah and other unpalatable trends—Steiner split with the society to form his own: the Anthroposophical Society. Its tenets are rooted in ideas of perceiving the spiritual world. He wrote many books detailing the "higher worlds" and their peculiarities, some of which have lead to startling scientific breakthroughs. In 1912, the first headquarters of the Anthroposophical Society was built in Switzerland of various woods and sculpted glass. It was burnt down in December 1922, but Steiner immediately designed a new headquarters of equally original architecture—this time of molded concrete. The new society was founded in 1923.

Steiner's ideas were responsible for a threefold commonwealth to solve the problems of war-torn Europe, for the foundation of the Waldorf schools, and for other educational revolutions. In his last years, Steiner lectured heavily on a variety of subjects, as diverse as mathematics, medicine, theology, drama, economics, and education. The specialists in these fields were always astounded by the breadth and depth of his knowledge. Steiner's books—both his own writings and those made from his many lectures—constitute one of the largest—if not the largest—literary contributions in history.

ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE
1857-1942

Arthur Edward Waite is one of the most famous writers on the occult, this due to his scholarly best-sellers with such colorful titles as *The Book of Black Magic and Pacts*. Born in Brooklyn, New York, Waite was raised as a devout Roman Catholic. His interests were changeable, and he eventually happened upon spiritualism and the works of H.P. Blavatsky, whose Theosophical Society he ultimately joined.

In 1881, Waite came across the writings of the French magician Eliphas Levi, and spent a good deal of time translating and codifying these works. He twice joined the Golden Dawn, the first time resigning after passing through the first order grades with suspicion of illegal practices by his superiors. Waite rejoined during the Golden Dawn's tumultuous years (1900), gaining control of the main lodge in London and rewriting the rituals along Christian lines in 1903. Eventually, however, his interests turned away from ritual magic and toward Freemasonry and Christian mysteries.

Waite's autobiography, *Shadows of Life and Thought*, chronicles his accomplishments. Today, however, his poetry is all but forgotten, and his high-brow writing considered flat and flaccid, long on intellectual fluff but short on the insight of a true initiate.

DR. WILLIAM WYNN WESTCOTT
1848-1925

Dr. William Wynn Westcott was a man of many accomplishments. He was a London coroner, an antiquarian, a scholar, and student of the Qaballah. He had belonged to a variety of secret societies: Westcott was Supreme Magus of the Societas Rosicruciana in England, and belonged to both the Freemasons and the Theosophical Society.

In 1888, Westcott—together with MacGregor Mathers and W.R. Woodman—founded the Golden Dawn based upon a cipher manuscript and correspondence with a German Rosicrucian adept. It was Westcott who exchanged letters with Sprengel, and, hence, he claimed contact with the Secret Chiefs of the order. While in the Golden Dawn, he went by the mottoes *Sapere Aude* ("Dare to be Wise") and *Non Omnis Moriar* ("I Shall Not Wholly Die"). He remained involved in the Golden Dawn through the 1910's, but spent the last years of his life as vice-president of the two Theosophical Society lodges. In his last days, he expressed his belief that contact with the secret chiefs had been lost or suspended.

Aside from his contributions in founding the Golden Dawn, Westcott will doubtless be remembered for his book *Numbers: Their Occult Power and Mystic Virtues* (1890, with a revised and expanded 1902 edition).

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS
1865-1939

William Butler Yeats, the famous Irish poet, was exposed to mysticism while an art student in Dublin. Here, he met a theosophist who introduced him to Hindu philosophy. Yeats and his college friend (a mystic who went by the pen-name A.E.) joined the Theosophical Society, where they met H.P. Blavatsky.

While studying Blake in the British Museum Reading Room, Yeats met MacGregor Mathers, who was in the process of copying obscure magical manuscripts. When, shortly thereafter,

Mathers and two others founded the Golden Dawn, Yeats became one of the first members in 1887, taking the motto *Daemon est Deus Inversus* ("The Devil is God Inverted"). He, in fact, helped Mathers write the order's rituals. Eventually, Yeats rose to control the London branch.

Unfortunately, differences of ideology began to tear the order apart. Yeats took exception to Mather's dictatorial style, and led the movement to expel Aleister Crowley from the Golden Dawn. Eventually, Mathers himself was ousted. When A.E. Waite assumed control of the London office and revised its rituals along more Christian lines, Yeats tried desperately to keep the order intact; however, Waite was unbending. Bitter, Yeats resigned from the Golden Dawn and burnt all his magical books.

Yeats continued to study magic, and even established an Irish order called the Hermetic Students. People in literary circles attempted to dismiss Yeats's connection to the occult as irrelevant; however, there is no doubt that Yeats was a mystic, and that magic was the backbone of his poetry.

For further biographical information, see Joseph Home's *W.B. Yeats 1865-1939* or Yeats's own autobiography.

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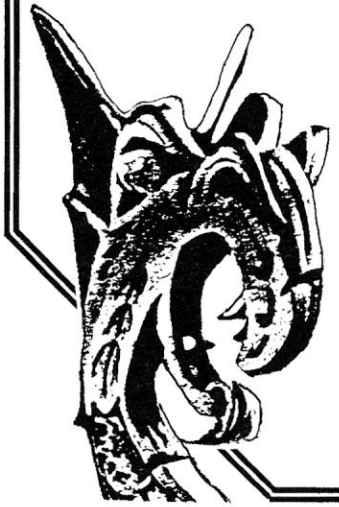
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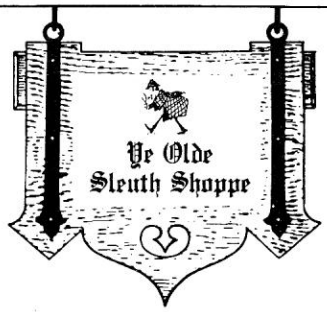
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Ringmaster and circus owner Joshua Brady was found dead inside the cat cage by aging lion tamer Rudolph Valini. Brady, who had recently acquired the circus, was despised by his adopted circus "family." What was he doing in that cat cage? Why did he buy this creosote and cotton candy heaven in the first place? Find the answers to these and other relevant questions by casting your friends as: sword swallower Tina the Great, lion tamer Rudolph Valini, wire walker Melody Reubanoff, accountant Sylvia McTweed, sad-eyed Bippo the Clown, trapeze artist Carlos the Courageous, the Wild Man From Kenosha, and Lydia the Snake Lady. Advanced game. *(JG-8307 boxed $16.00)*

The Coffeehouse Murder
For 4 Men and 4 Women
The Time: August 17, 1958
The Place: The North Beach area of San Francisco
Folksinger Jeremy Swain was found dead in an apartment above the Gate of Fate Coffeehouse. He had just finished a two-night engagement at the club before embarking on his first national tour. The list of characters to be cast includes: club owner and UFO watcher Barney Fawn, hipster poet and bongo player Art Fez, club hangers-on Natalie Corvus and Rocky Tuttle, Swain's live-in and back-up singer Teresa Wilcox, department store heiress Patty Farb, activist and bartender Fran Fern, and Swain's agent Del Finney. Advanced game. *(JG-8306 boxed $16.00)*

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For 4 Men and 4 Women
The Time: September 23, 1985
The Place: Windgate Manor, on a bluff overlooking the shores of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin
It has been said "They also serve who only sit and wait." Well, eighty-three year old (Beer Baron) Phineas T. Windgate's heirs and legatees had been doing plenty of



waiting. Waiting for the old man to die, that is. Only he was disgustingly healthy, so someone decided to give Death a helping hand. Could it have been Lionel, Phineas's profligate and disrespectable son? How about Miss Lillian, Windgate's prim and dour niece? She was already sixty herself and may be getting a bit anxious. How about the sweet and tender Nellie Couche, Phineas's young, uh, protege? Surely it couldn't be kindly Dr. Gus, the cat doctor who took care of all sixty of Phineas's precious feline friends. In all, eight suspects were staying at Windgate Manor that fateful night. Cast yourself and seven friends in the roles, and try to discover which one of you is a cold-blooded murderer. *(JG-8308 boxed $16.00)*

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PAUL MONTGOMERY CRABAUGH (1956-1985)

I am very sorry to have to tell you of the death last November of my son, Paul Crabaugh. Paul was always very proud of his articles which you saw fit to print and I thank you for your courtesies to him.

Paul discovered in mid-1984 that he had cancer, and even though he knew it was incurable he continued to write and participate in the gaming world as best he could. He was an extremely brave and worthwhile young man and his father, brother and sister and I miss him very much.

Janet H. Crabaugh
San Diego CA

THE SPICE OF LIFE

Thanks for issue 41—a very good issue. *Different Worlds*'s broad spectrum of covered subjects has always appealed to me, and I hope this never changes.

Michael Szymanski
Gasport NY

RAMBO: THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

I have, at various times in the past, had reason to disagree with your film reviewer, John Nubbin. This is expected owing to the nature of film reviewing. In issue 41 of *Different Worlds*, however, I found cause to be first shocked, then offended, and finally amused by Mr. Nubbin's commentary. Never before have I dealt with a reviewer with whom I so consistently disagree, or whose opinions I find more distasteful.

First, Mr. Nubbin found virtually no merit in the delightful fantasy *Ladyhawke*. This is perfectly all right; a movie reviewer's job is not to agree with everybody, but to voice his own opinions. Suffice it to say that we disagree on this particular film.

However, Mr. Nubbin follows his reaming of *Ladyhawke* with a simpering, simple-minded paean to the gonadal stupidity of *Rambo: First Blood II*. I wondered how anyone could look at this movie as anything more than a violent, right-wing fantasy with no redeeming social value save its sheer excessiveness. Then I remembered that Mr. Nubbin some time ago chose the jingoistic, idiotic *Red Dawn* as the best movie of the year. If Mr. Nubbin believes that Rambo, a homicidal, microcephalic psychopath with a machine gun symbolizes "the entire Vietnam experience," I have news for him. Both I and many Vietnam veterans are deeply offended by the moronic treatment of this serious subject, and its reduction of the "Vietnam experience" to a simplistic shoot-'em-up. And, despite Mr. Nubbin's high hopes for the movie, it has not so much inspired Vietnam vets to seek better treatment, as it has inspired conservative politicians and hot-blooded young macho-types to call for the United States to go "kick some Ruski butt." This is scarcely the lesson I believe the average vet wants to be sent regarding Vietnam. Already, I know of one high school graduate who has eagerly joined the marines, inspired by Rambo's idiotic heroics, and is expecting war any day now.

Anthony Pryor
Portland OR

EQUAL AMENDMENT

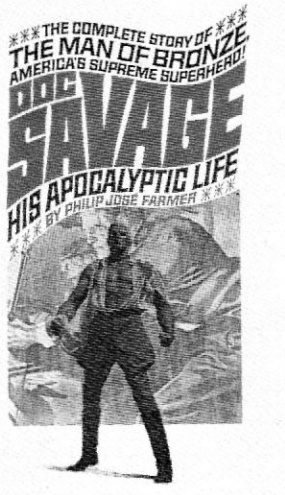
You continually show women in a poor light. While *White Dwarf* does this regularly, I expect more professionalism from *Different Worlds*. In the past you have published adventures which included such items as: The monster showed up . . . "and some women screamed." Another issue included a "pin-up" illustration of a bare-breasted woman. You have continued to promote a weak image of women with your most recent issue in the article on sanity for *Call Of Cthulhu*. Not only do women go into hysterics more often than men, but they also faint with higher regularity. This is simply too much for me not to comment on. I am surprised that you failed to notice the ludicrous logic behind the article's treatment of women. If the author can show scientific evidence to support the idea that women are hysterical and prone to fainting more often than men, I would be interested in seeing it.

Since I consider *Different Worlds* to be better than other magazines, I have higher expectations for it. Perhaps I am incorrect in expecting a fair treatment of women.

Martin Wixted
St. George, S.I., NY

DOC SAVAGE: THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Issue 41 has just reached the shops in London, and I was very pleased to see the coverage of Doc Savage. However, I was surprised that the author managed to write the entire article without mentioning Philip Jose Farmer's important study of Savage, *Doc Savage, His Apocalyptic Life*, or the George Pal film of the Man of Bronze. Farmer's book uses internal chronology to work out the approximate date of each adventure, and is the best compilation of Savage gadgets, associates, and techniques. I find it hard to believe that Mr. Szymanski could write his article without consulting this source. The film fails in several respects, but is still an accurate portrayal of Savage as described in the early Lester Dent novels. The article also implied



that Savage's career ended in the 1940s; I prefer to assume that Farmer is correct in his belief that Savage is immortal, and is still fighting evil somewhere in the world. Obviously Savage must have moved his base from the Empire State Building (and probably from New York) in the intervening years; the events depicted in George Romero's flim *Q The Winged Serpent* would have surely aroused Savage's attention long before the police became involved. Savage towers far above mundane figures like James Bond and Indiana Jones, and it's odd that no one has given him his own game.

Marcus L. Rowland
London, England

MY LIFE & H.P. LOVECRAFT

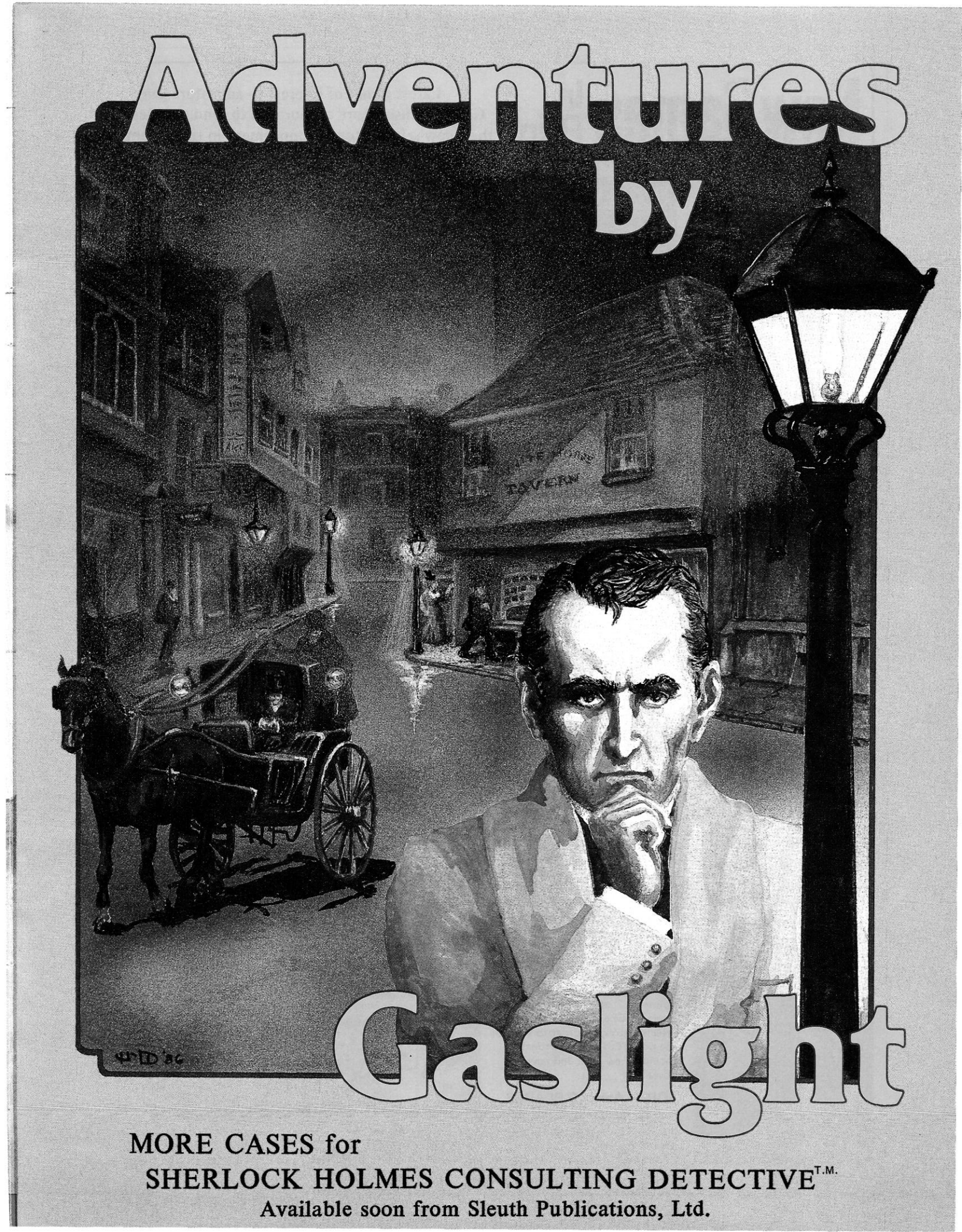
When I was still a teenager, during one of my last years of high school, I believe, nearly twenty years ago my father and one of my older sisters were discussing their favorite authors. They were mostly discussing strange ones. Poe I'm certain was mentioned and possibly Algernon Blackwood and his classic *The Wendigo*. My father happened to mention an author I had never heard of, H.P. Lovecraft. My sister had heard of him also but they never mentioned any particular story. A couple of years later I did read Blackwood and was impressed with the setting and suspense of Wendigo. Later, probably in my junior year of college at Western Illinois University, in browsing through a student bookstore, I noticed H.P. Lovecraft. Then and especially my last year of college, '71-72, I read him consistently, these were his well-known works of the Cthulhu Mythos. I especially remember one extremely cold weekend that winter, my roommate had gone home and it was much too cold to leave the dormitory. I read *At the Mountains of Madness*.

Early on I became aware of one of his constant themes that if people really knew and could witness the forces and powers that control the world and universe, they would go insane. In the introduction, Lin Carter pointed out that the Cthulhu Mythos is not that different from the Christian explanation of the Earth's antiquity. That a race of beings, supernatural, did at one time rule this planet and were overthrown in a war with greater cosmic forces. This is the real reason why I have re-read almost all of what I have read of Lovecraft previously and then some. Fortunately the university had a couple of volumes of Lovecraft's letters in which he mentions his inspiration and ideas would come from his dreams. Nothing sets Lovecraft apart, from Poe, Blackwood, Bierce, or anyone else more than this. Lovecraft is indeed in a class by himself. His approach to horror is more detailed, in fact scholarly, than anyone else.

Willard Payne
Flossmoor IL

If you have a personal anecdote about H.P. Lovecraft, the Cthulhu Mythos, or the Call Of Cthulhu *game, you are invited to share it with the readers of* Different Worlds *magazine. Please keep your missives to three hundred words or less. Be sure to suggest your own title.* —*Editor*

□



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New Games In Print

Latest games of interest to adventure gamers. Game publishers are encouraged to send samples of their new releases for announcement in this column.

ROLE-PLAYING

Flashing Blades (FGU, boxed, $12) by Mark Pettigrew. Comes boxed with a 48-page rulebook, a 16-page Adventures book, a character sheet, playaids, 1D20, and 3D6. Rules cover gentleman skills, yearly allowance, social rank, personal combat, the military, the clergy, the royal bureaucracy, clubs and orders, banking, etc.

The Future King (Spellbinders, 20pp+playaids, $4.95) by Tom Moldvay. A role-playing game/adventure in which historical characters go on a quest to re-awaken King Arthur.

Golden Heroes: The Role-Playing Game of Super-Heroes (Games Workshop, boxed, $13) by Simon Burley and Pete Haines. Comes with an 84-page Supervisors Book, a 56-page Players Book, 3D6, and 2D10. The Supervisors Book includes an introductory scenario. (See review on page 26.)

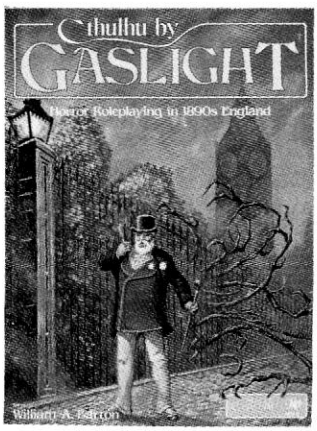
FOR ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

DL11: Dragons Of Glory (TSR, folio, $10) by Douglas Niles and Tracy Hickman. A DragonLance strategic simulation game. Comes with an 8-page rulebook, a 16-page scenario book, a 42"x33" map of Ansalon, and 320 counters.

Dragons (Mayfair, 96pp, $10) by Cory Glaberson. For 6-8 characters of levels 6-9. ". . . contains the lives, histories, and cultures of the dragon races, a new character class: the Dragonlords, and three independent, but related adventures for characters to assist in a war of epic proportions."

FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

Cthulhu By Gaslight: Horror Roleplaying in 1890s England





(Chaosium, boxed, $20) by William A. Barton. Comes with a 56-page Sourcebook for the 1890s, a 48-page Yorkshire Horrors scenario book, a 29"x21" map of the City of London, and a character sheet.

FOR DC HEROES

Batman (Mayfair, 80pp+map, $10) by Mike Stackpole. For characters of 2000-4000 Hero Points. Contains complete backgrounds of Batman's friends and foes, details of the equipment he uses in his war against crime, and three new adventures.

The Doomsday Program (Mayfair, 32pp, $7) by Mark Acres. For 4-6 characters of 500-1000 Hero Points. "Only the kidnaped Superman can foil Brainiac's plot to activate a computer network that will nullify the sun's gravitational pull on Earth. It's up to the Teen Titans to rescue him and save us from hurtling into Mars."

Escort To Hell (Mayfair, 32pp+playaids, $7) by Matthew J. Costello. A solitaire adventure. "It is the 21st century. You, Jonah Hex, is commissioned to escort the daughter of a Sisco official to her father's city, confronting the hazards and hostile beings of the alien world."

Fire And Ice (Mayfair, 32pp, $7) by Bruce Humphrey. For 4-6 characters of 250-500 Hero Points. ". . . the Fearsome Five masquerade as a S.T.A.R. Labs research group in order to unleash the powers of an evil artifact." Includes new rules and new powers.

FOR FLASHING BLADES

Parisian Adventures (FGU, 32pp, $6) by Mark Pettigrew. Four adventurs: "The Fencing Master," "The Grand Theatre," "The Great Marksmanship Tourney," and "Scavenger Hunt." Also includes a compendium of unusual and exotic items, a guide to Paris, and the rumormill.

The Cardinal's Peril and Other Tales (FGU, 32pp, $6) by Mark Pettigrew and J. Andrew Keith. Four adventures: "The Haunted Villa," "The Cardinal's Peril," "The Lady of La Rochelle," and "The Royal Hunt," plus a brief history of the Musketeers.

An Ambassador's Tales (FGU, 32pp, $6) by Mark Pettigrew. "Being in the main, a series of adventures in foreign lands, in the company of Monsieur de Bienvenu, special envoy of the Cardinal." A complete campaign made up of five interlocking adventures.

FOR GURPS

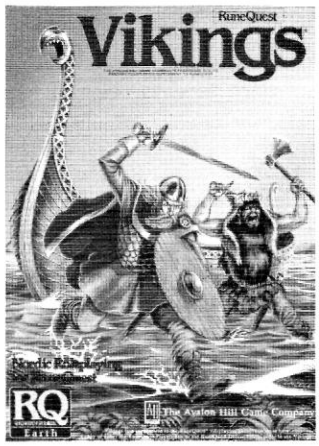
Man To Man: Fantasy Combat for GURPS (Steve Jackson Games, 80pp+Cardboard Heroes, $9.95) by Steve Jackson. Rules cover physical appearance, encumbrance, facing, hit location, critical hits & misses, close combat, special combat situations, fatigue, a sample scenario, etc. (See review on page 28.)

Orcslayer: A Combat Supplement for Man To Man (Steve Jackson Games, 48pp, $5.95) by Warren Spector and Steve Jackson. ". . . consists of nine linked combat scenarios, separated by 'interludes' of travel, rest, and interaction." Set in the fantasy kingdom of Caithness. (See review on page 28.)

FOR MARVEL SUPER HEROES

MHSP2: Secret Wars II (TSR, folio, $10) by Jeff Grubb. Special campaign adventure. Comes with a 32-page Campaign Book, a 32-page Roster Book, and a





33"x21" double-sided map.

FOR MORROW PROJECT

Desert Search (Timeline, 40pp, $6.95) by Joseph Benedetto, Jr. and H.N. Voss. "Somewhere in the wind-swept Nevada desert is the Morrow Project power station. Recon Team N-2 must find it fast before it is captured by a mysterious group known only as the Syen."

FOR PARANOIA

Acute Paranoia (West End, 80pp, $9.95) edited by Greg Costikyan and Ken Rolston. "New Rules to Ignore! New Secret Societies! Bots as Player Characters! Psychological Tests!" Includes rules supplements, 1 mega-adventure, 3 mini-adventures, 8 brief "Code 7" adventures, and props and handouts.

FOR PENDRAGON

Noble's Book (Chaosium, 80pp+map, $12) by Greg Stafford. Covers French characters, heraldry, inheritance of arms, tournaments, inside a siege tower, economy, land record, taxes, castles & defensive works, raid, siege, bombardment, assault, morale, invasion, etc.

FOR PSI WORLD

The Hammer Shall Strike (FGU, 32pp, $6) by Del Carr & Cheron. New rules and two adventures.

Underground Railroad (FGU, 32pp, $6) by J. Andrew Keith and William H. Keith, Jr. Three adventures.

FOR RUNEQUEST

Vikings: Nordic Roleplaying (The Avalon Hill Game Company, boxed, $21) by Greg Stafford, et al. Comes with a 40-page Players

Book, a 32-page Gamemaster Book, a 48-page Scenarios Book, a 20-page Vikings Digest, a 22"x 15" double-sided map, and Adventurer Sheets.

FOR SWORDBEARER

Dwarven Halls (FGU, 48pp, $7) by Arnold Hendrick. Covers the Valt Aszen region, Dwarven culture and society, strongholds, plots for gamemasters, etc.

FOR VILLAINS & VIGILANTES

Assassin (FGU, 32pp+counters, $6) by Thomas Dowd. Adventure for 3-5 superheroes.

Organized Crimes (FGU, 24pp+counters, $6) by Ken Cliffe. Adventure for 3-6 superheroes of levels 2-6.

Enter the Dragon's Claw: Honor (FGU, 20pp+counters, $6) by Ken Cliffe. Adventure against the ninja assassins.

Alone into the Night (FGU, 24pp+counters, $6) by Ken Cliffe and Kent Paling. Three mini-adventures for one gamemaster and one superhero.

FOR ANY SYSTEM

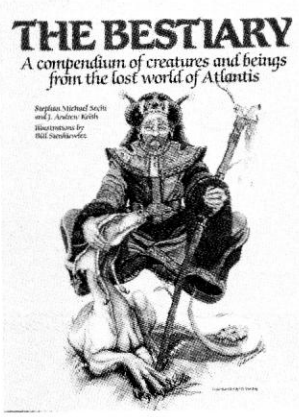
The Bestiary: A compendium of creature and beings from the lost world of Atlantis (Bard Games, 132pp, $14) by Stephan Michael Sechi. ". . . third book of the Atlantean Trilogy . . . more than a hundred creatures and beings drawn from the myths and legends of many different cultures."

GAMEBOOKS

Adventure 6 Gamebook: Master Of Ravenloft (TSR, 192pp pocketbook, $2.95) by Jean Blashfield. ". . . you are Jeren Sureblade, a paladin who must face the terrors that lie within Castle Ravenloft and somehow destroy the evil, undead Count Strahd von Zarovich—the Prince of Vampires himself!"

OTHER GAMES

Cosmic Encounter: The Science Fiction Game for Everyone (West End, boxed, $24.95) by Bill Eberle, et al. New edition of a game previously published by Eon. For 2-4 players. Comes with 20 alien powers, 4 space hexagons, 1 warp hexagon, 54 cards, 96 playing pieces, 1 hyperspace cone, and an 8-page rulebook.



East Wind Rain: The War in the Pacific 1941-45 (Task Force, boxed, $32.95) by Mark McLaughlin and Chris Vorder Bruegge. Strategic-level simulation for 2-6 players. Comes with a 56-page rulebook, 36"x22" map, 800 counters, playaids, and 2D6. Rules include a short game and an introductory scenario.

Hitler's Counterstroke in France (Task Force, boxed, $12.95) by James E. Meldrum. Battalion-level simulation of the August 1944 Panzer offensive. For 2 players. Comes with a 16-page rulebook, 108 counters, 24"x20" map, and 1D6. Features ranged artillery, air strikes, and roadblocks.

Imperium Romanum II: The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire (West End, boxed, $29.95) by Albert A. Nofi. Comes with a 51"x22" map, 800 counters, a 28-page Rules Book, two 8-page Charts and Tables books, a 48-page Scenario Book containing 35 scenarios for 2-6 players spanning the years 52 B.C. to 540 A.D., a counter tray, and 2D6.

Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective (Futami-Shobo, 216pp+playaids, 1900 yen) by Gary Grady, et al. Japanese edition of a game published by Sleuth Publications, Ltd.

Star Trek III (West End, boxed, $16.95) by Greg Costikyan, et al. Comes with three solitaire games: "The Kobayashi Maru," Starfleet Academy's most demanding test; "The Sherwood Syndrome," the Enterprise crew must depose a feudal dictator; and "Free Enterprise," a race to out-trade the Klingons.

Talisman (Games Workshop, boxed, $18) by Robert Harris. Second edition.

Treasure of the Lost Temple (FGU, 8pp+counters+map, $5) by Leonard H. Kanterman and Douglas Bonforte. For 1-2. "Each player takes the part of a treasure-seeking archaeologist, who must traverse the Lost Temple, reach the Eye Room to obtain the Jeweled Eye, and escape before the Temple Doors are sealed shut."

Tyrannosaurus Wrecks (FGU, 12pp+map+counters+playaids, $5) by Glen Frank. "A board-game of dinosaur-hunting/time-traveling excitement for 2-4 players (also playable solitaire)."

FOR STAR FLEET BATTLES

Introduction to Star Fleet Battles (Task Force, 48pp+map+counters, $5.95) by Stephen V. Cole. Introductory game to the popular tactical starship combat game.

Commander's SSD Book 7 (Task Force, 48pp, $4.95) by the Amarillo Design Bureau. Ships for the Federation, Kzintis, Gorns, Tholians, Hydrans, WYN, ISC.

MINIATURES

Off-the-Wall Armies: Highlanders (Gray Cat Castings). Distributed by Task Force Games. Animated rodents in 25mm scale. Cavalry rides on giant birds.
2100: Command Group (3 figures, $2.50)
2101: Footman w/Sword & Shield (3 figures, $2.50)
2102: Footman w/Claymore in Chainmail (3 figures, $2.50)
2103: Footman in Leather Armor (3 figures, $2.50)
2104: Crossbowman in Cuirass (3 figures, $2.50)
2105: Footman w/Claymore in Cuirass (3 figures, $2.50)
2106: Footman w/Pike in Cuirass (3 figures, $2.50)
2107: Commoner w:Axe & Shield (3 figures, $2.50)
2108: Commoner w/Pike (3 figures, $2.50)
2109: Commoner w/2-Handed Weapon (3 figures, $2.50)
2110: Lt. Cavalry Trooper w/Sword (6 figures, $4.50)
2111: Lt. Cavalry Officer w/Sword (6 figures, $4.50)
2112: Hvy. Cavalry Trooper w/Lance (6 figures, $4.50)
2113: Hvy. Cavalry Officer w/Sword (6 figures, $4.50)

MAGAZINE

The Dice Bag 16 (Force Publishing, 32pp, $1.50) edited by Andrew Gersten. Articles include "Phobias," "Treasure Lakes: An *AD&D* adventure for 6-8 characters of levels 5-10," etc.

FANTASY NOVELS

DragonLance Legends Volume 1: Time of the Twins (TSR, 400pp pocketbook, $3.95) by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman. The first volume in a new fantasy trilogy set in the world of the DragonLance saga.

MYSTERY NOVELS

Bats Fly at Dusk (Ballantine, 188pp pocketbook, $2.95) by A.A. Fair. A Bertha Cool-Donald Lam mystery set in 1942 written under a pen name by Erle Stanley Gardner.

The Case of the Shoplifter's Shoe (Ballantine, 234pp pocketbook, $2.95) by Erle Stanley Gardner. A Perry Mason mystery.

The Chrysanthemum Chain (Fawcett Crest, 216pp pocketbook, $2.95) by James Melville. A Superintendent Otani mystery about an investigation into a murder of an Englishman living in Japan.

Flawless Execution (Ballantine, 200pp pocketbook, $2.95) by John Logue. A Morris & Sullivan mystery. Murder of a football sportscaster on prime-time TV.

Gemini (Fawcett Crest, 268pp pocketbook, $3.50) by Domini Taylor. A novel of suspense about a twin brother and sister who share a dark unnatural power.

Jack & Susan in 1913 (Ballantine, 280pp pocketbook, $3.50) by Michael McDowell. "From New York to Hollywood, the daring Jack and Susan and that frisky dog Tripod disguise themselves, outwit crooks, and make movie history."

Murder by Remote Control (Available Press, 96pp, $4.95) by Janwillem van de Wetering, illustrated by Paul Kirchner. The mystery begins with the murder of an oil industrialist perpetrated by a remote control toy airplane.

Sudden Death (Ballantine, 328pp pocketbook, $3.95) by William X. Kienzle. A Father Koesler mystery. "The detective-priest searches from church to clubhouse to find out who took the football player permanently out of the game. . . ."

The Tree Of Hands (Ballantine, 314pp pocketbook, $3.50) by Ruth Rendell. A novel of suspense involving three mothers. □



FILM REVIEWS

LEGEND
HIGHLANDER

Reviewed by John Nubbin

LEGEND

Director . . . . . Ridley Scott
Producer . . . . . Arnon Milchan
Screenplay . . . William Hjortsberg
Music . . . . . Tangerine Dream
Photography . . . Alex Thomson, B.S.C.

CAST

Jack . . . . . Tom Cruise
Lili . . . . . Mia Sara
Darkness . . . . . Tim Curry

So *Legend*, Ridley Scott's big, long-awaited, much talked-about fantasy epic, is a bust, eh? That's the word. It didn't make any money in Europe, so it must be terrible—what'll we do, what'll we do? How can we save this picture? How can we save our millions of invested dollars and our jobs as the high-muckity-muck know-it-alls of public taste? I know; we'll slice the movie down from its over two hours to just eighty-nine minutes—more people in and out of the theater that way—we'll make a pile of money that way—fast—before anyone finds out how stinking bad this turkey is. And we know it must be a stinking bad turkey, because our friends, the Europeans, the guys who would not let us fly over their air space when we bombed Libya, told us it was.

So probably spake Universal Pictures, the tower of wisdom which wanted to slice off the ending of Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*, one of the most outstanding films of the last decade. The people at Universal have become a little snip-snip happy of late, and it seems to be affecting their decision making process. *Brazil* came out almost years late due to Gilliam's inability to accept any cuts. It was called the work of a genius, and even though Universal tried to bury it by giving it no advertising and limited engagements, it still did just fine, reaping favorable reviews and decent box-office returns in all parts of the country.

Alas, we shall never know what the true fate of *Legend* would have been. It is, in its butchered present form, still a fantastic film experience, but with all that missing time it could have been better.

The film is the story of Jack and Lili, two completely innocent teenagers, living in what might best be described as slightly more innocent times. Evil does not have that strong a hold in their world yet, due to the presence of unicorns. They are the holders of all the world's light. Theirs is the strength which holds darkness in its place. As one might assume, as usual, darkness refuses to acknowledge its place and soon starts enough trouble to get the story rolling.

It does not take long for evil to have captured Lili, and the unicorns, and to have found itself with the world at its feet, ready for the taking. Unfortunately, the main reason it doesn't take long is that evil's helpmate, the Universal editing staff, seems to have done most of their chopping at the beginning of the film. When the picture starts, there is a racing quality to it, as if one simply does not have all of what they are supposed to have to be able to interpret the storyline. True, a miles-long explanatory trailer preceeds the film, but it is such a poorly-written jumble its effect is minimal in helping the audience.

The picture quickly gets its pacing together, not through any effort of its butchers, but rather through its own strength. *Legend* is a brilliant bit of work; fast-moving, cleanly thought out. The special effects, make-up effects, art direction, etc., are all at 100% or better. The look of the film is perfect. Most scenes seem to step straight off the pages of the best classic illustrated fairy tales. No one could find fault with the images in *Legend*. The movie was shot with a care few films have ever received. The setups for each shot must have been some of the most painstaking ever devised. It is a beautiful film, almost dream-like in its visual charm.

Where most of the film's detractors are having their difficulty is with the movie's storyline. It seems a story about good vs. evil is just not enough for them. The whole point of the tale being unfolded for them is that innocence is not enough to banish evil from the world forever, but it is the only force which can ever banish it for even a short while. The point is made several times, the most obvious when a troupe of minor goblins gains the power of the unicorns. They boast about destroying the lord of darkness, one even tries, but true evil is always stronger than its children. It is only Jack and Lili who can stand up to Darkness, himself, and only they who can beat him.

Legend was shortchanged by the critics, here and abroad. A lot of the fault here is due to the decision to show a shortened version. What the fault is in Europe is anyone's guess. Maybe the material that was sliced away was rotten and everyone would have hated it, but from viewing the rest of the picture, one would be hard pressed to believe so. Like the last major fairy-tale film to be released, *A Company of Wolves*, *Legend* is not a highly commercial film. It is a breathtakingly splendid, incredibly detailed perfect vision of the romantic epic fantasy. An elf, some trolls and a human boy try to recover a human girl and the power of the unicorns from the forces of darkness. The storyline was stuck to from beginning to end, and all along the way, everything looked perfect. The film's only flaw is the obvious, heavy-handed, last-minute chopping which throws its pace off for nearly its first half hour, which in the light of how good everything else is in the film, is not that scathing a comment.

See this one if you can, especial-



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ly if you can see it on a big screen. If not, rent it, and try to imagine that it looked like the size of a building, and with all of its parts to show you. As in all fantasy, it never hurts to use your imagination.

HIGHLANDER

Director . . . . . Russell Mulcahy
Producer . . . . . Gregory Widen/ Peter Bellwood/Larry Ferguson
Music . . Michael Kamen & Queen
Photography. Gerry Fisher, B.S.C.

CAST

Conner MacLeod . . . Christopher Lambert
Brenda Wyatt . . . Roxanne Hart
Kurgan . . . . . Clancy Brown
Ramirez . . . . . Sean Connery

The action begins in a vast garage beneath Madison Square Garden. Two men are locked in mortal combat. The huge cavern echoes with the sound of clashing steel, sword on sword, despite the fact it is present day New York City where slightly more sophisticated weapons are available. It is a raging, all-out battle, one which does not end until the loser is decapitated.

And then, suddenly, the year is 1536 and the location is the Scottish highlands. The victor of the combat under Madison Square is here as well, a young man riding out to his first war. He is mortally wounded, and yet, he does not die. His neighbors and best girl condemn him as a witch and would kill him then if not for the intervention of his best friend who manages to get the youth a reprieve of 'mere' exile. The man who will live nearly five hundred years is on his own, and very confused, as is the audience.



Sean Connery is Ramirez, mentor to the deathless warrior-hero. Copyright © 1986 Highlander Productions, Ltd.



Christopher Lambert is Connor MacLeod, a deathless warrior who battles through the ages for the ultimate Prize.
Copyright ©1986 Highlander Productions, Ltd.

This is the style of *Highlander*, though, to keep everyone, including its major characters, as off balance as it can for as long as it can. It manages this through an extraordinary control over the storytelling and the editing.

The man responsible, of course, is director Russell Mulcahy, who has earned a reputation as one of the hottest of today's young music-video directors. He captured a great deal of the right attention with his low-budget Australian thriller, *Razorback*, enough to allow him to pick up the directing chores on *Highlander*. Luckily for us he did. As the film's star Christopher Lambert told us, "He is so quick he can shoot in a day what other people would shoot in two days. And what ends up on the screen is fantastic. Talent is something you have—you don't learn it. You have it or you don't."

And Mulcahy has it by the bag. The action never stops in *Highlander*, bouncing back and forth from the past to the present, showing us the growth of its immortal central characters, men who don't grow old, and who can only die if their heads are separated from their necks.

Interestingly, the film's storyline has a few holes in it, despite the fact that it does not serve up much in the way of explanations. The audience is never told why the immortals cannot be harmed by anything but decapitation, or why that does kill them, nor anything about the whole process of each champion's energy passing from one to the other, etc., and yet the picture works amazingly well.

The main reason for this is Mulcahy's shrewd choice of Lambert as his leading man. The actor's ability to shift his character from age to age is one of the key's to *Highlander*'s believability.

"The guy is immortal," says Lambert, "he can do anything he wants to and nobody can kill him—but there's something very sad about that. There's a strange duality to the character.

"When MacLeod is in Scotland at first, he doesn't know he's immortal until Ramirez (Sean Connery) appears and tells him and teaches him the things he has to know to fulfill his destiny. MacLeod is a very basic individual. In his early days in Scotland, he is like a young dog who faces danger and fights hard. When he is in present day New York, he is more like an old dog who has learned a lot."

As has Lambert—his portrayal of Tarzan in the lackluster *Greystoke* was that film's one shining achievement. A great deal of what he learned there is evident in *Highlander*, as are the talents of all those around him.

Lambert, Mulcahy, and all of the people involved with this film have poured all of their talent into its making, and it shows. There are no flaws in the special effects, the photography, the rapid transitions, etc. It is a flowing masterpiece with but one problem—after it was finished, some heavy-handed, second guessing editing was added, which bruised, but did not break, a number of scenes.

As in *Legend*, someone in power decided the product just wasn't good enough. In both films, the music was tampered with, and they were chopped to disadvantage. Luckily, though, both were vividly strong enough to survive those who know how to make anything 'perfect.' I'm not saying we as a society are not lucky to have so many people willing to protect us from ourselves—people willing to edit the violence out of the Three Stooges or Bugs Bunny and the rest, and to attack video games and role-playing games as tools of the Communists and the devil—honest, I think it's great we have so many people willing to dictate to us how we should spend our time. I'm just glad they didn't do a better job in 'adjusting' either *Legend* or *Highlander*, the two best fantasy films to come along in quite some time.

Damn glad. □



by GIGI D'ARN

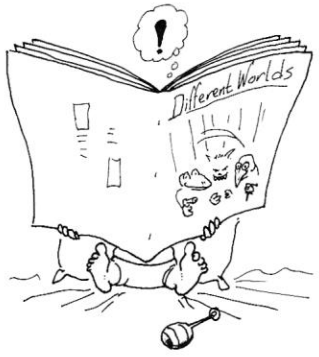
Dear Tadashi,

Congratulations to you and your wife, MIYAKO, on the birth of your number one son, GEORGE ATSUSHI EHARA. And many thanks for the marvelous baby pictures. He looks simply adorable! And no one guessed George in the contest.

Sad news in the science-fiction publishing industry. Judy-Lynn del Rey (1942-1986), publisher and editor-in-chief of Del Rey Books, died February 20 at the Bellevue Hospital in New York City. She suffered a brain hemorrhage on October 16, 1985, from which she never recovered. Judy-Lynn probably did more than any other individual to gain general respect for science fiction as a major branch of publishing.

Can you believe it? TSR is going to be at LA ORIGINS. This must be the first in a decade. TSR has had a feud with the Game Manufacturers Association ever since the convention conflicted with their GEN CON and TSR has boycotted it ever since. There's sure to be some good gossip floating around the convention for me to pick up.

DAVE HARGRAVE reports that he has submitted the manuscript for his *Arduin, Bloody Arduin* to Grimoire Games who is hoping to get it out on time for ORIGINS.



Make your plans now for ORIGINS XIII. The con site has been determined and it's going to be in Baltimore next year over the Independence Day weekend. It will not be on a college campus but at the downtown Hyatt Regency and the Baltimore Convention Center.

Soon to be released is Palladium's *Revised RECON*, the Vietnam-era role-playing game which was originally published by RPG Inc. Also due out from Palladium is *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Adventures* (July) and their *Palladium Role-Playing Game Book III: Adventures in the High Seas* (August).

Diverse Talents of Southern California has picked up *The Space Gamer* from Steve Jackson Games and has promptly incorporated it into their *VIP of Gaming* magazine. This effectively means *The Space Gamer* is no more and another magazine bites the dust.

Soon to be released from West End is *Clones In Space* for *Paranoia* and *Ghost Toasties* for the *Ghostbusters* game.

What is *Orc Girls on Rollerskates with Uzis*?

Tantalizing speculations include TSR getting rid of *Strategy & Tactics* and selling it off to West End (I mean, all those old SPI items are going there right?). And it hasn't happened yet but the Avalon Hill Game Company may one day close down Victory's New York offices and ship everyone down to Baltimore. JERRY GLICHENHOUSE and SUSAN KOCH has already resigned their posts at Victory and are now working for West End.

Is TV's *60 Minutes* planning to send MIKE WALLACE to the headquarters of World Wide Wargamers to give KEITH POULTER the third degree?



TOME will finally have another role-playing supplement out soon. This one is *The Octagon Of Chaos* by TONY FIORITO for Chaosium's *Stormbringer*.

Chaosium has obtained the rights to publish Midkemia's role-playing supplements. They don't plan to republish the entire line, though, as their quality control department won't allow it.

For *Elfquest* fans, July is the scheduled release date for Mayfair's *Elfquest Boardgame*.

Among the games the Avalon Hill Game Company is discontinuing is *Source of the Nile*, a good title for someone to pick up and republish in its original form.

Timeline is readying for release in the near future *Prime Base*, a major *Morrow Project* supplement.

TSR has entered into a licensing agreement with Steve Jackson Games to publish *Car Wars* solo-adventure gamebooks. The books will feature the reader creating his own character and that of his gunner, and buying and equipping his car as desired. The first two gamebooks, at least, are written by STEVE JACKSON himself.

The *Sorcerer's Apprentice* magazine has been purchased from Flying Buffalo by a New Hampshire publisher who plans to put it out on a monthly schedule. The publication is now set to include fantasy fiction, useful information for dungeonmasters, and epic poetry.

Is *Fire & Movement* going to come out with a swim suit edition this year? Be sure to show the photographer the picture with me in my orange bikini for me if they pay well.

Love,

Gigi ♥♥ □



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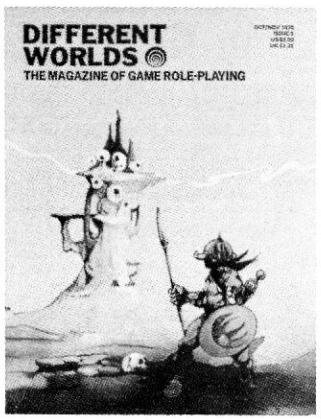
Issue 1: Jan/Feb '79. Sold out.

Issue 2: Mar/Apr '79. "Specialty Mages: Part 2." "My Life & Role-Playing" by Steve Jackson. "Arduin, Bloody Arduin" by Dave Hargrave. The first "Letter From Gigi."

Issue 3: Jun/Jul '79. "My Life & Role-Playing" by Dave Arneson and Steve Perrin. "Specialty Mages: Part 3." Druid's Valley: A *Bunnies & Burrows* campaign" by Dennis Sustare.

Issue 4: Aug/Sep '79. Paul Jaquays cover. "Enchanted Weapons Table" by John T. Sapienza, Jr. "*HeroQuest* Sneak Preview: Waha's Quest" by Greg Stafford.

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Issue 6: Dec/Jan '80. "Finding Level in *RuneQuest*" by Ray Turney. "How to Make Monsters Interesting" by Lee Gold. "The World Of Crane" by George V. Schubel.

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Issue 8: Jun/Jul '80. "Talent Tables" by John T. Sapienza, Jr. "*Land of the Rising Sun* Designer Notes" by Lee Gold.

Issue 9: Aug/Sep '80. "The Imperium: A *Traveller* campaign" by Marc W. Miller and Frank Chadwick. "ORIGINS '80 Scrapbook."

Issue 10: Oct/Nov '80. "You Gotta Be Fiendish" by Larry DiTillio. "Dungeon of Pelius Mright: An Adventure for Novices" by Ken Rolston. "Gem Types & Values" by Kathryn E. Shapero.



Issue 11: Feb/Mar '81. Paul Jaquays cover. "Gems & Magic." "A New Computer System for *Traveller*." The first "Sword Of Hollywood" by Larry DiTillio.

Issue 12: Jul '81. "Meaningful Names for Characters." "The Full Circle: Preview of the *Thieves' World* game" by Robert Lynn Asprin.

Issue 13: Aug '81. "Role-Playing in Piers Anthony's Land of Xanth." "Samurai Swords." Reviews of *Land of the Rising Sun* and *Arduin Adventure*.

Issue 14: Sep '81. "Judges Guild and *Dungeons & Dragons*: A guide for the discriminating gamemaster." "Character Personality Profile." "Painting Miniature Figures." "Taverns & Inns" by Lewis Pulsipher. "Familiars" by David Nalle. "Plausible Geography for Role-Playing Games."

Issue 15: Oct '81. "More Citizens: Six new classes for *Traveller*." "Tournament Role-Playing: Part 1" by Ken Rolston. "Man Bites Dog: Role-Playing in the Future" by Ken St. Andre. Reviews of *Aftermath!* and *Fiend Folio*.

Issue 16: Nov '81. "Tournament Role-Playing: Part 2" by Ken Rolston. "Solo Role-Playing" by Lewis Pulsipher. "Illusion Magic" by David Nalle.

Issue 17: Dec '81. "Solo *RuneQuest* Scenario: Ware Hall" by Sandy Petersen. "An Approach to World-Building: *Questworld*" by Lynn Willis, Greg Stafford, and the Chaosium Staff. Review of *Champions*.

Issue 18: Jan '82. Sold out.

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Issue 31: Nov '83. Special Fantasy Issue. "The Cup Of Death: Poisons for use in fantasy role-playing campaigns" by Larry DiTillio. "ORIGINS '83 Scrapbook." "*Stormbringer* Scenario: Bastion Of Balo" by Ken St. Andre. "My Life & Role-Playing" by Dave Hargrave and Gigi D'Arn. Reviews of *The Mechanoid Invasion* and *The Traveller Book*.

Issue 32: Jan/Feb '84. Special Ancient Cultures Issue. "The Cliff Dwellers: Indians of the Classic Pueblo Period" by Ken Rolston. "Threat of the Nightgaunt: A superhero adventure." "My Life & Role-Playing" by Sandy Petersen. Review of *Villains & Vigilantes*.

Issue 33: Mar/Apr '84. Special Post-Holocaust Issue. "Playtesting *The Morrow Project*: An anecdotal report from Timeline" by Bill Worzel. "My Life & Role-Playing" by H.N. Voss and Ken St. Andre. "Operation Link-Up: A *Morrow Project* scenario of post-holocaust Earth" by Barron Barnett and William A. Barton. Reviews of *The Morrow Project*, *Monster Manual II*, *Superworld*, and *Privateers & Gentlemen*.

Issue 34: May/Jun '84. Special Superhero Issue Featuring the DNAgents. Will Meugniot cover. "The Crystal Of Chaos: A *Call Of Cthulhu* adventure." Reviews of *James Bond 007* and *Harn*.

Issue 35: Jul/Aug '84. Special Horror Issue Featuring *Call Of Cthulhu*. "My Life & Role-Playing" by Mike Stackpole. "Blame It On Cthulhu: Creating plots for *Call Of Cthulhu*" by Larry DiTillio. "Death Scenes: Aftermaths of Cthulhoid kills" by Sandy Petersen. "The Star-Devourer: A superhero module" by Steve Perrin. Review of *Witch Hunt*.

Issue 36: Sep/Oct '84. Special Magic Issue. "Magic & Social Structure: A Magic-Based Society." "Kabbalistic Magic." "ORIGINS '84 Scrapbook." "Where's Ogmar?: A solo *RuneQuest* module" by Alan LaVergne. Reviews of *Chivalry & Sorcery*, *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes*, *Lands Of Adventure*, and *The Traveller Adventure*.

Issue 37: Nov/Dec '84. "Secret Societies Part 1: The Assassins." "Louis Wu & His Motley Crew: A *Ringworld* module." Reviews of *Ringworld*, *Chill*, *Lords Of Creation*, and *Rolemaster*.

Issue 38: Jan/Feb '85. "The Cult Of Uleria" by Sandy Petersen and Greg Stafford. "The Rosicrucians." "Genetic Engineering: A *Traveller* variant." "The Eye Of Sitar: A *Call Of Cthulhu* adventure." Reviews of *Toon*, *Tekumel*, *Justice Inc.*, *Powers & Perils*, *Stormbringer*, *Marvel Super Heroes*, and *Bushido*.

Issue 39: May/Jun '85. "The African Leopard Men." "Creating Realistic Cities For Fantasy Adventures." "My Life & Role-Playing" by Aaron Allston. "Super Map 1: The Waterfront." Reviews of *Paranoia*, *Indiana Jones*, *TimeMaster*, *Other Suns*, and *Thieves' Guild*.

Issue 40: Jul/Aug '85. "The Chinese Secret Societies." "Adventuring in the Worlds of H.P. Lovecraft Part 1: The Cthulhu Mythos" by Keith Herber. "Adventure Game Campaigns: How to start easily & quickly." "Super Map 2: Business District." Reviews of *Twilight: 2000*, *Time & Time Again*, and *Heroes Unlimited*.

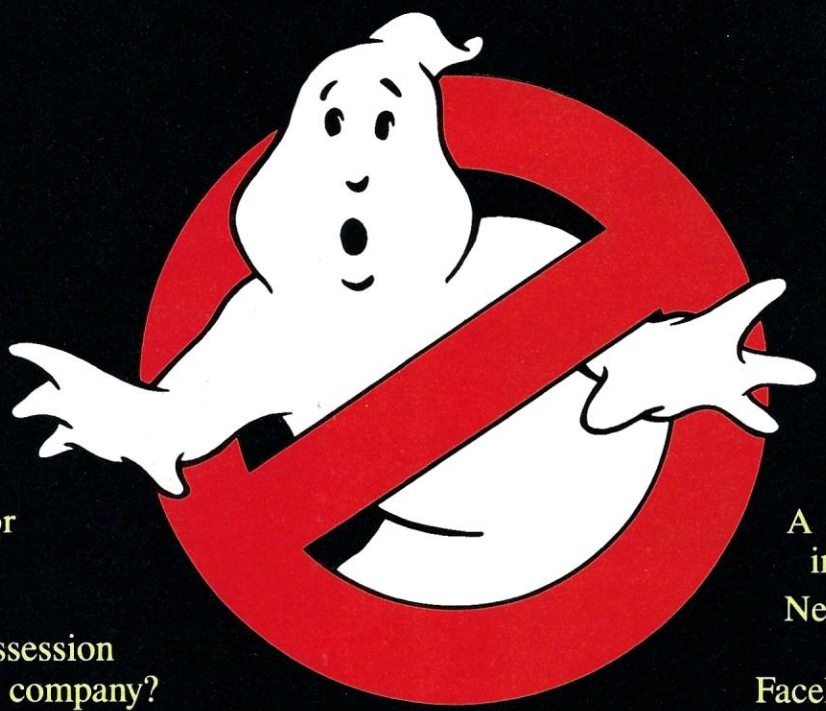
Issue 41: Jan/Feb '86. Frank Frazetta cover. "The Druids: The Oldest Secret Society," "The Adventures of Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze," "Adventuring in the Worlds of H.P. Lovecraft Part 2: Dreamworld" by Keith Herber, "Losing Your Marbles in *Call Of Cthulhu*: Rules for Playing Insane Characters," "Operation: Deep Freeze, a *Morrow Project* scenario," reviews of *RuneQuest 3*, *DC Heroes*, *The Doctor Who Role-Playing Game*, *Sandman: Map Of Halaal*, *Star Trek: The Adventure Game*, and *Masks Of Nyarlathotep*, "Interview with Frank Frazetta: Fantasy Artist."

Issue 42: May/Jun '86. James E. Warhola cover. "DW Game Poll Results," "The Art of James Warhola," "Empire of the Incas," "A Cthulhu Mythos Story: Dagon Manor" by Robert E. Howard and C.J. Henderson, "Archaeological Expeditions," "Blackmoor Campaign Module: Garbage Pits of Despair Part 1" by Dave Arneson, reviews of *Pendragon*, *Arabian Nights*, *Fantasy Hero*, *Midnight at the Well of Souls*, and *Unearthed Arcana*, "Facts of Life in the Middle Ages." □

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