

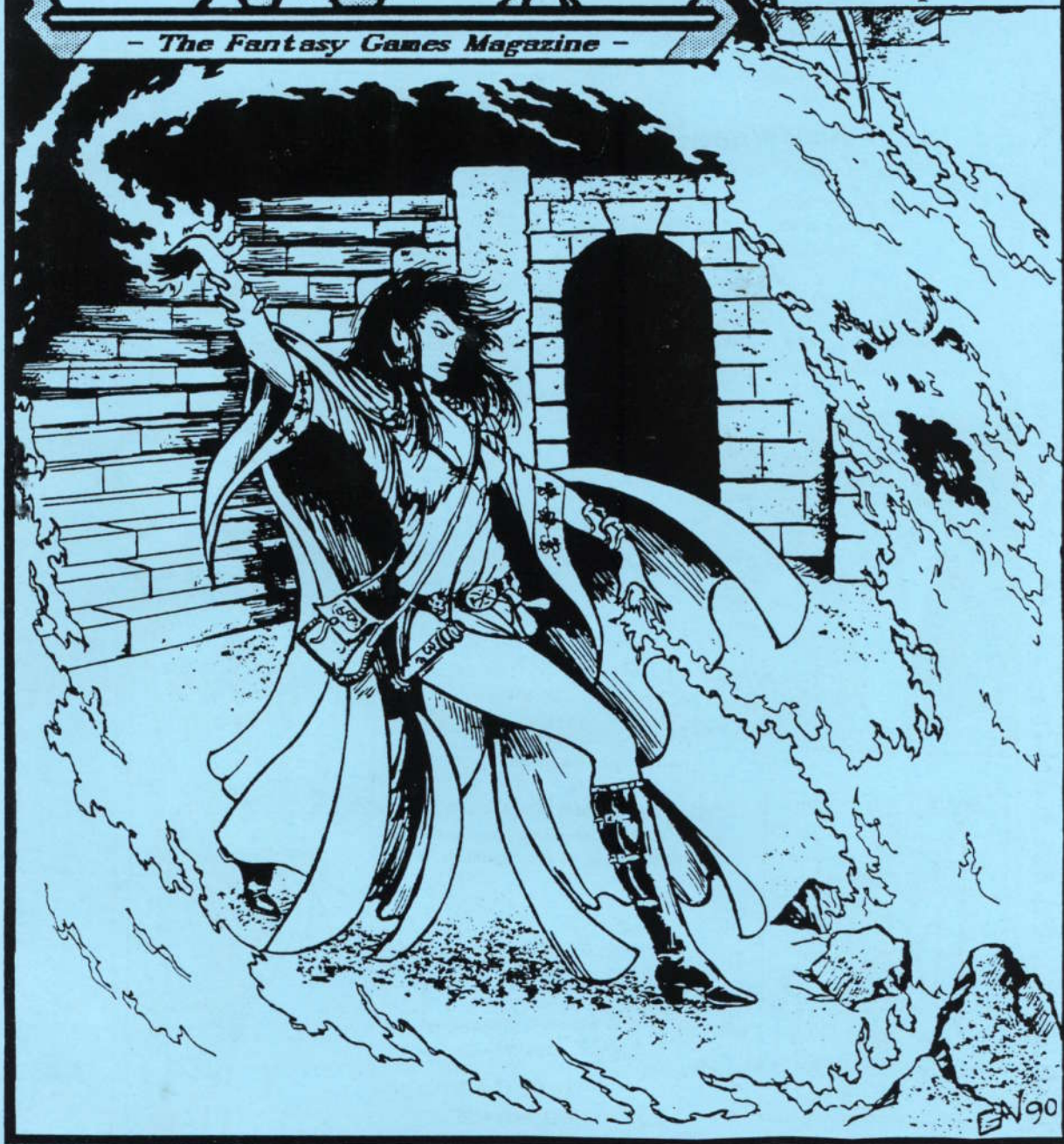
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- The Fantasy Games Magazine -

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No.#2

March/April 1990



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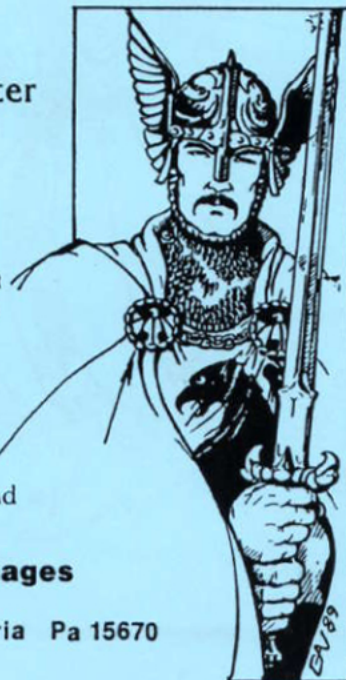


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Volume I • Number 2
March 1990

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Woodcuts in this issue were
taken from various 18th and
19th century manuscripts.

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BACKROOM MURMURING

EDITORIAL

...and the adventure continues!

Welcome back! Pull up a chair and dust off your boots. Stay awhile. As I promised in our premiere issue, Shadis has undergone many changes. Your feedback was a tremendous help in pushing us in (hopefully) the right direction. Don't mind the saw-dust and tools. We're just doing a little remodeling, knocking down a few walls, putting up new ones etc. When the dust settles we hope to have a place you'll want to visit from time to time.

We were very pleased with all the positive responses we received about our first issue. Though most everyone had something to say about that 'damn text', and the eye-strain and headaches it caused, the general consensus was that the content was good and that Shadis showed enough promise for the reader to struggle through the blurred copy. Our primary task since then has been improving the text and print quality. I'm very pleased with the results. However, since I am writing this prior to publishing I could be making a fool out of myself if the same problem reoccurs.

I'd like to take this opportunity to make special mention of our cover-artist this month. George Vrbancic of Infinite Images Inc. (Who was the focus of Spotlight in Issue no.#1) was kind enough to provide us with some great original art. He has tentatively agreed to do more covers in the future. I'm sure he would appreciate your comments. If you enjoy his work, please let him know so that we can persuade him to do a repeat performance.

I would also like to make mention of Daniel Giddings' cartoon strip 'Puzzo n Logo' which you'll find hidden on page 43. I received

Daniel's artwork only days before press time and was not able to give it the prominent place it deserves. Hopefully you'll be seeing more of Mr. Gidding's work in these pages.

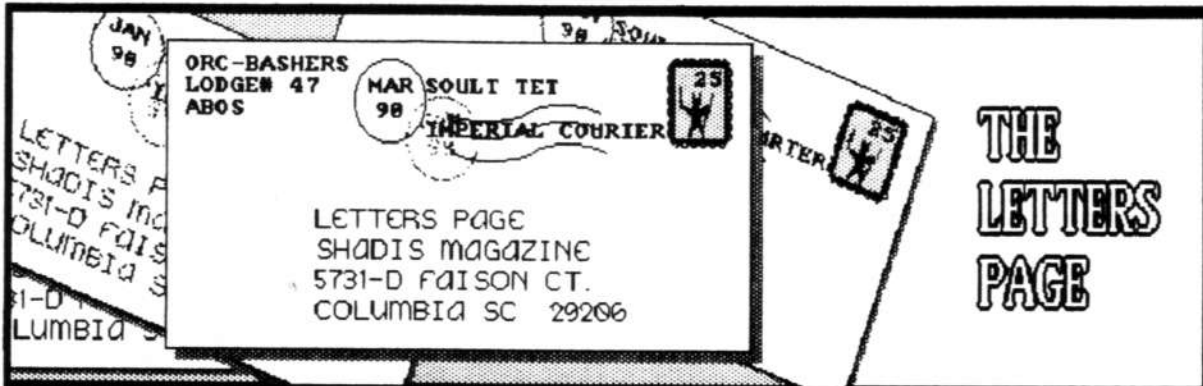
I'd like to thank those who took time out to give us some feedback on issue no.#1. And I'd would like to encourage the rest of you to let us know what you think of us. Already the readers are having an dramatic impact on the molding and shaping of Shadis during these early stages.

Many of you commented that you liked the fiction, especially the format of having all the stories grounded in a common fantasy milieu. Since this was the original inspiration for Shadis, we are both glad and relieved. Many of you wanted to see more fiction while others want to see more game-related articles. For those who prefer the gaming articles over fiction do not fear. We have no plans to allow the fiction to dominate the magazine. The ratios of fiction to articles should run fairly constant to what you see in this issue. However, we do plan to expand to 100 pages per issue as soon as funding comes together. This will allow us to provide more material in both areas.

Also, with the additional space we will be able to offer more areas of interest. High on the list of new features is a Monster Column, detailing new creatures for RPGs. Also various modules and adventures are in the making to be presented within these pages.

As always, this issue will have to stand on its own merit. Let us know what you think of Shadis.

Jolly R. Blackburn
March 10, 1990



**Note: Due to space limitations and the many 'long' letters we've received, some letters have been edited. Keep the letters coming!*

Dear Shadis,

Congratulations on your new venture. I had to write and cast my vote. Concentrate on fantasy solely! There are hordes of fantasy/sci-fi magazines out there and they spend too little space on too many subjects. A pure fantasy rag would be both different and refreshing.

I had a question about the Alderac milieu. I was really intrigued by the Grevans and the Sarlangans. How about running some background info on these races? In fact how about background material on the Empire itself. I'm hooked! Keep my issues coming!

Dave R. Blake

El Paso, TX

Many readers were curious about the Grevan and Sarlangan races. Greytar has promised to cover both cultures very thoroughly in the future. As for a fantasy-only format the ballots are still open for the time being.

Dear Shadis,

I loved the game 'Keeps' in issue no.#1. I've used it several times in my campaign and it is proving to be very popular with my players. We've developed several house rules. In fact one of my players has become so obsessed with the game that his character has squandered his entire life savings.

While I can appreciate the fact that you tried to keep the game short and simple, I have a few suggestions for those

who want a little more detail and realism.

I think the strength of a character should be factored into his Intoxication factor. I'm assuming that stronger characters have more muscle mass and therefore a larger volume of blood in their systems. Ok, this is a stretch, but for RPGs it works. Anyway, the more blood in a person's body, the less profound the effects of alcohol on that person. Using this system and the descriptions of the players in your sample round of keeps I would have to say that the Barbarian would undoubtedly be the favored player.

Frank Lowe

Kokomo Indiana

While I was working on Keeps I did indeed consider that larger players would have an advantage. However due to space constraints and for the sake of simplicity such rules were removed.

Like I stated in the article, Keeps lends itself to variations and new rules very well. I think you'll find your campaign's version of Keeps will take on a very distinct form. I am always interested in looking at new variations on the game.

Dear Shadis,

A few comments about your first issue. First, I enjoyed it tremendously. For the first issue, I thought it was very well done.

John K. D'amato's article 'The World Beyond HackandSlash' was full of ideas, even if I did not agree with all of them. I am not sure the idea of players, or even the DM creating a detailed religion is a good idea. You can

never tell when the 700 club might show up on your doorstep denouncing you.

Most of the people in gaming that I have met have some intelligence and imagination. The more our intelligence grows, the more complicated our games of relaxation become. People with no minds and even worse, no imagination, seek to ruin the enjoyment and relaxation of others.

Until people learn to understand that role-playing games are just very complicated games, we gamers must be careful.

I also liked this article for almost the same reasons I disliked it. This type of role-playing results in people becoming more involved with their characters and it might send a few to the history books to investigate religions of the world. This allows a player to role-play his character better.

'Pushing Your Luck' left me a little cold. I've played in a few groups, but nobody has ever run a game of chance more complicated than a roll of the dice. As a game in itself, I will try it after reading part two.

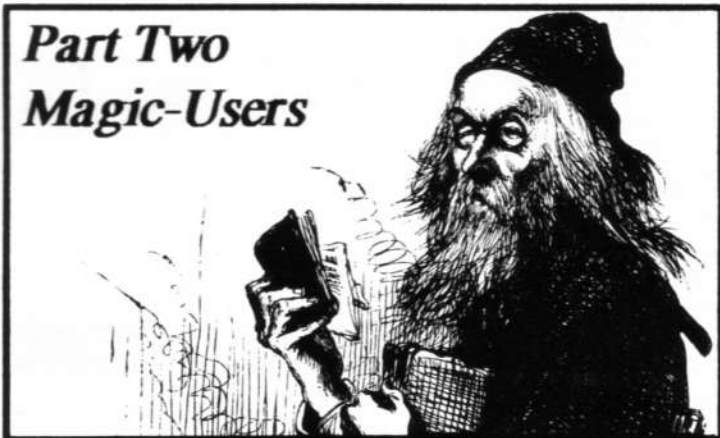
The game and computer reviews were typical but always a great help to people on a budget. An impartial review of such games can indeed be a life saver. Keep them in the magazine, but please no hints and solutions. There are enough hint books on the market.

'Under the Spotlight' I really enjoyed. I suggest you definitely keep this column in your magazine. I am sure

Continued on page 59

The World Beyond 'HackandSlash'

Part Two Magic-Users



By John K. D'Amato

Glendower the Magician had had a busy week. While waiting in town for the rest of his party to gather provisions, he'd come across a fellow sorcerer, and spent hours discussing with him the magical properties of basilisk blood. With that new-found knowledge, Glendower had borrowed a lab and spent the next few days working on a new formula designed to neutralize any type of paralyzation spell.

It proved useful late in the week when Triock, the elf, opened a magical tome in the Ruins of Barrowghoul, and became instantly paralyzed. Not only did it save Triock's life, but Glendower's subsequent study of the magical-trapped tome gave him clues to another glyph of warding he might be able to use or avoid in the future.

Despite Glendower's busy week, Glendower received next to nothing in experience points from a DM that used only dead bodies and gold pieces for computing experience points.

How many campaigns have you experienced, where truly religious clerics, thieves who avoided combat and took treasure through stealth or magic users devoted to their craft, went virtually unrewarded? Probably quite a few, and so have I.

Last issue, I discussed a solution to this problem, with specific point guidelines for the actions of clerics, and how it could help a simple but tedious hack-and-slash campaign evolve into a more realistic and more enjoyable adventure in role-playing.

In this issue we'll turn our attention to some specific things we can do to make the role-playing of magic users a little

more realistic and fun for players. Again, the points I've assigned to the accomplishment of tasks is meant only as a guide, and individual DMs should reach an agreement with their players at the beginning of a campaign or gaming session, about how much a task should be worth.

The main job, love and often the obsession of a magic user is magic - studying, experi-

"Too often, however, our magic users spend their time fireballing orcs, magic missiling unsuspecting bartenders or hustling for gold."

menting and practicing. They are primarily scholars and scientists, more interested in treasure for the larger laboratories and supplies it can buy than castles, summer homes, fine furs and other ostentatious displays of wealth.

Too often, however, our magic users spend their time fireballing orcs, magic missileing unsuspecting bartenders or hustling for gold. You can change that.

Award only half the experience points normally given for killing monsters/beings, unless they have special capabilities of some sort, like a displacer beast, and then the MU would receive normal experience points.

Give the magic user double the experience points for killing monsters/beings which have magical ability or have been magically created.

The idea behind the points for the displacer beast, for instance, or a magical creature, is that the MU may be able to use the knowledge gained in such an encounter. Given enough study over a long period of time, (perhaps a lifetime) and some experimentation, the MU may be able to duplicate the displacer beast's abilities or recreate a spell some evil creature used against the party.

In the same vein, only award half experience points for treasure (although it's still worth the same amount in monetary terms).

Normal points are awarded if the treasure is magical in nature, i.e. a magic lamp, but only after a magical property has been discovered. This avoids the problem of Glendower picking up a pair of boots and the DM giving him 2,500 experience points. He'd have to be a pretty dumb Glendower-the-magic-user not to figure out those aren't just an ordinary pair of boots.

In the course of an adventure, magic users often come across things which can neither be considered monsters/beings nor treasure, but still might prove to be of valuable experience sometime in the future. Award 50 points for every encounter with a magical device, trap or item, but make a 100 points per day (game time) maximum, and

with the provision that the magic user must have realized that magic was present.

An apprentice or low-level MU is probably going to be more dedicated and eager to impress a high level wizard with the accomplishment of a mission, than if he's working for the mayor of a small town. For that reason, give the MU 1,000 points for completion of a mission for any wizard three times the character's level. That should motivate him, and may make it easier for you as the DM to interest a MU player character in a financially non-lucrative adventure; i.e. the gathering of three basilisk eggs the senior MU needs for a potion.

Finally, there are points for studying, experimenting and practicing magic. Instead of lounging around in taverns with the great medieval unwashed, give your magic users 10 to 50 points for every three consecutive days they spend studying magic or experimenting. This will help them to spend their time wisely, while they are waiting for Triock-the-fighter's wounds to heal.

Sometimes on the trail, one magic user may come across another. In many games they say "Hail fellow, well met," and part without anything transpiring between them.

I submit that this is unrealistic. Put two or three nuclear physicists in a room full of other people and in no time at all, they will be deep in discussion, ignoring the rest of the world.

The same holds true with magic users. The quest for more knowledge, professional curiosity and the fact that they are both scholars ought to bring them together, regardless of whether one will impart some secret or spell to the other. For those reasons, give the magic user 50 experience points for every half-hour exchange of magic views, philosophy or information with another magic user. To avoid abuse, set a maximum of perhaps 50 or 100 points per day.

Spells mean power as well as the practical application of knowledge gained, and just as a fighter strives to find a good sword, the magic user

MAGIC-USERS

is always looking for a new spell.

Currently in the game, however, acquisition just means adding another spell to one's list. If it happens to be a spell that isn't an offensive killer or defensive boon, usually the player could care less, and won't go out of his way to obtain it.

If we give the magic user 500 points (after first level) for every new spell learned or acquired, every spell will have some value, and the MU again may become more interested in his scholarly pursuits.

The end result of all this study is having a spell ready to cast. Like anything else in life, we gain experience everytime we do something, regardless of the repetition.

Presently, a MU gains no experience points for casting the spells he has learned, unless there is treasure to be earned or monsters to slay. Expensive spells go uncast and quick spells are preferred over longer, more involved ones.

Award 50 points for every segment spent on a spell successfully cast (100 points minimum and 500 points maximum) and you should see an

increase in the number of spells your magic users are casting.

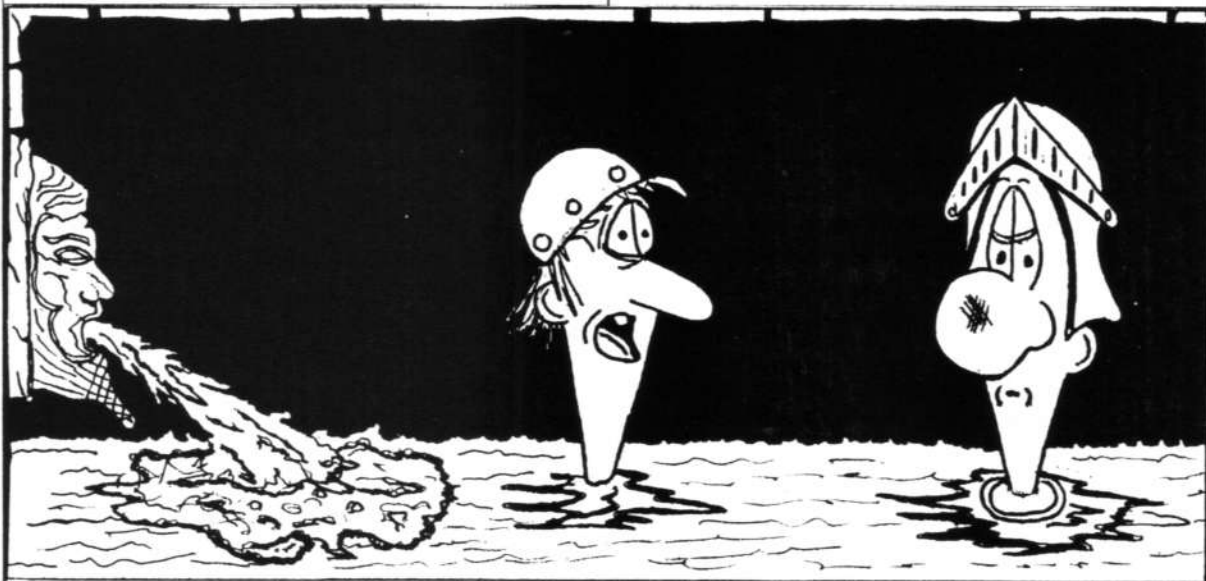
Again there are restrictions. The spell must be successfully cast, and the situation should be appropriate to the spell, or your magic users will be casting "Floating Disc" spells to pass the salt to dinner companions.

Hopefully, these suggestions will help to make the game more fun for you and your players and your magic users will become more like the scholars they should be, than the fighters they have been forced to be.

If you have any other suggestions on what other MU tasks I've left out that should earn experience points, please send them c/o this magazine.

Worksheet #2 provides a summary of the experience-point system for Magic Users. Feel free to reproduce this form for your own use. It can be used during a gaming session to keep track of the points a MU has earned. Modify the point values as you see fit.

Until next issue - good gaming.



"Have you seen the dwarf?"

EXPERIENCE POINT WORKSHEET# 2

MAGIC
USERS

1. 50% experience points for found treasure, unless treasure is magical in nature. Points not to be awarded until magical properties are discovered.

2. 50% experience points for killing monster/being, unless it has special abilities and then normal points are awarded. If monster has ability to perform magic, than double points.

3. 1,000 points for completion of a mission for magic user 3 times the character's level.

4. 10 to 50 points for every three days spent studying magic or experimenting.

5. 50 points per half-hour exchange of magical views, or information with another magic-user. (Max 50 per day)

6. 500 points for every new spell acquired and learned.

7. 50 points for every encounter with magical device, trap or item. (Max 100 points per day) Magic-User must realize that magic is present.

8. 50 points for every segment spent on a spell successfully cast. (min 100 pts/max 500 pts)

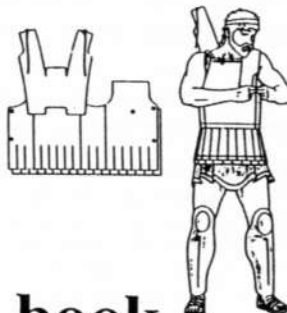
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The Bones of Ruin



By Jolly R. Blackburn

PART II WOLVES AND OLD MEN

"In my dream two travelers wandered by a lonely grave one day, and a terrible question was asked by one to the other, "To whom does that stone testify?"

And the answer haunts my dreams, for the other man replied, "I know not sir, I know not." In my dream I then saw that the grave was my own.'

Eslain Sular, The Silent Stones

Day 195 Year 108

Velnar Curstain approached the large iron doors of Bowmar prison. It was late, well after the third watch and a steady rain drizzled down upon the city of Soult Tet. Raising his staff, he knocked on the heavy doors several times. From within, a rattling of chains and the scrape of an Iron bolt being slid back told him that someone was responding. A moment later a small spy-hole slid open, a half-closed eye on the other side peered through at him.

"What ya want?"

Curstain groaned and replied, "It's Velnar Curstain the Rader-Keem! Let me in!"

The eye on the other side of the door widened immediately, "Muh Lord? Whut brings ya here at such an hour?"

Curstain struck the door again with his

staff, "I've business to attend to! Open this door!"

The bolt slid back and the large door creaked open, straining on its hinges. A shaken guard confronted Curstain. "My apologies my Lord! What can I do for you?"

Curstain pushed the guard aside and entered the room. He removed his cloak and shook the rain from it. He was standing in the outer block of the guardhouse. To his left was the barracks for the prison guards and to the right, through the double portcullis was the main prison with its labyrinth of dungeons and dank cells.

"Why are you on duty alone? Do not the orders call for two guards at this post?"

The guard began to stammer, "Uh...the captain has gone into the block to check the cells. Every hour as ordered!"

Curstain blushed slightly at his abruptness. "Oh I see. Very well. I'm here on an urgent matter. I wish to speak with the prisoner Raven-thorpe."

"Raventhorpe? My Lord the orders are to allow no one to speak with the prisoner."

Curstain furrowed his brow in anger, "Do you realize who I am?"

"Why of course ma Lord" answered the guard without hesitation.

"Then you must realize that I issued those orders!"

The guard was visibly shaken, "My apologies ma Lord. I'll show you the way."

Curstain smiled, "Excellent, Lead on."

He followed the guard as he opened the double gate leading into the main prison.

The guard took a torch from its mount on the wall and turned to follow a narrow-winding corridor that descended ever so slightly. After several moments, Curstain detected the shadows of torchlight coming from the other direction. Shortly, the Captain approached with a somewhat alarmed look on his face.

"Draval? What is this?" he snapped.

The guard halted, "Captain, it's Rader-Keem Curstain. He's come to see Raventhorpe"

The confused Captain raised his torch and strained to see Curstain's face. "Lord Curstain? Is there a problem?"

Curstain stepped in front of the guard, "No Captain. I was told that Raventhorpe is close to death. I thought I'd have a few words with him."

The Captain shook his head, "He's wearing the face of death alright. That's the truth my Lord. But he's not talking. I'm afraid you...."

"I'd like to determine that myself. If Raventhorpe dies before I have a chance to question him the Emperor will have us all!"

"Of course my Lord. If you'll follow me." He paused, "Draval! Return to your post. I'll see to this."

The guard nodded, turned and headed away. Curstain motioned for the captain to lead the way and they proceeded on. After several moments they came to a set of rough-hewn steps descending at a steep angle. "Watch your step my Lord, the walls seep down here."

They descended about thirty steps and came to a large irregularly-shaped room. A foul smell overcame Curstain's senses and he quickly pulled the sleeve of his robe over his nostrils and mouth. He was familiar with these foul odors from his days on the fields of battle; disease and death.

In the corner, bound by chains and lying on a heap of soiled straw lay a dark figure. A frail chest rose and sank slowly, a multitude of deep red

gashes were clearly discernible even in the torch light.

The captain walked over to the prisoner and kicked him in the side. The frail figure grunted and rolled to his side. A tormented face, framed in a beard of grey, looked upward.

"You've a visitor old man. Get up!"

Curstain stepped up beside the captain and placed a hand on his shoulder. "Captain, I wish to talk to the prisoner alone. I can find my way back to the guardhouse."

"My Lord? I can't leave you down here alone!"

"It's alright captain. Now go!"

The captain nodded and departed. Curstain waited for several moments until he was sure they were alone and then kneeled beside Raventhorpe.

"Rave? It's me, Curstain," he spoke in a hushed voice.

Raventhorpe raised his head and stared weakly at Curstain for several seconds.

"I knew you would come. It was only a matter of time. I knew it wouldn't be..." He laid his head back down, his face contorted with pain.

Curstain eased an arm around him and helped him to a sitting position. "I tried to come many times. I wanted you to know that I tried everything to aid in your escape. When I failed in that, I tried to render you an honorable death. I've failed you Rave. With all my powers, with all my chains of office, I couldn't help you. Can you forgive me?"

"You were afraid I would talk my friend. Afraid I would utter your name under the whip. Don't bother to make your case with me. I have no power to condemn or forgive."

"You know better than that Rave! We were friends once. I've done nothing to make you believe such a thing. I never wanted to see it come to this. I haven't slept in weeks thinking of you chained away in the darkness here; in agony!"

"The pain will end," said Raventhorpe

weakly, "Not even the Emperor can detain death. And in the end, the boy will fulfill the oracle."

"You still cling to those prophecies even now?" asked Curstain sadly, "Don't you see our folly? The world is not ruled by oracles. Where are your prophets now? He who has the sword has the power. Even your sacred Kaba-troth tells you that."

Curstain reached into the folds of his robes and produced a small amber vial. He held it toward Raventhorpe. "I've come to release you. This poison is swift, you have my word. You also have my word that your family will be cared for. I've made arrangements to move them to Kal Dez. Once you're dead the Emperor will move swiftly to do them harm."

Raventhorpe looked into Curstain's eyes, "You've come to silence me."

Curstain turned his eyes away from the old man. "I've come to free you from this daily torture. Can't you believe that?"

Raventhorpe smiled faintly, "I can believe many things. I believe that you and Gart were the only two who knew my hiding place in Abos. And I also know you fought like a warrior to have me executed without an audience. You've embraced the Emperor once again. You fear that I will put the finger of death on you with my confession."

Curstain stood to his feet, "If that were true I could have had you killed a fortnight ago." He turned and began to pace the small room.

"I've taken my oath to the Emperor again, I'll admit that. But not for myself! I've three sons to think of. They are the innocents in this affair. Sur'val my eldest has just been admitted to the Bin'Parta. Is he to die for my crimes? Losing my head to the Tandar's axe will not topple Sageem from the throne! But I would never betray you and I haven't. It was Gart who sold us out. He be-

trayed you to the Var Rader-Keem in exchange for a handful of gold and his life."

Raventhorpe shook his head, "Why did he not put the finger on you?"

Curstain shrugged, "I don't pretend to understand the likes of Gart! Scav was the only one who seemed to trust that scoundrel. But a man of Gart's standing accusing a Rader-Keem of treason? Even he's too smart for that."

"You have nothing to fear from me" said Raventhorpe, "I'll drink the libation you have brought me. Gart is your enemy now. Soon his gold will dwindle and he'll be looking for new ways to rekindle it."

Curstain drew pale. "Don't you think I know that! He fled the city before I could get my clutches on him. Believe me I would have made him pay for his treachery and I swear he will get his just rewards. He'll spend his blood-money to pay

for his own funeral rites."

Raventhorpe turned the vial of potion in the palm of his hand. "It's strange how time and distance can change a man." He looked toward Curstain, "A few weeks ago I would have thrown this vile elixir in your face. But now it seems like sweet nectar. They say that an excellent guest offers his host a gift of fine wine. You are a most excellent guest Lord Curstain. A few sips and release. A brief...." His voice cracked, "...moment and all the bonds of man no longer have any power over me."

Curstain stood motionless. He watched as Raventhorpe removed the stopper from the vial and raised it to his lips. He took several short sips, his face reflecting deep anguish.

Raventhorpe dropped the vial and lay back on the straw. He turned his head toward Curstain and smiled weakly. "Will you stay till it's over?"

Curstain nodded, "Of course Rave, of course"

"Don't you see our folly? The world is not ruled by oracles. Where are your prophets now?"

"Only the accursed die in solitude." He coughed violently for several moments. "Promise me one thing Curstain, if you are the friend you claim to be."

"Anything"

"See my family to safety."

"I've already arranged it. It's being taken care of even as we speak."

"...and one more thing...if the boy shows up, help him. Honor the oath you've made to him."

"Scav? Show up here?"

"He will. He has no choice. And when he does he'll need refuge."

Curstain was silent. He knew he could never swear to such a thing. How could he?

"Swear by it Curstain!" said Raventhorpe reaching up and clutching the official's robe. "If anything is left of the man who served Rehnus Sagenthor, swear by it."

Curstain drew pale and pulled away. "I swear..."

He stopped. Raventhorpe began to cough uncontrollably, and clutching his chest he rolled to his side and pulled up into a fetal position. Finally he drew silent, his breathing became shallow. After several moments he emitted a low guttural groan.

Curstain stepped away from him in fear. He watched for several minutes until he was quite sure Raventhorpe was dead. He then retrieved the vial and placed it in his robe.

Taking a torch from its holder he headed up the steps.

Day 201, Year 108

Scav yawned and shook his head, shaking the morning dew from his hair. Shivering he reached over to the small circle of rocks where a raging fire had burned brightly just hours before. Desperately he felt for any signs of heat.

With shuddering teeth he threw back the

wool blanket and hastily struggled to put on his clothes. Winter was fast approaching the Galon hills and Scav concluded it was the worst place to be on a chilly, windy morning.

He stood to his feet and stretched, the gnawing pain in his gut reminding him of the hunger which had demanded satisfaction for the last two days. Yawning, he gathered his blanket and walked toward the solitary thorn tree where he had expected to find his pony. He stopped dead in his tracks.

Dropping the blanket he quickly spun on his heels, scanning the horizon in all directions. Gone! The sudden prospect of walking out of the desolate hill country caused him to panic. Racing to the thorn tree he searched for tracks. He wasn't a skilled tracker but in the sandy, infertile loam of the Galons, it didn't demand such skills. What had happened during the night was all too obvious and very unnerving.

Two sets of large human-like prints trailed off into the distance with the pony in tow. What was more alarming was that the large tracks were scattered all about the campsite. Glancing over to where he had lay sleeping he immediately detected the same tracks, the nearest of which was only scant inches from where he had been sleeping. A lump formed in the base of his throat.

He suddenly realized that along with his pony, his satchel and water-skin had also vanished. Sinking to his knees in despair, he cradled his head in his hands.

The deep dread of walking out of the accursed country became too much to bear. He pondered the thought of pursuing the thieves, but quickly dismissed the notion. He wanted his pony and badly, but he didn't want to meet up with the thieves. From the size of the tracks he was very certain they were not human. He looked down at a set of deep tracks before him and found himself studying them. One set was peculiar in that the left foot of its maker apparently had lost three toes.

He turned the dagger in the palm of his

hand and resigned himself to reality. Retrieving the blanket, his only remaining possession he set off toward the east, his stomach protesting in earnest.

After an hour or so, the sun had reached a sufficient height to begin to warm the barren hills. The effort of climbing and maneuvering his way convinced him to drop the blanket and continue on without it. He hated himself for doing so, for he knew the bone-chilling damp would return that night and he would curse himself for not being stronger.

The strains of walking, however, and the greatness of his hunger demanded he handle the present. What he needed was food, and in any form it should present itself. The previous evening, he had expended a great amount of energy and effort digging for grub worms, but in vain.

Scav was beginning to wonder if his short, troubled life was destined to end right here, nothing left but a pile of bleached bones for the passer-by to wonder at. He had passed many such bone-piles over the past few days, unfortunates who had wandered too far and probably spent their last hours cursing their own stupidity. Scav was just breaking the crest of a large ridge when a chilling sound crescendoed throughout the hills.

He froze, the hairs on his neck standing on end. He stopped breathing and listened intently, but there was only a dead silence over which he could hear his own heart, pumping wildly in his chest. The sound which had startled him had been a shrill wailing, faintly woman-like. Yet he was quite sure it was not a human sound.

After several moments, he cautiously continued. As he descended the other side of the ridge he came to the edge of a deep ravine. He was just about to descend its bank when the sound again echoed across the hills. This time, it came from below him. Sinking to his knees he looked into the dark ravine below. As was common in the Galon-hill country, the high terrain was barren, with only a few stubborn thorn bushes clinging to the dead

soil. However, in the ravines and gullies small miniature forests thrived, thick and ominous. Peering into the web of foliage below, Scav could detect no sign of movement.

Again, the sound issued forth, but this time it was followed immediately by another from the far end of the ravine. Scav began to sweat profusely as a chorus of wailing howls resounded from the ravine. He drew pale and felt his legs begin to tremble. The dagger quickly found its way to his hand, but was of little reassurance. He began to back away from the ravine's edge, wishing he were miles away. He had only crept a few feet, when a dark form caught his eye. A large buck exploded from the wood's edge and landed on its forelegs, its mouth rimmed with froth and its eyes wide in terror. It struggled violently to regain its footing and frantically started up the steep bank of the ravine toward Scav. Scav noticed the buck's hind quarters were shattered, a mass of blood and severed flesh. The buck fought to climb the steep bank of the ravine, dragging itself with its front legs, its jaw agape in a silent-scream.

At that moment another larger form caught Scav's attention. A large grey and black creature had broken the edge of the foliage. With amazing speed for its bulk, it closed the distance with the buck and leaped heavily on its back. Massive jaws closed around the deer's neck and in a savage instant, thrashed its neck about. In the span of a few seconds the buck collapsed in a dead heap.

Scav watched it all in terror. Frozen in his tracks he looked on with a stifled scream forming in his throat. He was suddenly snapped to his senses as the wolf arched its neck and emitted a long mournful howl. From the woods a dozen like responses rang out. It was too much, Scav screamed. The startled wolf below him snapped its attention toward him. A set of piercing blue eyes came to bear on Scav and the wolf bared its fangs in anger. It was the largest wolf Scav had ever seen or imagined. It was monstrously large, almost the size of a

pony. He envisioned his dead corpse clenched in the large powerful jaws of the beast. Frozen in fear, he stared at the wolf as it raised its head and sniffed at the air. For several moments the two stared at each other, both motionless.

Finally, the wolf broke the truce and began to move up the hillside toward Scav, a low growl emitting from its gaping jaws. Scav watched in disbelief for several seconds, then jumped to his feet and raced away.

Running like a crazed man, he dashed for the only semblance of cover in sight, a large jagged, sandstone boulder with a halo of thorn bushes growing about it. He dared not look back, for he was afraid of what he'd see. The boulder, a good fifty yards away, became the focus for all of Scav's efforts.

Suddenly, he was thrown to the ground by a tremendous force from behind, his face thrust into the sandy-soil. At first, there was no pain, only the sense of being thrashed and pulled about violently. Then an agonizing searing pain overwhelmed him. The wolf had him by the lower legs and was shaking them in his jaws like a leg of mutton. Muscles tore and teeth grated against bone. Tightening his grip on his dagger Scav rolled to his back and began to frantically stab at the wolf's neck and head.

The wolf howled in pain, paused and then continued his attack with greater fury. Every blow seemed to intensify the wolf's attack. Scav now sensed something behind him and felt teeth clamp down on the back of his neck. Another wolf! A tug of war ensued, the intense pain caused him to drop his dagger and flail in agony. He was just about to lose consciousness when the pressure on his neck suddenly slackened. The wolf which had been thrashing his legs had turned its attack toward the other wolf. Now the two were engaged in a furious

contest and Scav was the prize. Vaguely aware of a chance to escape, Scav attempted to get to his feet but found his legs to be useless and unresponsive. Rolling to his stomach he began to crawl toward the boulder again.

He had crawled a few feet when again a wolf grabbed him by a leg and began to maul him. Screaming in both pain and terror Scav rolled over and struck at his attacker with bare hands. Then all about him there was a flurry of movement, as sev-

eral more wolves, attracted by the sounds of a kill, descended upon the scene. One grabbed his left arm and proceeded to attempt to strip it of its flesh. Writhing in pain, Scav began to drift into the shelter of unconsciousness. Somewhere in the back of his numbed-brain he heard a high-pitched yelp and his arm was freed. A moment later, he heard another yelp and his legs dropped to the ground, his attacker crashing down on him in a motion-

less heap.

Scav's last thoughts before blacking out was the awareness that he was choking on his own blood.

"The wolf had him by the lower legs and was shaking them in his jaws like a leg of mutton. Muscles tore and teeth grated against bone."

Day 213 Year 108

Scav found himself seated at a large oaken table set with fine dinner-ware and silver utensils. Clustered in the center of the table were a variety of pastries, meat-dishes and other delicacies. Before him a large pewter flagon of wine sitting beside a plate of stewed venison greeted his eyes.

Eagerly he set into devouring the steaming dish. At that moment an arm reached over his shoulder and a large helping of brander-berry sauce was applied to his venison. He looked up.

"Nayrod?" he asked in astonishment, "Is

that you?" Naryod had been his old tutor and bondservant, who had taught Scav in his childhood. Where had he been all these years? It had been so long since he'd seen the servant's weathered face. Scav couldn't help but stare at him.

"Evenin' Sir" Nayrod replied, "Your mother will be down shortly."

"Mother?" Scav thought, "What's going on here?" His mother had died giving birth to Andos. Had Nayrod been filching the Orluian brandy again? He was about to begin eating again when a familiar voice rang out.

"Scav you little bastard! Can't you wait for the rest of us before you start stuffing your belly?"

Scav looked up startled. "Andos?"

Sure enough it was his younger brother. Scav suddenly went pale and dropped his fork. Andos had been missing for years, ever since his journey to the Kalinor on Scav's behalf. So sure was the family that Andos was dead that his empty funeral clothes had been placed in the family tomb and sealed.

He turned to Nayrod. Now he remembered. Nayrod had suffered a heart attack one night when Scav was only twelve. Everyone had been afraid to inform Scav and it had been weeks before he learned the truth.

Scav looked about the table closely. He recognized things now. This was the family table and he was in the Sagenthor Villa outside of Soult Tet. He looked toward the head of the table where his father's huge black-elm chair sat empty. Before it a large alabaster soup bowl sat waiting. Scav closed his eyes and looked again. The bowl was spattered with thick streams of blood and small rivelets of crimson were streaming down the sides onto the white-lace beneath it.

Suddenly, a large wolf leapt into his father's chair and began to lap up the blood.

Scav woke up screaming. He tried to get to his feet and run but fell back in agony. His neck felt as though a red-hot bracer had been placed

about it. As he lie in agony he became aware of a host of other pains all about his body.

Wrestling with his thoughts he began to remember the wolves. He opened his eyes and looked around him. He was in a dark, warm room. There was a terrible stench, one of dead flesh and urine. But there was also the smell of roast venison. His knotted stomach twitched at the prospect of a meal. Turning his head he noticed a low fire burning in a stone fireplace, over it a side of venison was being licked by the flames.

He wet his lips. He couldn't remember the last time he had eaten meat. Looking about him he found that he was laying on a bed made of furs and skins piled in a crude wooden frame. He gazed down at his legs and held up his injured arm. The wounds were crudely dressed with large strips of stained cloth. Apparently someone had rescued him. But who?

Straining his neck to look about the room, Scav determined he was in a one room-cabin. The walls were constructed of logs which were still covered with bark and packed with mud. Along one wall an assortment of shelves were littered with a wide variety of glass bottles and vials. One shelf was crammed with parchments, scrolls and books, arranged in a haphazard manner.

Assured that he was alone, Scav tried once again to get up. He grimaced in pain and quickly forgot the notion. He was just about to call out when the door swung open.

In the doorway, silhouetted against an over-cast sky, a tall robed figure paused for several moments. He was carrying a large leather satchel across one shoulder and an enormous twisted staff in his right hand. The man entered slowly and closed the door. Scav strained his eyes to get a better look. He was an elderly man, very tall and thin with a balding head and a full flowing beard of grey. The stranger hung the bag on an iron nail by the door and set down his staff. Turning, he noticed Scav's attentive eyes.

Scav was trying to build up the nerve to

say something when the man approached him. Moving over to the side of his pallet he reached out and placed a large calloused palm on Scav's forehead.

"You dressed my wounds?" asked Scav nervously, "I want to thank..."

"Your fever's broken. I think you just might live after all," the old man interrupted.

He turned and moved toward the fire. Picking up a clay dish he pulled a piece of venison from the spit and brought it back to Scav.

"You'd better eat this. I've been nursing you on grous'nader stew for days now. You'll need to stoke up your strength."

Scav thanked him and grabbed the meat. He began to devour the venison at a fevered pitch. After several moments of gorging himself, he looked up toward the old man.

"You killed the wolves?"

The old man shook his head, "I wouldn't know how to kill a sturm'wolf."

"Then who?"

The old man pulled out a bone pipe from his robes and began to fill it with pipe-weed. "Has'Faur the Dralch brought you here about a week back. He's a mute. Couldn't tell me what had happened, but it was very obvious from your wounds."

Scav took another bite of venison. He'd seen Dralch before. They were large brutish looking creatures. They were somewhat human in appearance but larger and sheathed with incredible muscles. All the ones he'd encountered were slaves in the capital city of Soult Tet. He'd seen them working on the roads and mining stone in the quarries. Once he had seen a pair of Dralch fight to the death in the arena.

The Dralch called themselves the Di'ndryl and lived in the rocky hinterlands of the Northern Isles. Scav knew little else about them except that the children's stories of his youth were filled with evil Dralches who stalked young children and hid them away in their forest lairs.

"A dralch up here?" he finally asked, "I owe my life to a dralch?"

The old man smiled and took a deep draw from his pipe. "Has'Faur has lived in the Galons for years. Probably a runaway. He bears a slave's mark. Takes skins every winter and brings them to me. I sell them in Talert every spring and we split the coin."

Scav finished off the last of the venison and handed the old man the bowl. "By the way my name is Sca..." He caught himself and cursed his stupidity, "My name is Scanton"

The old man chuckled over the stem of his pipe. "Put your mind to ease boy. I don't care who you are. As for me, my name is Kandraas. And that is my real name."

He stood and returned to the fire throwing another log on the flames. "Very few go by their real names in the Galons. Everyone up here has reason to be running or hiding from someone. They say that only wolf hunters and outlaws live in the Galons."

He returned and seated himself, "I've little to offer but a roof to put off the rain and some fresh meat when Has'Faur decides to come around." He paused and pointed at Scav with his pipe. "But before you start believing that I'm good of heart and charitable you'd best know the truth. Has'Faur is paying me handsomely to play nurse-maid to you. I suggested burying you the moment I saw you, but he wouldn't have it."

Scav stared at Kandraas in disbelief, "He's paying? You mean to tell me that he's paying you to make me well?"

Kandraas nodded. "I've never understood the Dralch, leastwise Has'Faur. But his gold is as yellow as any man's."

"Well regardless of who's paying who....I am grateful."

"Don't start believing Has'Faur's a bright copper either!" said Kandraas sternly, "He's got a black spot or two. If he's dipping his gold to help you, you can be sure there's a wrinkle in it."

Scav was becoming very concerned now. "What are you trying to say?"

The old man shrugged. "I'm not saying anything. When someone offers you free wine, be prepared to get a taste of vinegar, that's all."

Scav wondered at what the old man said. What would a runaway Dralch have to gain by keeping him alive?

"Well, I plan to be long gone by the time he shows up!" said Scav.

Kandraas smiled, "You think so? You might be able to hobble to the privy in a few days or so," he shook his head in amusement, "but you can grow a beard that would scratch your chest before you could walk out of these hills."

Scav shook his head, "No, I must be in Talert as soon as possible. I'm already dangerously late."

Kandraas leaned back in his chair and puffed his pipe. "Come spring, I can take you with me when I go in to sell my skins."

Scav shook his head again, "No, I must go as soon as possible. I'll pay you! Twice what you would make in the spring!"

Kandraas smiled, "Son, it's a two-week journey round trip to Talert. I would either catch

the winter storms going or coming and I'm too old and wise to let that happen to myself. Besides I searched you very thoroughly and you haven't a copper to offer."

"I have friends in Talert. They'll gladly pay whatever I ask!"

Kandraas stood to his feet and stretched, "I'm sorry lad. You'll have to wait until spring unless you find it in yourself to walk out of here. Either way, Has'Faur might have something to say about it."

Scav closed his eyes. He couldn't wait for two months in this stinkhole. Falsnare and the others would surely be gone by then.

Kandraas moved over to a small pallet in the corner of the room and sat on it's edge. Before lying down he looked toward Scav and shook his head. "Was damned foolish to be traveling the Galons alone son. Damned foolish"

Scav closed his eyes and moaned in despair. He never imagined that fulfilling an oracle would cause a man so much grief.

Next Issue:
Thorns and Briars



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SHADIS

INTERVIEWS

Not too long ago Larry Niven and Steven Barnes released the sequel to the cult-classic *Dream Park*. The *Barsoom Project* takes place seven years after the adventure of *Dream Park*. Many of the same characters are back and once again there is trouble in *Dream Park*. The *Dream Park* series is set in a future where technology in holograms and computer sciences has enabled professional roleplayers to act out adventures in simulated environments.

I was glancing through the Afterword of the *Barsoom Project* and was surprised to discover that a group in Colorado had been established based on the *International Fantasy Gaming Society (IFGS)* of the *Dream Park* Series. According to Larry Niven, the group sponsored live-action, costumed role-playing adventures. Wanting to know more I contacted Paul Hayes, president of IFGS to find out more. Here's what I learned.

SHADIS: *A lot of readers have no idea what IFGS is all about. Can you explain it?*

HAYES: The International Fantasy Gaming Society was spawned in 1981 off the original book *Dream Park* by Larry Niven and Steven Barnes. People with the organization thought it would be an entertaining thing; live-scale role-playing events. Things kind of evolved from that.

What we do during the year is run games that are similar to table-top fantasy-role-playing games but we concentrate on live action. We use padded weapons for combat. We have an entire rule system for various character classes of which we have eight different ones. We run adventures using this system.

SHADIS: *How many members do you currently have involved with IFGS?*

HAYES: Currently we have about 400 members, but we have participation of over a thousand people per year.

SHADIS: *If our readers were interested in joining IFGS, how would they go about it?*

HAYES: The easiest way to do it would be to write to IFGS, P.O. Box 3555, Boulder Colorado 80307-3555. We will send them our literature describing the organization, a member-

ship form and what they would need to do to get involved.

SHADIS: *I understand that you have chapters across the country. How many do you presently have?*

HAYES: Presently we have four chapters in the Colorado area -- Denver, Boulder and Colorado Springs, as well as Dallas, Texas. We have chapters being started in Atlanta, Georgia, Norman,

FOCUS: I.F.G.S



SHADIS INTERVIEWS

Oklahoma; Boston, Mass; Los Angeles, California; and Columbus, Ohio. We have a lot of response from other areas of the country and I expect we'll start chapters in Florida, New York and the Washington/Oregon area.

SHADIS: *If someone was interested in starting a chapter in their own area, what would be the best way to pursue it?*

HAYES: Well, they should contact us. We keep a database with the names of everyone who has expressed interest from different areas of the country. After being contacted, we would forward the names of people from the same area and send some advice on how to reach others.

SHADIS: *What sort of RPG system are you using to moderate your games?*

HAYES: We designed it ourselves. It has the common elements, such as magic-user classes and fighters etc. We are currently using a version produced about a year ago, which was based on one we developed about three years prior.

SHADIS: *Can you briefly explain how a typical live-action adventure is run?*

HAYES: Typically it is very similar to table-top RPGs in terms of the scenarios. There are some things that work much better and others that don't work well at all. A typical plot is that someone hires a group of adventurers to recover some item.

During the adventure, the group may encounter some bandits who live along the road. They don't have anything to do with the main plot but happen to live in the area. They may encounter friendly town folk where they can receive help and buy supplies. They could meet an old hermit in the woods, who knows that the people they are looking for live on a mountain nearby.

Eventually, they are going to encounter the bad guys of the scenario. Typically a fight will break out, or the group will sneak in and take the item. Fighting is handled without dice or with any chance determination for hits except for missile fire which is handled with a percentage-to-hit system

based on character class.

Different classes inflict different amounts of damage and have access to different weaponry. Fights continue until one side surrenders or is eliminated. They then retrieve the item and wrap things up.

SHADIS: *I'm intrigued by the whole idea. Are the adventures actually played on location? It sounds like you actually go out into the mountains and set these things up.*

HAYES: Yes, we normally play in a rural setting. One of the Colorado settings we frequently use is a private ranch that we lease. Other places we've used have been public parks, national forests, etc. We've used junior high schools for some events, but typically it's the rural setting.

SHADIS: *What are some of the plans for IFGS in the future?*

HAYES: We have A LOT OF PLANS. A big part of it is that we want to keep growing and receive more recognition. We want to align ourselves with various non-profit groups. Role playing in general is a very good form of therapy.

Something we've been wanting to do is get involved in helping people such as delinquents or handicapped people. We'd like to get involved with therapists in writing scenarios designed to help such people. I think that teamwork is an incredible part of the gaming environment and it can be very useful as therapy. Taking on the role of someone else for a few hours in a safe environment can do a lot to relieve anger, frustration etc. And you can do this without harming anyone or using violence.

Because it's an environment that produces a lot of teamwork, we would like to align ourselves with some corporations that want to develop a sense of teamwork in their upper echelons. We've talked about a lot of other things along that line. But primarily we want to entertain. Games are our main job. It's what we do well.

SHADIS: *Very commendable goals. With all the bad press on RPGs I think it's great*

that someone is focusing on some of the positive factors of role playing.

HAYES: Yes, we definitely want to stress the benefits of role playing. We haven't had any problems with that sort of badpress but we are aware of it. It's something that we are aware of and want to address. We'd certainly like to see role-playing get the recognition it deserves.

SHADIS: *What kind of response have you been getting from the gaming community at large?*

HAYES: Actually the response has been very positive, almost uniformly. The chapter we have in Los Angeles spawned from a gaming group that was already in existence, the *Santa Fe Gamer's Association*. A large part of the base we have in the Denver and Boulder Colorado area rose from various gaming groups in those areas. Also, various hobby stores which sell gaming equipment have been sources of support and of contacting new members. So the response from gamers has been very positive. We have very little negative response from people who play the table-top versions. They tend to think that live-action role-playing would be a lot of fun and they usually find they are right.

SHADIS: *What age groups are you finding as the majority of your members?*

HAYES: The age groups are widely varied. I think a lot has to do with what area of the country you're talking about. We've had children as young as six or seven years of age participating. We've had people as old as sixty or seventy participating as well as whole families. We've had doctors, lawyers, students, etc. become involved; pretty much the whole gambit.

We have people from the technical professions involved as well as those you would consider quite ordinary.

SHADIS: *How about participation by women gamers?*

HAYES: I would say our ratio of women to men is about one-third to two-thirds. I believe that in table-top RPGs the ratio runs about 1 to 10.

SHADIS: *Is there any sort of rating system within IFGS for distinguishing the top players?*

HAYES: No, we haven't established a rating system as such. We have a system for keeping track of experience points for characters to keep track of what levels players are at. We also provide a point system for players who are playing a role rather than an on-going character, such as the actors who play the NPCs in an adventure. That could be used as a rating system to a certain degree. This gives them the opportunity to participate in some behind-the-scenes activities because they've devoted a lot of time and work already. But we don't have a system that would allow us to say that 'John Doe' was rated number one.

SHADIS: *Are the adventures strictly fantasy oriented?*

HAYES: We have in the works rules for espionage, which are being playtested right now. We've been researching science-fiction rules as well as an Old West system.

We just haven't decided if there is a demand for those environments out there yet.

SHADIS: *I've been hearing a lot of rumors about plans for the Dream Park series, such as a movie, more novels etc. Any information on these?*

HAYES: We are not involved with those aspects. We have a good relationship with Larry Niven and Steven Barnes and they've told us of some exciting things in the works.

They've incorporated the *Dream Park Corporation*. They've made plans to open a Dream Park; an 'entertainment park' if you will. I don't have a location on it but they plan to do a groundbreaking sometime in 1991.

Paul Hayes was kind enough to forward a good bit of material on his organization including the IFGS Fantasy Rules which is this issue's subject for 'In the Spotlight'.

The Equalizer

A New AD&D® Character Class

By Lew Herring

Lashing on his sword, Chandell doused the fire and moved quickly out of camp. This was a daring mission; to sneak into the orc encampment where his brother Rathvar was prisoner and get out alive. The orcs would not be expecting an attack, but he knew Rathvar was counting on him.

These thoughts raced through his mind as he quietly stole through the heavy brush. Spotting the fires from the orc camp alerted him and he dove for cover just as an orc patrol passed within arms reach of him. From his vantage point outside of camp, Chandell saw a huge ogre come from a tent and start giving orders to an orc squad. He watched the orcs leave and quickly formed a plan of attack.

Leaving his hiding place, Chandell worked his way through the woods until he was behind the tent the ogre was in. Making a mad dash across a small clearing, Chandell dove under the tent flap and rolled to his feet. The ogre, caught offguard, was not able to avoid the charm-monster spell Chandell was casting upon him and immediately fell under his control. Chandell moved to the mouth of the tent and seeing that all was clear began praying to Athena, Goddess of Wisdom, for the power to cast the tongues spell on himself. The spell would allow him to communicate with the ogre.

"Quickly, where is your prisoner?" asked

Chandell. The ogre, under the influence of the charm answered, "He's tied in the tent in the middle of camp." Chandell grabbed the ogre and pulled him close. "Now remember, you're my friend and you are going to help me. Let's go." He pushed the ogre out of the tent and pulled the hood of his cloak down over his face.

It was nearly four a.m. and the camp was quiet as the ogre led Chandell to a tent and stopped. Chandell's heart was pounding furiously as he whispered, "Is the prisoner in here?" The ogre grunted a yes. In the heat of the moment, he ripped the tent flap open and saw two orc guards standing over his bound brother. The surprised orcs rushed him, their swords biting deeply into Chandell's unarmored body. Pulling his sword, he dropped one orc but the other one ran and yelled for help. Chandell began unttying Rathvar asking, "Can you walk?"

"I can walk and fight if you give me a weapon," answered Rathvar.

Outside the tent, Rathvar picked up the dead orc's sword and looked at the ogre. "Who's this?" he asked. Chandell smiled and said "He was my escort, but if we get out of here quickly we won't be needing him." Rushing through the camp, the sound of the pursuing orcs made the two run even harder. Crashing into the darkness of the woods, Chandell stopped and began casting a spell of confusion. Rathvar readied himself, knowing that those orcs which es-



caped the confusion would meet his and Chandell's blades. The orcs, when hit by the spell, began wandering off. Two were so dazed they began fighting each other. Still, three orcs rushed the brothers, but after a fierce battle, only Rathvar and Chandell were standing. Chandell hugged his brother and said, "Let's go home."

Who was that spellcasting warrior? Was he a weird mutant from space or some twisted vision of a Dungeon Master after an all night party? Neither, it's *The Equalizer*. Based upon the banished-to-syndication TV show, the Equalizer, is a unique, new character class that will provide players great role-playing opportunities. The Equalizer

TV show, starred Edward Woodward as do-gooder for hire Robert McCall. McCall was an ex-field agent, who while quite handy with a weapon, had a whole bag of tricks up his sleeve. McCall also had a commanding presence about him that inspired loyalty and faith.

The equalizer is a product of the formula for creating new character classes in the *Dungeon Masters Guide, 2nd Edition*, pages 22 and 23. The class is a unique blend of abilities designed to equalize any condition. The equalizer fights as a warrior, casts wizard spells

of the enchantment/charm school of magic, casts the divination spells of a priest and hides and moves with the skill of a thief.

The equalizer is not a holy crusader, but is for hire to right wrongs, find the truth, and to bring justice to oppressed beings. Fighting injustice is tough work and clients must expect to pay a hefty fee. Once taking a mission, an equalizer will not stop until victorious or dead. The gold is impor-

tant, but the cause is paramount.

Proficiencies:

Grant the equalizer 4 initial slots, with an additional proficiency every 3 levels.

Ability requirements: *Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Dexterity: 9 Charisma: 16*

Prime requisites: *Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Dexterity.*

Races allowed: *Human*

Warrior Abilities:

The equalizer fights as a warrior and can use any weapon. Initial weapon-proficiency slots are three, with an additional slot coming every four levels. Equalizers do not specialize in weapons or

gain a warrior's bonus for exceptional strength or high constitution. Armor cannot be worn by an equalizer, as this would restrict the movements necessary for casting wizard's spells.

Wizard Abilities:

A high charisma, study, and research allow the equalizer to cast wizard spells of the enchantment/charm school of magic. Examples of these spells are: hold person, confusion, charm monster, enchanted weapon, and mass suggestion. The complete list of these spells are in appendix 5 of the *Player's Handbook, 2nd Edition*. The

equalizer cannot use magic items restricted to the wizard class.

Priest Abilities:

The equalizer believes in justice and fair-play. To help achieve these ends, the equalizer worships a deity of wisdom, knowledge, or justice. The deity grants access to the spells from the sphere of divination. Examples of these spells are: detect magic, find traps, detect lie, and tongues.

Equalizer Experience Levels			
Level	Equalizer 1	Equalizer 2*	Hit Dice(D8)
1	0	0	1
2	1,800	2,000	2
3	3,600	4,000	3
4	7,200	8,000	4
5	18,000	20,000	5
6	36,000	40,000	6
7	72,000	80,000	7
8	135,000	150,000	8
9	252,000	280,000	9
10	522,000	580,000	9+2
11	792,000	880,000	9+4
12	1,062,000	1,180,000	9+6
13	1,332,000	1,480,000	9+8
14	1,602,000	1,780,000	9+10
15	1,872,000	2,080,000	9+12
16	2,142,000	2,380,000	9+14
17	2,412,000	2,680,000	9+16
18	2,682,000	2,980,000	9+18
19	2,952,000	3,280,000	9+20
20	3,222,000	3,580,000	9+22

*Experience levels if using non-weapon proficiencies.

The Equalizer

All divination spells are in appendix 6 of the *Player's Handbook, 2nd Edition*. An equalizer cannot turn undead or use magic items restricted to the priest class.

Thief Abilities:

Hiding in shadows, moving silently, and hearing noises are skills the equalizer has to work effectively in the underworld. These talents are not only for surveillance, but also for survival. The percentage chance for each ability is in the *Dungeon Master's Guide 2nd Edition*, page 23, table 19.

Restrictions:

The ideals of truth, justice, and fair play limit the equalizer to a good alignment. Should an

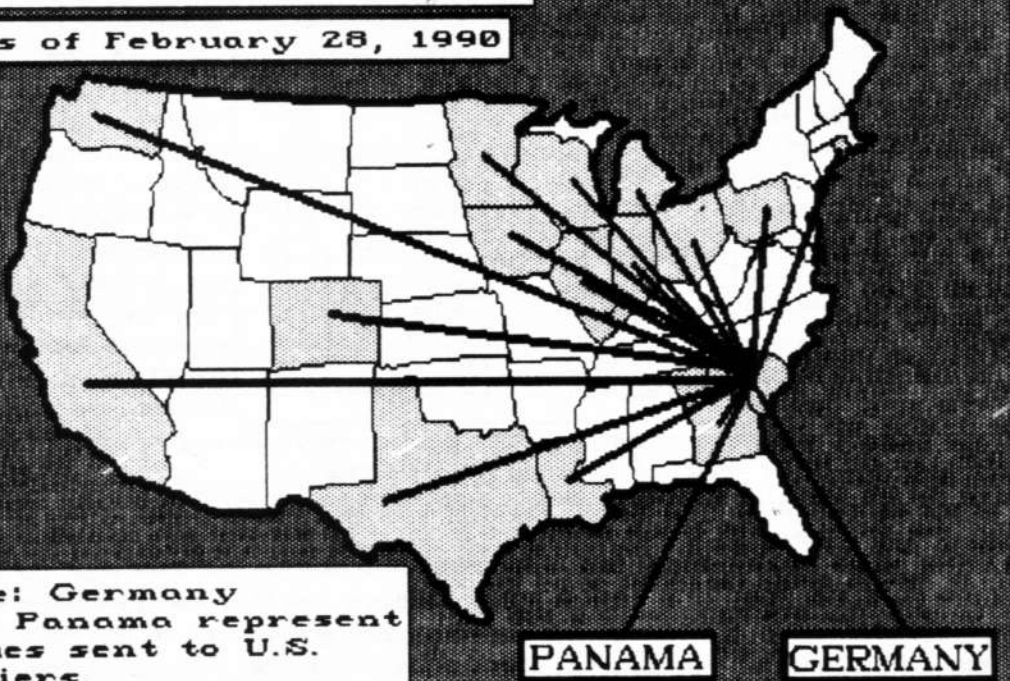
equalizer become aware of an act of injustice and take no steps to remedy the situation, level advancement halts and cannot resume until justice prevails. The equalizer must donate 10% of all monetary gain to needy causes.

Successfully playing the equalizer demands an experienced role-player. The class is not overly powerful, yet has many skills to apply and can be a dynamic party player. There are many areas left open for each dungeon master to alter the equalizer to fit an individual campaign. Just remember, if you've got trouble and need a friend, call the Equalizer.

* AD&D, Advanced Dungeons and Dragons, The Player's Handbook and The Dungeon Master's Guide are trademarks for TSR's Fantasy Role-playing game.

SHADIS DISTRIBUTION

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PANAMA

GERMANY

The Pitfalls of Playing an Evil Character



By Frank R. VanHoose

Many players seem to have problems running evil characters. The general tendency is for evil characters to disrupt the campaign with such actions as backstabbing fellow players or bringing an undue amount of problems into the game. Alignments are meant to define a character's view of the world and how he reacts in it. It doesn't mean he hasn't the ability or desire to form friendships or have a sense of loyalty to those friends. Nor does it mean he doesn't have the intelligence or cunning to cooperate with others in order to further his own interests. Frank runs one of the best evil characters that I've had the occasion to play with. In fact, after several months of running this character, no one else in the group knew his character was evil. All of his evil deeds were done behind the backs of others.

We were discussing the disruptive problems of evil characters and he decided to investigate further. JRB

How many of you have seen a gaming session or a whole campaign disrupted by one player with an "evil" character who insists on stealing from members of his own party, or backstabbing anyone he chooses over a small slight? Many players seem to feel that playing an "evil" character absolves them of any responsibility whatsoever. Others feel because their characters are "evil" they are forced to play them in a manner leading to distrust and dissension within the party.

I happen to have an acquaintance who is highly placed in the thief's guild of Soult Tet. I decided to speak to him about the effects of having an irresponsible evil thief in an adventuring party. His name is Prawyr Borstin.

Q: *Prawyr, you're a very experienced thief from what I hear. Is that true?*

A: Well, I've been in the trade since I was a young whelp roaming the streets of West Fork, stealing whatever I could to keep alive.

Evil Characters

Q: Have you always been on your own or did you ever team up with someone?

A: I had a few friends I used to hit around with. Being on your own sure gives you a bigger share of the spoils but limits the size of the job you can pull. There's sure times when it's nice to have companions.

Q: Have you ever been in a group where one or more members had an evil alignment?

A: Every group I was in had one. I ain't no candidate for sainthood myself, you know. But there's different shades of what people call evil, just like there's different kinds of everything else.

Q: Ok. So let me rephrase that. Have you ever been with a party that had an evil member who felt that being evil was a license to do just about whatever he wanted regardless of how it affected the whole group?

A: More'n once. But the one that sticks out in my mind was the time me and ten good men got together to hunt for an old Haagan tomb that's supposed to be somewhere southeast of Ventel.

Q: Sounds interesting, go on and tell us about it.

A: Well, after we got our supplies and animals we set out from Soult Tet to Ventel. Ventel, that's a little muddy town to the northeast of here. We made good time and didn't have any problems for about a month. Then one night, while he was supposed to be on guard, Kish (a pretty good thief but not the kind of man you would want at your back), decided to sneak off and rob a merchant's caravan we'd passed earlier in the day.

Kish would be the kind you're asking about. He didn't have nothing on his mind except how he was going to get ahead.

Well, he took off, leaving the camp unguarded and while he was gone a bunch of Sarlangan cutthroats snuck in and stole half our mounts and most of our supplies. While Kish was looting the merchant's camp, the bastard did something that roused the whole camp.

So here he comes running straight back to

us with a horde of angry merchants hot on his heels. We scrambled out of our blankets and ran into the woods to hide, grabbing what we could lay our hands on as we went.

The guards tore up our camp and took the rest of our supplies. We were all pretty pissed with Kish. Here we were, stuck out in the woods with next to no food, and no mounts. All around us a mob of unhappy merchants were beating the bushes for us. What was worse, the merchants managed to locate an Imperial patrol further down the road and had the soldiers out in the thicket looking for us. We decided then and there that old Kish was gonna pay for all our troubles out of his share of whatever we got when found that tomb.

Well, we struggled our way to a little village and got some more supplies and animals and went on to Ventel. We laid up with the Black Thorns there. They ain't rightly a thief's guild but they own that town. They got some arrangement with the local Vard'gra and pretty well do as they please. Lately, though, I been hearing stories about somebody giving them some grief. Well, they're gonna hafta be pretty tough characters if they expect to move in on the Black Thorns.

After we rested, we took off southeast into the forest looking for the landmarks that were supposed to lead us to the tomb. We didn't have any luck, but plenty of problems for about a week. Then one night, Kish tripped over a rock and dropped his pack. A seam came undone and let a bunch of jewels and gold coins spill out.

Seem's ole Kish had helped himself to some of the Black Thorns treasures before we left. We could understand his reluctance to share with the rest of us, 'cause now he had give us a bad name with the Thorns who had undoubtedly put a death warrant on our heads by then. That meant we couldn't go back to Ventel to rest up and get resupplied. Well, we cursed him some and made up our minds to keep a good eye on him in the future. If it had been up to me, I would have put him under right then and there.

About two days after that, we came on a small band of Sarlangans and decided to rob them since we outnumbered them. We jumped out of the bushes with drawn swords but those Sarlangans didn't blink an eye.

They just whipped out their own blades and set into us. It didn't take long for us to cut them all down and with only a little cut here and there for our efforts.

We all made out pretty well from that fight. We got a fair amount of gold and several horses and Lor'sta Fran found a Sarlangan shortsword that was something special. Somebody with a special skill in metal and swords had made that one.

Now, Kish wanted that sword pretty bad. He argued that Lor'sta didn't need it, 'cause he had a big two-handed blade that'd take a man apart in two pieces just like he was nothing.

Lor'sta and the rest of us felt like he'd found it and it was his'n to do with as he liked. Kish argued a lot, but finally he gave in and we thought the matter was settled.

Next morning, we found out differently. We found Lor'sta in his blankets with his throat sliced open. When we looked in his pack we found that special shortsword was gone. Three of us wrestled Kish down and held him while his pack was searched. Sure enough, hidden in the bottom, under his gear, we found that sword.

The party was split about what should be done with Kish. Some wanted to use that fancy sword to open him up like a gutted fish and leave him for the death-birds. Some of the others wanted to take all his stuff and leave him naked in the woods for the Sarlangans to find. 'Bout the only thing we agreed on was none of us trusted him at our backs anymore. Well, with Lor'sta dead, that cut us down to nine and if we killed Kish, it'd leave us with only eight. We decided to let Kish

live, but we kept all his weapons and made him ride point. We figured if anybody got ambushed or caught in a trap, Kish'd be the best one for it.

Kish, he was better than we gave him credit for. He had a dagger hid out somewhere and next night, he cut the guard's throat and stole the map to the tomb out of my bags, taking off on his own.

When we woke up the next morning there was only seven of us left and no map to guide

us. We packed up and with me leading the way, ('cause I was the best tracker), we took off after Kish, determined to make him suffer. What we was going to do to him when we caught him wasn't going to be pretty, but would take care of the traitorous little bastard for good.

It took us three days to catch up to Kish. He was good at hiding his tracks and we couldn't make good time. It didn't make a difference to



Evil Characters

Kish though, 'cause the Sarlangans had caught him about two days before we did. What them Sarlangans had done to that boy made what we had planned for him look downright merciful. Not that we shed any tears for him, but after the Sarlangans had their fun, they'd taken everything he had including our map.

Wasn't no point in us going any further. From the tracks around what was left of Kish there must have been over a hundred Sarlangans in the group that did for him. We sure didn't want any part of them. Besides, without a map our chances at finding that tomb were slim at best. We just turned around and headed back west. Since we couldn't go back through Ventel 'cause of Kish's thievery, we struck out straight west hoping to hit a road. It took us nearly a month to get to any kind of town and we'd lost another three of our men by the time we got there.

Now, that Haagan tomb's still out there

somewhere. Course Kish cost me my chance to ever find it. Only the gods know where or if that map'll ever show up again. I'll tell you son, if you ever get in a group with someone like Kish, go ahead and cut his throat first thing. It'll save everybody a lot of grief in the long run.

Q: *Thanks Prawyr. I'm sure a lot of people will keep Kish's story in mind when they go to form a party and hit the trail.*

Does the story about Kish sound familiar? A campaign was ruined and a party destroyed through an unwillingness to cooperate and because of an overabundance of self interest. Remember, RPGs are meant to be fun. That means fun for everyone involved. By using your imagination and common sense I'm sure you can find ways to play an evil character that are entertaining, without being disruptive to the campaign. There's no reason that each session cannot be an enjoyable experience for everyone involved.



FROM THE SCROLLS OF GREYTAR

By Jolly R. Blackburn



Greetings young students,

Mr. Vanhooose and Mr. Felton treated me to a marvelous dinner the other-night after which we sat about a roaring fire, sharing a keg of my best Orluian-brand and telling stories.

The Shriek has been foremost on our minds recently, and came up during the course of the evening conversation more than once.

I had been going through my collection of scrolls the previous day and came across Eslain Sular's "Forge of the Gods", which is a history of Soult Tet written by Sular just after the fall of the Forcaran Empire.

Originally the work was in three volumes. However when the Sageem Council of Censors convened in the year 94 TR, the book was banned and all existing volumes were ordered to be burned. There has never been a satisfactory answer as to why the books were condemned, but I suspect the Bin'Parta was disturbed by portions of the work concerning the political intrigues of the senate.

However, several scribes of the Dervin-Kayarta (the Imperial Archives in Soult Tet) were appalled by the order and simply hid the material. The fragments I possess are from those hidden volumes. They were unearthed years later when an adjoining room was being added to the Archives. Unfortunately time and the elements destroyed much of the works. They passed through the hands of numerous private collectors and eventually I obtained them and returned them to the Archives where they are now highly treasured.

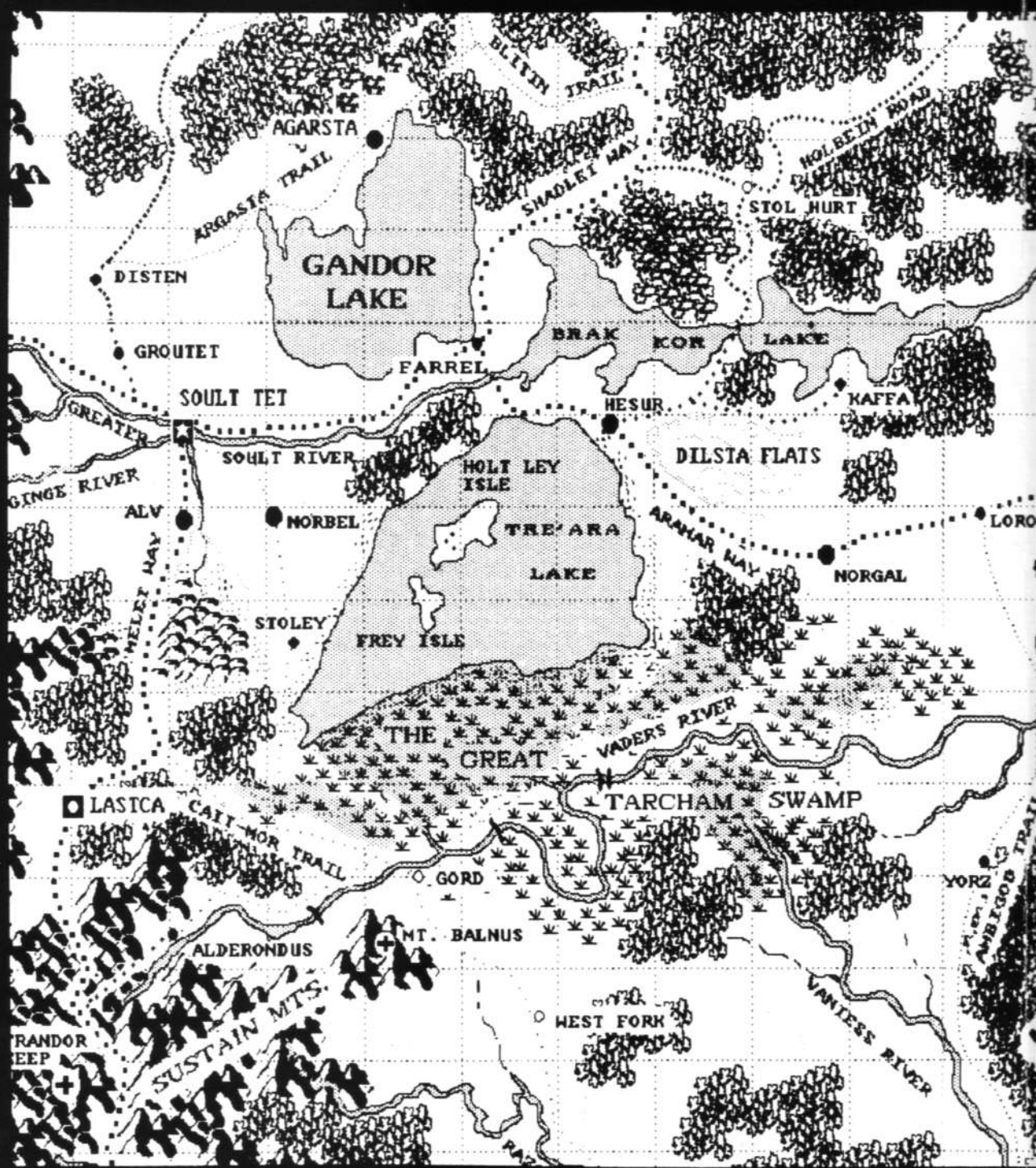
At any rate it had been several years since I had translated the fragments and I decided to reread my copy again. I was utterly amazed at the revelation. I had completely forgotten that the text dealt with what could only be the first mention of the Soult Tet Shriek on the written page.

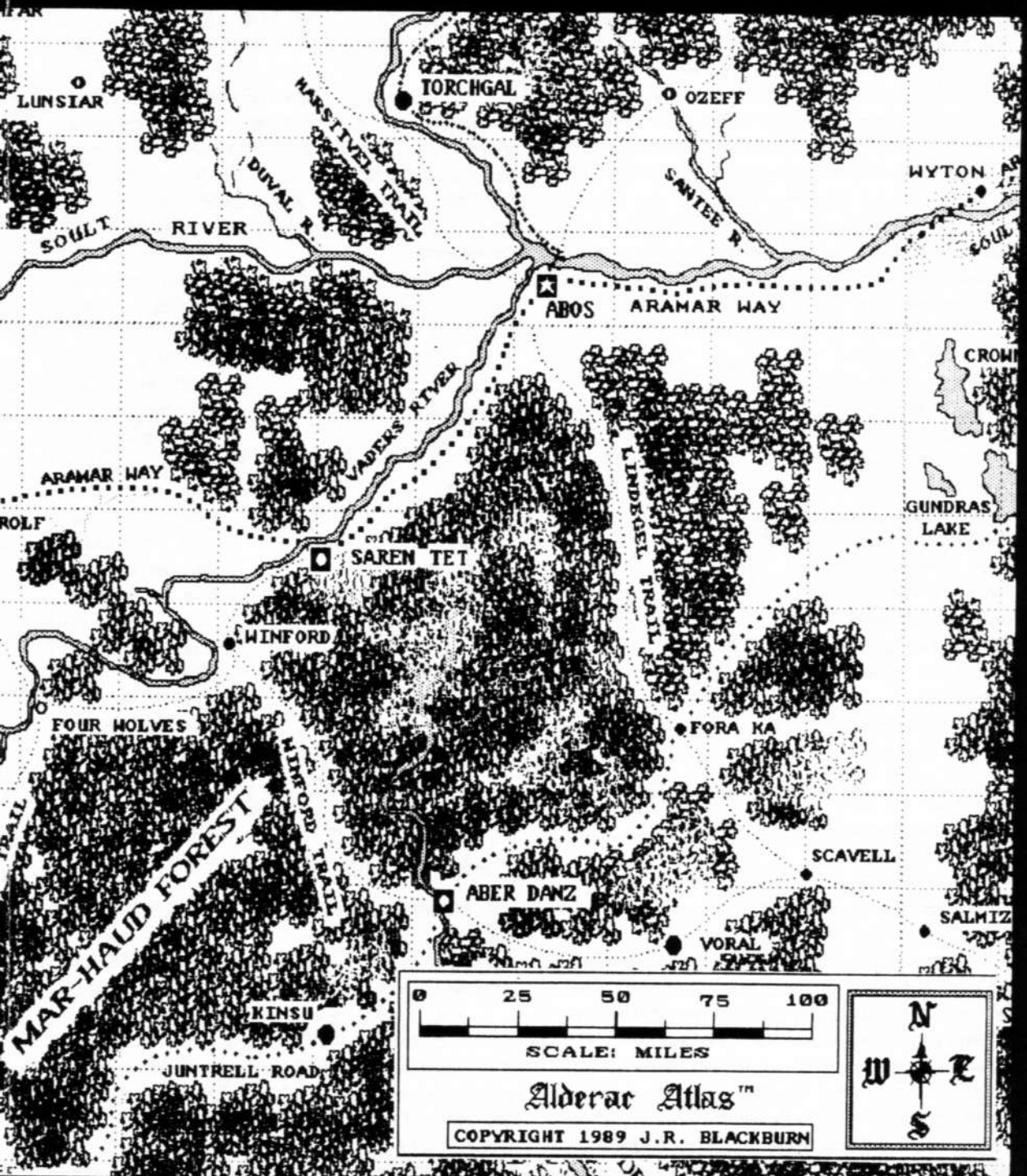
Here is what Eslain Sular had to say about it; (There are many portions missing. Where a fragment was missing '...' indicates a break in the text.

Volume I/Language OA
Lines 138-600

"...It came about that in the third reign of the Emperor Kageem, the Soult river flooded and overran it's banks. The lower quarter of the city was flooded under three to four measures of water and remained so for seven days. A multitude of buildings had their foundations swept away and the damage in the lower quarter was immense.

The Emperor ordered the Guards of the Imperial Roads, to secure the flooded areas and to prepare building walls as soon as the waters receded. The walls were to ensure against future catastrophies of the same nature. The expense of the wall....the citizens of the lower-quarter were outraged that they should pay for the wall and large crowds formed at the soldiers camp to protest. The Patrell of the camp forced several hundred citizens from the mob into labor on the very wall they had come to protest. As the months passed, the crowds faded and the wall was fastly





reaching completion. The Emperor now decided that a new bridge connecting Progression Way and Stone Point Street should be constructed. It was during this construction that a workman found an iron chest buried in the river clay. He managed to remove it from it's resting place and with the aid of several men drug it up from the mud.

A certain young captain who had been stationed at Fork Bend to supervise the rationing of brick and stone, discovered the workman's find and claimed it in the name of the Emperor. However greed apparently overcame the officer and when the chest had been safely transported to his tent he immediately sent for a black smith from a local smitty and ordered him to cut the chains which secured it.

After several hours of labor the smith finally achieved his task and was quickly sent away.

The captain slowly opened the chest. What lay inside the chest was not gold or precious stone, but some hideous creature trapped untold years before and buried beneath the Soult river. Now free, it released it's rage upon all it encountered. The captain was rent in two and several dozen guards outside the tent were likewise savagely maimed. Those who died were the fortunate ones. For those who encountered the beast and lived became in-

sane and no sense could be made from their wild babbling.

The creature was reported in and about the city for several nights and many victims were discovered. Then it disappeared into the forests and is only heard from occassionaly, normally on Flur'Mar, the days of ill-conception when it returns to the city and gorges itself on the blood of the innocent..."

The similarities to the Shriek are very startling, especially it's habit of killing on the Flur'mar. As to the origin of the chest and it's hideous contents one can only guess. I, myself have little doubt that the story is true.

Frank was asking me about the sturm-wolf. It seemed that he didn't believe the story I had related about my one encounter with a sturm-wolf.

I had related a story about a sturm-

wolf which had been brought into the city of Soult Tet to be killed in the Arena.

A drunken guard accepting the challenge of a bet, entered the wolf's cage in order to tie a red ribbon about it's neck. (The city guards have never been known for their wisdom.) The wolf made a quick mess of the guard and escaped it's cage.

Continued on page 54





Just Spoils For The Unjust

Criminal Justice in Fantasy Role-Playing

By Jolly R. Blackburn

"...And the purpose of these laws is this; to protect the citizen from those who would do him harm or unjustly deprive him of his property. More importantly, the law has been written down to uphold the Emperor who is the protector of the people. Anyone who stands against the law stands against the Emperor and against the people. Out of fear of the law, the wicked shall be held in check and the people safeguarded. It is the fear of punishment that restrains human wickedness."

From the Codex of Rehnus Sagenthor

Something that has been overlooked in RPGs for a long time is a detailed criminal justice system for fantasy milieu. Most of the packaged campaign worlds that I am familiar with offer very little in this regard besides some brief suggestions. Normally, a few paragraphs and some random tables are provided to deal out justice. That's a real shame. Any DM worth bearing the title is always looking for new avenues of role playing in every aspect of the game. Variety and conflict are what keep the players coming back. You would think that with character classes like the

thief and assassin being a major component of many RPGs, a detailed legal system would be mandatory.

One night, after running a very nasty session of city adventuring, I realized that my city's legal department was very lacking. I locked myself in my room, determined to correct the situation. I was tired of players walking about my world as if they owned the place and behaving as if they answered to no one. I was tired of fighters who picked fights with merchants and bullied tavern patrons, of thieves who went about picking pockets without a care in the world, unafraid of being caught and of wizards who used their magic in public for trivial tasks with little concern for the local citizenry's reaction.

In this article, we will first look at medieval legal systems to determine just what actions were considered crimes and what punishments were used to match the crime. This information will be used to build a model legal system for a fantasy milieu. With the system I will describe, you should be able to quickly build a criminal-justice system for any culture you have in your campaign.

Medieval Law

Most of us have always handled criminal justice in our campaigns by the "seat of our pants," using our familiarity with contemporary law and what little we've picked up by reading books and watching movies.

But medieval law was vastly different from our own and extremely diversified and complex. Laws and punishments were often a curious blend of tribal, religious and Roman laws which varied from community to community.

Medieval Europe comprised many different cultures and as such, it would not be feasible in this short space to describe all the various legal standards that were in use. Instead, I have chosen the Germanic system as a model. These laws were typical of most in use throughout Europe. In addition, they included some nasty twists and unique

punishments.

Types of Law

There are five basic types of legal systems that you should consider when building a criminal-justice system for your campaign:

1. **Statute Law.** These are the laws dictated by a state. They are normally recorded and stringently enforced by officials of the state; such as police forces, guards and patrols as well as a judicial body. This is the top end of the system; the formal law. It has a system for apprehending violators and rendering punishment. Statute law has the potential to either be extremely harsh in punishment or considerably fair and humane.

2. **Tribal Law.** These are also called 'folk laws' and are commonly passed down orally from generation to generation. These traditional laws are most often associated with barbarian tribes or non-human races. Within a state, a system of statute laws may be enforced, but often in isolated pockets of the population, it is the tribal laws which deal out justice. Punishment under such a system is normally carried out promptly, with little ceremony or deliberation.

3. **Religious Law.** These are often harder to define. If a state has an official religion, then the religious doctrines of that faith may dictate the nature of the statute laws. Religious beliefs will define just what is a crime and how appalling that crime is perceived to be. For example, in one kingdom, polygamy may be perfectly acceptable, while in another, it is an abomination and warrants death. For our purposes, we will define religious law as only the authority a religion/church has over its members.

4. **Mob Justice.** If a wrong-doer is apprehended by non-officials justice is often rendered quickly by the captors. The criminal is denied any official process of law and his guilt or innocence is decided by the mob. Often, a mob will render a punishment according to tribal or folk law. Mobs are commonly swayed by the emotion of the moment and a 'blood-lust' may override any compas-

sion the accused is hoping for.

5. Guild Laws/Regulations. I couldn't very well leave these out, since guilds had tremendous influence over the citizens of medieval Europe. Guilds were very powerful micro-states. A craftsman putting out shoddy work could be severely dealt with. Usually, a guild member violating a guild law was punished within the guild and turned over to the state for further prosecution, only if warranted. Confinement, mutilation, etc., would not be punishments within the realm of guild authority.

6. Military Law.

Primarily, only members of the military are subject to military law. Within occupied territories and frontier regions, the military is often the only form of official authority. Military justice will usually adhere to the Statute Laws of the state to which it belongs. Often, however, the military has its own system for dealing with wrongdoers and it often is very harsh.

Process of Law

A person apprehended for committing a crime could be passed through several of the legal systems mentioned above. For example, if a woodcutter is accused of putting out inferior work, the guild could find him guilty and ban him from further practice of his trade. The city, under statute law, could fine him 50 gp for selling the public false goods and his church may oust him for violating its dictates of honesty.

Types of Crime

There would seem to be no limit to the number and variation of crimes with which a character could find himself accused. What is considered a heinous crime in one culture, is quite acceptable in another. As such, the following list could never be complete.

I would like to point out that many of the crimes I have included are not likely to ever crop up in a fantasy-role-playing campaign. It didn't seem appropriate to eliminate them and I have included them to give a more thorough understanding of medieval law. Besides, just because a player would never think of committing infanticide doesn't mean he couldn't be falsely accused of such a crime.

Also, keep in mind that the following are historical examples taken from medieval Europe. In such a system, an unmarried couple guilty of fornication could be sentenced to death. But certainly not all cultures would have such a severe reaction.

I. Homicide

The definition of homicide was often hard to pin down in ancient times. In some cultures if one person killed another, no matter what the circumstances, he was guilty of murder. In other more enlightened cultures there were allowances for self-defense, and justifiable homicide.

A. Murder. Murder is a broad term. It is normally considered the taking of a human's life by another with intent or malice. However, in medieval times, even animals could be and were tried for murder.

B. Manslaughter. Manslaughter is the killing of another person without intent or malice. It is killing in self-defense or to protect one's property.

C. Infanticide. In medieval times this was a very common crime, mainly due to the harsh penalties for other crimes. Unwed mothers were faced with severe punishments if exposed and often killed the bastard child to conceal their crime.

D. Arson. Arson was considered a par



ticularly appalling form of murder, perhaps because it was such a cowardly crime and so indiscriminate. At any rate arson was ranked among the crimes of murder.

II. Assault

Assault of course is physical injury upon one person by another. There are various degrees. It could be anything from grabbing a woman by the wrist to breaking a chair over a bar-keep's head. Punishments varied in harshness often attempting to match the crime.

III. Larceny and Related Offenses

Larceny was the taking of another's property through violence, deceit, falsehood or abuse of one's power.

A. Theft. Thievery was classified into degrees based on the value of the property stolen. The punishment was set accordingly. Theft was normally defined as the taking of one's property without violence or the threat of violence. Thus pick-pockets and shoplifters would fall in this category.

B. Burglary. A more serious form of thievery. Involves the breaking of barriers or safeguards in order to steal. i.e. windows, doors, locks.

C. Robbery. Robbery was theft coupled with the use of violence or the threat of violence.

D. Embezzlement. Considered a very serious crime. Embezzlement was the taking of money by anyone trusted with another's money. These were normally treasurers, city officials, money-changers etc.

E. Falsification. A catch all term used to describe anyone who used deceit to enrich himself at the expense of others. They could be convicted under laws aimed at falsification. If a baker sold his rolls at a certain price and it was discovered his profit margins were too high he could be arrested.

F. Coinage Offences. This was the making coins with a false die. It also could also be defined as the minting of coins with low-grade metals with an official die. An official coin minter could

easily be tempted to substitute inferior metals in his product and pocket the real stuff.

G. Forgery. This was the making of false documents, use of false seals or the use of genuine seals and letters for unlawful purposes.

H. False Pretences. This is the use of false weights and measures and/or the making of false goods. Also includes cheating at gambling, bilking and pawn swindles.

IV. Sexual Offences

As stated before, many of the crimes listed should never come up in an RPG. The following are included to simply present a complete legal system.

A. Rape. Forcing sexual relations upon another person who is unwilling or deemed unable to make a moral decision. In the perception of morality in medieval times, rape was often associated only with women of good social standing, i.e. only virgins and widows could truly be raped. It was not likely that a man would be charged with rape if the woman was of questionable character. However, he was likely to be charged for fornication or adultery if the crime came to light. Ironically, in such a case, the victim could be charged as well.

B. Sodomy. Sodomy had broader connotations than in our modern usage. It referred to any sexual act that was not performed in the traditional manner.

C. Incest. This is certainly a universal taboo. Incest is considered to be among the most appalling crimes and the punishments are very severe.

D. Bigamy/Polygamy. In medieval Europe with it's Judeo-Christian influences, polygamy was a serious crime. Those guilty of polygamy were certainly guilty of adultery and fornication as well.

E. Adultery. Sexual relations between partners in which at least one of the partners is married to someone else. The crime was worse than fornication, for an 'innocent' spouse was vic

timized. In addition, the breaking of the marriage vows was considered an act against god.

F. Bestiality. Sexual relations between humans and animals.

V. Religious Offenses

A. Blasphemy. Abuse, reviling or defamation of the gods. Includes cursing and swearing as well.

B. Heresy. Heretics were persons who deviated from the normal traditions of a religion.

C. Sorcery. Many cultures view magic and its practitioners as the embodiment of evil. Magic-users in a fantasy milieu could very easily become the targets of persecution campaigns.

VI. Political Crimes

A. Treason. Any person who breeches his contract with his country is guilty of treason. This could entail plotting to overthrow the rulership, aiding an enemy, etc.

B. Duty of Loyalty. In medieval times each citizen was assumed to have a 'duty' to act and behave in a way that benefited the state. Those who failed to do their civic duties were dealt with. Bad-mouthing the King, refusing to help in civic projects etc., were evidence of not doing one's duty.

VII. Civil/Social Crimes

A. Ordinances/Regulations. Medieval Europe is famous for its cumbersome volumes of social laws and regulations. Almost every facet of one's life eventually became the subject of regulations.

There were laws dictating what colors one could wear, what style of shoes etc. Many laws were to enforce the distinction between the classes. If a commoner dressed beyond his means he would be punished swiftly.

One aspect of Medieval Law that is rarely applied to fantasy RPGs is the restrictions on travel. Citizens were not allowed to come and go as they pleased unless they had the approval of the council of the city they belonged to. One had to apply to the town council if one wanted to visit an-

other city. Often a deposit of money had to be left to ensure the traveler returned.

If a citizen wanted to move, he had to get permission and obtain notes declaring he owed no debts. Likewise, if someone wanted to become a citizen, a special tax had to be paid and an oath taken.

B. Conduct Codes, Morales. The dogma of religion compelled many to behave according to accepted doctrines. In addition it compelled people to ensure that their neighbors did likewise. Since the medieval church forbade such things as self-pride and extravagance, it became a crime for anyone to flaunt themselves or their wealth. Women's necklines, carriages, etc. became subject to the discretion of the law.

Types of Punishment

There was no shortage of imaginative minds in medieval times when it came to devising ways of punishing criminals. Many are morbid and quite shocking. That's exactly what they were designed to be. There was little notion of rehabilitative punishment behind the laws. The idea was to encourage obedience to the law out of fear.

1. Monetary. Monetary fines were perhaps the most humane form of punishment to come out of ancient times. The idea was that a wrong could be corrected by the criminal or his family by paying the victim or state an amount of gold or goods. Often, the fines themselves were quite beyond the means of the guilty party to pay and thus he was punished with severer penalties. All crimes including murder were at one time allowed to be settled with the payment of 'peace-money', Weirgeld, etc. This practice stemmed from tribal laws, where feuds often broke out over such crimes, eventually weakening the tribe. The money tribute settled things peacefully. The offender was literally buying peace.

2. Confinement. Deprivation of liberty has always been considered a prime deterrent to crime. It was sometimes imposed as an act of mercy in lieu of mutilation or death. More often, it was to

allow the criminal to suffer for his crimes. Sessions of torture, starvation and other abuses could be administered to the criminal behind closed doors. There was no concept of rehabilitation, the state had no interest in such noble ideas. The criminal had offended the state and a price had to be paid.

While some criminals were imprisoned for life terms, they did not sit idly in their cells counting the days. Hard labor, working for the state and sometimes for private contractors have always been associated with prisons. Some prisoners, however, were locked in dungeons and dark cells, never to see the light of day again.

In ancient times, however, imprisonment was not as prevalent as might be supposed. The punishment of pain and death was much more common. Imprisonment was more often used to hold offenders until a sentence was rendered or while awaiting execution.

3. Degradation. In all cultures a person's honor and pride is a very precious and well-guarded possession. Thus it is a common punishment to humiliate or degrade the wrong-doer.

A. Censure. Censure is a mild and very effective form of degradation. Fellow citizens were forbidden to talk with the censured criminal and he was forbidden to approach others. Censure could be administered for a short period of time or for life.

B. Recantation/Apology. The wrong-doer was forced to stand in a public place and recant or apologize in a loud voice any untruths, defamations etc. Often he was required to strike his offending mouth with a switch or board to signify the misdeed.

C. Clothes of Degradation. These were specially prepared items of clothing with symbols or markings indicating what crime the wearer had committed. Patches were devised with various meanings for prostitutes, thieves, liars, etc.

D. Procession of Shame. The wrong-doer was forced to march a prescribed distance in

public. Often he had to wear clothes or items of degradation. The procession involved carrying a heavy object such as a stone to a specific location. If he dropped the stone or was unable to complete the distance, then a harsher sentence was imposed. The procession was a 'trial-by-ordeal' so to speak. If a person's guilt was not certain, then the procession could decide if a harsher sentence was in order.

E. Defamation. Defamation was a legal means for somebody who had been wronged to seek retribution. A creditor unable to collect his money from a debtor, for example, could have handbills published, detailing the debtor's crimes and defaming his character. These were posted all about the town, making life miserable for the wrong-doer. This form of coercion would be preferable to a creditor over formal charges since a debtor would be unable to pay off his debt from prison.

F. Carrying Objects of Shame. While similar to clothes of degradation, these were normally objects made of iron and wood that symbolized the crime committed. The use of Masks of Shame were wide-spread. A woman who gossiped about her neighbors may be forced to wear a mask with a large mouth and wagging tongue. Those forced to carry or wear the objects, were made to do so in public places such as the market centers, and were subject to ridicule and harassment.

G. Ban on the Bearing of Arms or Social Accoutrements.

The right to bear arms was once a symbol of status. Also, there were certain articles of clothing which distinguished rank and social status. A wrong-doer could be denied the right to bear such items, thus depriving him of his status.

H. Public Servitude.

This differs from confinement and slavery. The purpose is to have the wrong-doer perform demeaning tasks such as waste removal in public view. Normally, it was a single task which could last from an hour to a full day, which upon

completion satisfied the sentence.

J. Loss of Rank/Status. In many medieval societies social rank was determined by a town council. If an upper-class citizen was found guilty of a crime, he could be stripped of his rank permanently or on a temporary basis.

K. Denial of Burial. Players may not see this as much of a threat, but it was a very important issue to most people of the medieval period. Denial of a religious ceremony and church burial was very much dreaded.

L. Pillory.

This is perhaps the most well known of the medieval forms of punishment. Almost every town had a pillory centrally located, where wrong-doers were brought to have punishment administered. The pillory had various forms, but

it was always located in the town's market place with an elevated prominence. The guilty were bound to the pillory during market days for public ridicule. Public beatings and executions often took place at the pillory.

M. Ducking. Ducking was used more as a degradation punishment than a physical one. It was often called the 'baker's baptism' because it

was common for bakers who cheated their customers to be ducked. The guilty person was strapped to a chair which was mounted on the end of a long wooden beam. With the use of a pivot, the chair was lowered into a body of water and the wrong-doer was 'ducked' a prescribed number of times.

N. Tarring and Feathering. This a long-

time favorite for practitioners of 'mob-justice'. It does, however, have a history as a statute punishment. Frequently, it was an additional punishment for condemned prisoners marching to the place of execution.

4. Torture.

Torture was universally utilized. It was applied for countless reasons. If the wrong-doer appeared to be unremorseful,



a few sessions of torture would influence him to act a little more repentant. Unfortunately, protesting of one's innocence was often seen as an unremorseful attitude.

Torture was also used to deter any further violations of the law. Sometimes it was inflicted to draw out confessions, obtain the names of coconspirators etc. The numerous forms of torture used

in medieval times are mind-boggling. I will make no attempts to list them all here, for I don't have the stomach to do so. I won't go into the various specifics of torture either, you all have vivid imaginations. Most are familiar with more infamous forms, splinters under the nails, hot wax dripping on a bound victim, etc.

In medieval law the common practice was to categorize torture into five degrees or categories;

I. The threat of torture. The accused was shown the instruments of torture and forced to witness others being tortured.

II. The accused is taken to the place of torture and administered 'painful-interrogation'.

III. The prisoner is stripped and bound while being tortured.

IV. The prisoner is left suspended by chains or rope by his hands or feet between torture sessions.

V. The prisoner is subjected to the elements while suspended as in IV.

The art of torture was considered a science and 'doctors' specializing in torture were employed by the State.

In many societies, certain persons were immune by law to the threat of torture. Children under 14 years of age, pregnant women, the bedridden, etc.

5. Mutilation

Mutilating punishments served two purposes. First, it identified the criminal to others. If he committed the same crime again, his past conviction would be known and it would go worse for him. It also served as a deterrent to others. Secondly, it was a form of compensation, a form of the 'eye-for-an-eye' rule. If a thief picked a pocket, cut off the offending hand, for example.

A. Blinding. This is the severest of the mutilation punishments. This was often rendered when a death sentence might have been warranted but a decision was made to have the wrong-doer suffer greatly for his crime. Or perhaps the criminal was immune to a death sentence by 'law', so

blinding became a loophole. Citizens were often forbidden to render aid to the blind-convict. No one was allowed to offer shelter, food etc.

B. Removal of the Hand. A frequent punishment for such crimes as theft, perjury, assault, cheating at gambling, etc. Different variations were applied. A difference between the wrong-doer's primary hand and secondary hand was taken into account.

C. Removal of the Fingers. A milder form of cutting off the hands. Cutpurses, pickpockets and other petty criminals could suffer the loss of a finger(s).

D. Removal of the Ear(s). Removal of the ear allowed the criminal to be marked, without rendering him unfit for work or servitude. Criminals condemned to slavery often had their ears removed to identify them. It also was used to signify that the condemned could not bear weapons, enter a city etc.

E. Removal of the Tongue. This punishment was reserved for those who offended with their words such as blasphemers, heretics, false witness, etc.

6. Banishment. Often a community purged itself of it's undesirables. Banishment meant certain death for many in medieval times. Often banishment was imposed when a death sentence was the only alternative. If the banished person ever returned to the region, the death sentence would be immediately carried out.

7. Slavery/Labor. Manpower was a very valuable commodity and criminals were often used to fill the workforce. Public buildings, roads etc., were all built with the aid of slave labor.

8. Death

A. Beheading. Beheading was a very common form of capital punishment. Criminals convicted of particularly heinous crimes were thought to be possessed by evil powers. A prevalent superstition was that such criminals returned from the dead to render further harm, especially toward their accusers and executioners. Thus re

moval of the head and separate burial/cremation ensured a permanent death.

B. Hanging. Hanging is also a wide spread and well known form of execution. It is regarded as a particularly dishonorable and shameful form of death. It is often reserved for thieves and their ilk. There are two forms of hanging which were practiced. The first was more merciful. The condemned was placed under the gallows or a tree on an object and was pushed off. The snap of the neck against the rope usually rendered a swift death. The other form known appropriately as 'Slow Death', was where the noose was placed about the condemned's neck and he was slowly pulled up off the ground. Such unfortunates could linger for long agonizing minutes before death. Criminals who were hanged, were often left on the gallows or tree as a part of the process. When the corpse finally fell from the rope the remains were buried or burned.

Often hanging alone was not considered adequate punishment. Harsher forms were devised, such as hanging by the feet, hanging over a fire etc.

C. Breaking on the Wheel. Breaking on the wheel was among the most feared forms of capital punishment ever to be devised. It was reserved for murderers and traitors. The criminal was laid out on the ground, his arms and legs outstretched and bound to stakes driven into the ground. Boards or timbers were placed under each limb so that a space of four to six inches lay between the limb and the ground. The executioner, sometimes with the aid of an assistant, took a wagon wheel, usually specifically constructed for the task and dropped it on each limb, breaking it. The sentence specified how many blows of the wheel had to be administered. The dead or dying man's limbs were then

threaded under or over the spokes of the wagon wheel. The wheel was hoisted atop a pole set into the ground, ten or fifteen feet high.

D. Drowning. Drowning was a common form of punishment for females. The condemned's hands were bound and the wrong-doer was thrown from a bridge or river bank. If no bodies of water could be found, the condemned was held under water in a pool or well. Frequently, the condemned was sewn in a sack with live animals before being thrown in the water.



E. Boiling. Boiling wine or oil was a standard punishment for those accused of falsification. Heretics, likewise, were apt to suffer such a fate.

F. Burning. Burning was reserved for criminals of particularly atrocious standing such as sorcerer's, witches, mass-murderers, etc. The idea was to eradicate all traces of the condemned. Burning was often coupled with another form of capital punishment. For example, a sorcerer may be sentenced to be beheaded and then burned.

G. Burying Alive. Burying alive, historically was reserved for those guilty of sexual crimes and infanticide. A pit was dug and the condemned bound hand and foot, was thrown in and the pit filled back in.

H. Impalement. Impalement takes two forms. In the first, the condemned was placed in a pit and buried alive, as in G. above. Then a long stake was driven into the pit and through the condemned.

In the second, and more common form of impalement, a tall pole with a sharpened end was erected. The condemned was placed atop the pole and impaled. As the condemned struggled, he would deepen the impalement.

I. Immurement. This was reserved for those of the higher social ranks. It spared the family the disgrace of a public execution and avoided shaming the family. The condemned was placed in a cell or sometimes walled up in a room and left without food or water. He was left unattended until his demise.

J. Quartering. There were two types of quartering; before death and after death. Originally, quartering was carried out by hacking off the limbs of the condemned with an axe or sword. This evolved into tying each limb to a different horse, and each was driven off into a different direction, thus tearing the condemned apart.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND RPGS.

By now you've probably come up with at least a few ideas of how to apply various aspects of the legal systems we've looked at to your campaign. Implementing such a system could have dramatic results in your campaign.

In my campaign, for example, magic is now rarely displayed openly. Those seeking the aid of magic or desiring a magic item have to quietly and discreetly inquire and hope they don't ask the wrong person. You won't find any magic-shops with large signs beckoning the passer-by to come in and browse. Magic is a black-market item and would appear to be very scarce. Magic and its practice is forbidden by the Empire. Those caught possessing magical items or practicing magic are likely to be put to death or blinded. Spellbooks and items are confiscated and burned.

Of course, the Empire is also corrupt and most high officials possess magic items or have their 'personal' mages to consult.

As a result, mages in Alderac look over their shoulders often and keep a low profile.

Thieves tend to be a little paranoid too.

They know the penalties for being caught all too well and think twice before pulling that next job. They don't fancy risking their hands for a few dozen gold pieces. The Thieves in my campaign have become very cautious and less impulsive. As a result, they plan bigger heists and the hauls are bigger.

I've seen fighters swallow their pride and ignore an insult because they know strangers rarely get a fair trial in Soult Tet.

Some interesting sessions have resulted

from the fumbled pick-pocket attempts of an apprentice thief. Whole new adventures have been created from such instances. Death administered by the state has become a very horrifying form of demise to player-characters. The state often safeguards the body after death by cremation, burying in a common grave, etc. Also the head is often removed and disposed of separately. Resurrection is no longer a sure thing. The dead

character's friends may not want to risk retrieving the body.

But using a pure medieval clone for every society in your world wouldn't be much fun. The legal systems should vary from country to country. Players should be kept guessing as to what the local-laws dictate. Anyone who has travelled abroad can testify to how confusing it is adapting to a different set of rules.

Many forms of punishment can be devised and the clever DM should add any new ideas to the lists provided. There are many possibilities. For example, in my campaign I have a race called the Sarlangans. Their religious doctrine declares that no man can decide the guilt or innocence of another. Thus all of their punishments consist of trial-by-ordeal systems. A suspected thief is stripped and forced to walk through the wilderness



The Hangman

and retrieve an item that can only be found in a certain locale which is usually days away. If he returns, he is deemed innocent and accepted back into the clan. If he doesn't return? Oh well, he must have been guilty.

In the above example, player characters would truly see the contrast between the Sarlangans, and say, the human-city they just left where thieves were immediately hung.

The Criminal Justice System

The following is a system to help you in designing custom-made legal systems for any culture. The system consists of a series of tables. Table A lists all of the crimes listed in this article and gives each one a code. Tables 1 thru 9 list the various forms of punishments and lists a two digit code to each one. Finally a Master-Sheet is given which lists the crimes by their codes down the left hand side. By cross-referencing the crime with the culture listed at the top of the column you can find the appropriate punishment for a particular crime in that society. If two punishments are listed, then there are varying punishments for the crime based on factors such as certainty of guilt, status of the victim, etc. These represent the minimum degree of punishment the accused can face if found guilty and the maximum degree of punishment he can face.

You can design your own systems by us-

ing the blank portion of the worksheet. Reproduce this form for your own use.

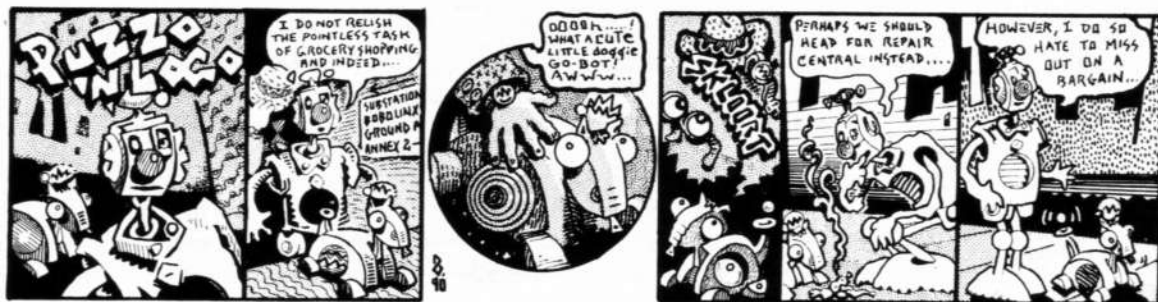
I have provided some generic examples which list a legal system for a world-empire which has an advanced system, a small isolated village which practices a mixture of various legal codes and a barbarian tribe utilizing a tribal code of criminal justice.

I have not covered the trial process and have left that up to the DM. I don't feel a random dice roll to decide guilt could sufficiently simulate such a process. The best way is for the DM to assume the role of the officials deciding the fate and guilt of the accused and to handle things from their point of view. The DM should acquire any prejudices and mind-sets he believes the judge(s) would have. Are Dwarves particularly hated in the community where the Dwarven thief has been apprehended? Is magic feared and despised by the mob which has caught up with the wayward mage?

My main goal in researching and writing this article was not to hand the DM a set of rules for handling all criminal justice matters in a campaign. How boring for the players if every town used an identical set of laws. I set out to provide a simple system which anyone could modify to fit into their own campaign with minimal work. Add variety and use your imagination.

"Puzzo 'n Logo" ©

By Daniel Giddings



Criminal Justice Tables®

Table: A
Crime Codes

HOMICIDE

- A. Murder
- B. Manslaughter
- C. Infanticide
- D. Arson
- E. Assault

LARCENY

- F. Theft
- G. Burglary
- H. Embezzlement
- I. Falsification
- J. Coinage Offenses
- K. Forgery
- L. False Pretenses
- M. Robbery

SEXUAL OFFENSES

- N. Rape
- O. Sodomy
- P. Incest
- Q. Bigamy
- R. Adultery
- S. Bestiality
- T. Fornication

RELIGIOUS OFFENSES

- U. Blasphemy
- V. Heresy
- W. Sorcery

POLITICAL CRIMES

- X. Treason
- Y. Duty of Loyalty

Civil/Social Crimes

- Z. Dress codes
- AA. Disorderly Conduct
- BB. _____
- CC. _____
- DD. _____
- EE. _____
- FF. _____
- GG. _____
- HH. _____
- II. _____
- JJ. _____
- KK. _____

Table: 1
Monetary/Fines

- 1A.....1D10 gp
- 1B.....20+1D10 gp
- 1C.....30+1D20 gp
- 1D.....50+2D20 gp
- 1E.....50+1D100 gp
- 1F.....100+1D100 gp
- 1G.....500+1D100 gp
- 1H.....1000x1D2 gp
- 1I.....1000x1D4 gp
- 1J.....1000x1D6 gp
- 1K.....1000x1D8 gp
- 1L.....1000x1D10 gp
- 1M.....1000x1D20 gp

Table: 2
Confinement/Prison

- 2A.....1D4 days
- 2B.....1D8 days
- 2C.....1D20 days
- 2D.....1D4 months
- 2E.....1D8 months
- 2F.....5+1D10 months
- 2G.....1D3 years
- 2H.....2+1D3 years
- 2I.....5+1D5 years
- 2J.....5+1D10 years
- 2K.....10+1D10 years
- 2L.....10+1D20 years
- 2M.....Life

Table: 4
Degradation

- 4A.....Censure
- 4B.....Recantation/Apology
- 4C.....Clothes of Degradation
- 4D.....Procession of Shame
- 4E.....Defamation
- 4F.....Wear object of Shame
- 4G.....Ban on the bearing of Arms/Titles
- 4H.....Public Servitude (1D20 days)
- 4I.....Loss of Rank/Social Status
- 4J.....Denial of Burial/Rites
- 4K.....Public Flogging
- 4L.....Ducking
- 4M.....Tarring/Feathering

Table: 6
Mutilation

- 6A.....Blinding
- 6B.....Removal of Primary Hand
- 6C.....Removal of Non-Primary Hand
- 6D.....Removal of both Hands
- 6E.....Removal of Finger(s)
- 6F.....Removal of Ear(s)
- 6G.....Scar/Mark of the Crime
- 6H.....Removal of Tongue

Table: 3
Confinement Conditions

- 3A.....Hard Labor/within prison/dungeon
- 3B.....Hard Labor/Municipal projects
- 3C.....Solitary confinement/dungeon

Table: 5
Torture

- 5A.....Mild/Non Scarring or Life Threatening
- 5B.....Severe/Possible Scars
- 5C.....Extreme/Possible loss of life

Table: 9
Capital Punishment

- 9A.....Beheading
- 9B.....Hanging
- 9C.....Breaking on the Wheel
- 9D.....Drowning
- 9E.....Boiling
- 9F.....Burning
- 9G.....Buried Alive
- 9H.....Impalement
- 9I.....Immurement
- 9J.....Quatering

Table: 7
Banishment

- 7A.....Banished from City/Village
- 7B.....Banished from State/Territory

Table: 8
Slavery/Labor

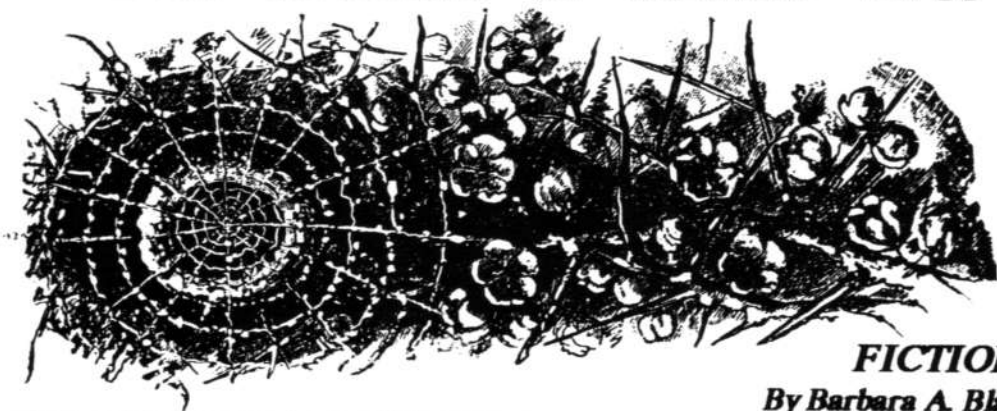
- 8A.....Sold As Slave to Private Party
- 8B.....Becomes a Slave of the State
- 8C.....Condemned to Period of Service (See Table 2)

These tables are by no means complete. Use them as models for developing your own unique systems. Research at your local library on various cultures will provide you a wealth of alternatives. Some suggestions are the Vikings, American Indians, Ancient Egyptians etc.

Criminal Justice Master-Table.

CRIME CODE	WORLD EMPIRE	REMOTE VILLAGE	BARBARIAN TRIBE					
A	2K/9A	1G/9B	7B/9F					
B	1G/2F	1F/1J	4A/7A					
C	6A/9F	8B/9G	9E					
D	9F	6A/9H	7B/9F					
E	1A/2B	1A/1L	4J/4K					
F	1B/6B	4K/6E	4D/7A					
G	1E/6G	4K/6B	4D/7A					
H	1I/2I	1G/5B	4K					
I	1C/4K	1G/5B	4K					
J	1I/2I	1G/5B	4K					
K	1I/2J	1H/5B	4K					
L	1B/1J	1G/4K	4B/4K					
M	6B/9B	1J/9A	4H/7A					
N	5A/7A	4B/4K	1C					
O	4I/9G	4D/9D	7A					
P	9A/9G	4K/5C	7A/9D					
Q	2E/7A	NA	NA					
R	2E/7A	1G/4F	NA					
S	5C/9D	4C/7A	7B					
T	2C/5B	NA	NA					
U	6H/9F	9B	4A/7A					
V	6H/9F	9B	4A/7A					
W	2F/9C	NA	NA					
X	6G/8B	4K/7A	7B					
Y	6F/7B	4K/7A	7B					
Z	1A/4F	4C	NA					
AA	1A/4D	4B/4K	NA					

The Shriek of Soult Tet



FICTION

By Barbara A. Blackburn

Part Two "Men or Monsters?"

Gar lie staring up at the ceiling of his room. He watched as a spider crawled into a corner and ate a fly. He could hear his sister's gentle breathing as she slept. Suddenly, the peace of the night was burst with an excruciatingly loud crash. Bits of wood and slate rained down upon their heads. In an instant there was no roof above them, only some huge, writhing beast.

Gar screamed as a deformed, ropey appendage reached for Shindar. Jumping to his feet, he grabbed the small sword that had been his father's and swung it wildly.

His sister screamed as the monstrous tentacle crushed her ribs. Gar could hear bones crack as he saw the life drain from her face. Her body dropped limply to the floor. Letting out a mad yell, he began chopping. Slime spewed into the air and the creature whirled to face its attacker. Astonished, Gar gasped as he saw it's bizarre face. The thing had the features of a man with buging eyes and mouth agape. A slimy arm swung toward him and knocked him to the ground with a thud.

Gar awoke on the floor of his room with someone shaking him. "Wake up, wake up!"

He swung a fist, still living in the intensity of a nightmare. A strange voice shot back, "You hit me, and I don't care if you are dreaming, I'll throw you out that window."

He tried to shake the visions of the night from his mind as he looked up. A small dark girl was staring back at him. "Who are you?" His words were barely.

"That's not important. I thought someone was getting killed in here! That must have been some bloody nightmare. What'd ya eat last night, Grevan stew?"

The tall youth stood shakily and looked over to Shindar's bed. She was gone.

He grabbed his sword and shouted, "Shindy, where are...where is my sister?"

"Sorry, didn't see anyone else in here. Maybe she went down to get something to eat. Come on, get dressed and I'll help you look."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Draya Rist' lin I work for the inn, I'm what they call a bouncer, ya know? Meet ya down at the bar, you're in urgent need of a drink."

He was still sitting on the bed in a daze trying to get his shirt on, when there was a knock at the door.

"Hey, did ya go back to sleep? C'mon, I talked to some people downstairs, there's a fellow who said he saw your sister asking some strange questions about some monster. She left with a couple of guards."

Gar ran through the door nearly flattening his informant.

"Hey, I'm not going to help you find your sister if you turn me into a hall mat!"

"Don't need you, don't have time. Gotta find her."

He brushed past her and headed down the stairs. He was all the way out the door when he stopped. He stood out in the dirty street for awhile, scratched his head, looked in all directions and then whirled around in place.

"Whoa, watch it ya 'dok! That's the second time you tried to stomp me. I don't know where you were raised, but where I come from, it's not polite to run over people, no matter how big you are."

Gar stared at the small, good-humored girl in amazement. He hadn't asked for her help. Still, he did need someone who knew their way around this strange city.

"So, can you tell me where the guard-house is?"

The laughter that followed his question turned his face as scarlet as the wine he and his family used to make at the vineyards. "What's so funny?"

Draya tilted her head, squinted up at him and tried to talk between fits of mirth. "I...I'm sorry. I know it's rough on you...not knowing where she is, but...if you could've only seen yourself running around like...well, let's just say...you were a damn funny sight."

"I've got to find her. I don't care how funny I look. Are you going to help me or stand there laughing yourself to death?"

He took off with the strides of an unstoppable force. "Wait!" He could hear the tiny voice behind him. Turning, he saw Draya running to

catch up.

"You're going the wrong way, c' mon, I'll show you."

They wound their way through a maze of backstreets that Draya had sworn was a shortcut. Finally, along a soot-encrusted wall that separated the frets of Hacksmith and Starkdale, they found the guardhouse tower.

Gar reached for the door with a swift, determined movement, but Draya stopped his hand before it reached the latch. "Not so fast, what's-your-name. You never did tell me who you are. We can't just barge into the guardhouse and demand things. Let me handle it."

"I'm Gar Tharlflax, and I'll go along with you for now, but I'm not gonna let anything happen to Shindar. She's the only family I've got now."

Draya tapped lightly at the heavy iron door. She waited, then tapped again, a little louder. To Gar it seemed they waited forever. He had just raised his long arm to give the door a good smack, when a small window at the top slid open and a face peered through the opening.

"What's yer business?" The doorman spat his question making no attempt to mask his irritation. He had been comfortably soaking his feet before this interruption.

Draya cleared her throat and spoke softly, "Kind sir, we are searching for a young lady who was seen with two of your guards this very morning. Would you happen to know where a certain Shindar Tharlflax may be? Her family worries beyond measure when she is away."

The man looked puzzled. The window from which he gazed was some distance above Draya's head, and he had not seen her. A startle came across his face at her first word.

When he had fully regained his composure he said, "I'm not sure, I just came on watch. Come in and ask the patrell. Leave yer weapons with me."

The door swung out toward them slowly,

complaining loudly. Like an old man's joints, years of use had made the hinges somewhat uncooperative.

Upon entering, they were hit with a strong odor. Gar realized that the smell of men cooped up was much worse than that of the animals back home in the barn.

"What's the name of that girl again?" A gnarled little man shouted from a darkened corner.

Gar spoke up, "Her name is Tharlflax, Shindar Tharlflax. She's my sister. We're from West Fork. We came to visit my sister and uncle who lived here. Unfortunately, we found that they are both dead. We believe something odd happened, you wouldn't know any..."

A sharp poke in the ribs interrupted his speech. Glancing downward, he saw Draya glaring up at him.

"Sir, do you know where she is?" The girl took control of the conversation.

The man stepped out of the shadow bent over and stood face to face with the tiny woman. "Who might you be? I think I've seen you around someplace. Was it in the prison? Or maybe it was on a the whipping post in the market place. Maybe we should throw you into Bowmar until I'm sure."

Scratching his unshaven chin he appeared to ponder his own questions and then finally broke the silence of his intimidation. "Naw! I guess I must've gotten you mixed up with someone else who spoke when they were not spoken to." He glared at her menacingly.

Gar interjected, "Please, she's just trying to help me. I don't know anyone in Soult Tet. I needed her to show me the way here. Is my sister alright?"

The man's hard face broke into a half-smile as he turned to Gar. "Son, we'll find her. I sent a runner to talk to the two guards we think she was with this morning. Have a seat while we wait. Shouldn't be long."

Shindar walked down the unfamiliar streets toward the inn. Her steps were quick and

shaky. "They're hiding something," she thought. "What are they are so worried about?"

She didn't see the dark silent man who slithered along behind her, watching every move.

Gar and Draya sat nervously awaiting word. The gnarled patrell kept his menacing gaze on the small woman.

She leaned back in her chair and whispered to Gar, "I don't know what I did, but this unpleasant reject of a sewer rat wants to kill me, I can see it in his beady eyes."

Gar replied, "Oh come on, he's an official, he can't just go around killing people. You're imagining things."

Draya scowled, "In Soult Tet, officials are the ones ya gotta watch out for. You never know who you can trust."

The patrell moved closer, noticing the two in conversation. He was practically breathing down Draya's neck when he spoke. "Son, I don't know what you see in this little piece of trash, but if I were you, I'd find a better class of friend."

Gar's face grew red with anger and Draya was about to say something foolish when the door opened.

"Ty' Norta at your service sir!" The young man's tone of respect did not match the irritation in his eyes. His disheveled appearance spoke of a man awakened against his will.

"Ah, yes. Tell these two where they might find the girl you brought in this morning. The one named Shindar."

A strange look came across his face, "Sir, she's the one who was talking about that monster. Remem..."

"Oh yes...ah hem...I recall her now. That's the one you let go just before you left."

Gar stood up, "You said you didn't know who she was. Now you say you brought her in. She's no criminal. I swear if she's hurt..."

"Look boy, she was spreading a rumor that is illegal in this city. In fact, it's treasonous. All we did was warn her, scare her a little and let

her go. If I were you, I'd talk to her, next time she might not be so lucky. She could end up like our latest traitor, thrown from the cliffs into the Soul River."

Gar lunged toward the offensive officer but his new friend stopped him. Grabbing him by the back of his shirt, Draya edged toward the door.

"Thank you very much, we'll be going now, no problems."

She scurried out with Gar in tow.

He struggled, "Let me go, they have no right to treat her that way! I'll kill..."

"Come on, she's alright, they didn't hurt her, be grateful. They can do what they want, believe me. You came out good, 'cause you're from out of town. Come, let's go find her in case she's wandering around lost like her brother. I swear, you two have brought enough chaos into our town for three monsters."

Draya heard the echoes of angry shouts from inside the guardhouse as they walked away.

Shindar sat on her bed and tried to rub off the filth of the jail cell she'd been kept in for the past two hours.

Shuddering, she remembered the rats that had crept over her feet in the dank stone cubicle.

A sharp rap sounded on her door. Startled, she jumped up, "Who...who is it? I'm not dressed."

"This is Warl Obar the innkeep. You and your brother are to be out of here. You've already stayed well past your welcome. Someone's waiting to occupy this room and they've already paid. Besides, don't need trouble-making law-breakers in

my distinguished establishment. I'll be back as soon as I find my bouncer, then we're coming in whether you're dressed or not!"

Shindar lost all color in her face. "Oh, what have I done? Gar, where are you? What am I to do?" Her thoughts raced as she mindlessly stuffed her few possessions into a bag.

She had their belongings packed by the time Gar and Draya walked through the door.

Shindar wailed, "Gar, I am sorry, I have gotten us in so much trouble!" She threw her arms around his neck

and wept.

Gar grasped her shoulders and pushed her gently backward, to look at her face. "Are you alright? I was so worried. Did they hurt you?"

"Ahem!" Draya interrupted. "Would you two kindly like to tell me what's going on? I've had enough mystery for one day."

Suddenly, a bellowing voice shook the walls, "DRAYA!!! Draya Rist 'lin, where are you? I wish to see you IMMEDIATELY!"



Draya's face turned pale, "Gods! It's Warl, he's gonna skin me alive!"

She ran from the room, colliding with the huge fat man as he rounded the corner.

She picked herself up off the floor, but her employer grabbed her by the tunic collar. Yanking her up into the air he began to shout.

"Young lady, you work for me, do you understand? What are you doing with the likes of that country trash?"

As he slammed her against the wall, a dam of pent-up fury burst from her mouth.

"Get those manure-stinking hands off me you overgrown mountain slug! I'd rather kiss a year's-rotten corpse than look at your ugly face another instant. I quit!"

Gar and Shindar looked at each other in amazement as they overheard the tirade.

A shocked silence hung over the entire inn for what seemed an eternity.

But as the shock wore off, the entire place echoed with the sounds of someone being thrashed about.

Loud thuds shook the doors as the girl bounced off the walls.

The huge man howled as Draya kicked out and caught him in the groin.

Enraged, the man began to pummel and kick the girl mercilessly.

Gar stormed out of the door in time to see the large man landing a sharp kick to the girl's side as she lie bleeding on the floor.

As the ugly man drew back to strike again, he felt Gar's long fingers around his thick neck. In an instant, he was bouncing down the stairway, where he landed on a table and passed out cold.

Gar shouted for his sister and they helped the injured girl to her feet.

The three staggered down the stairs, scurried over the body of the unconscious man and made their way out the door.

Draya mumbled, "Hope you didn't kill 'im, you're in 'nough trouble as 't is."

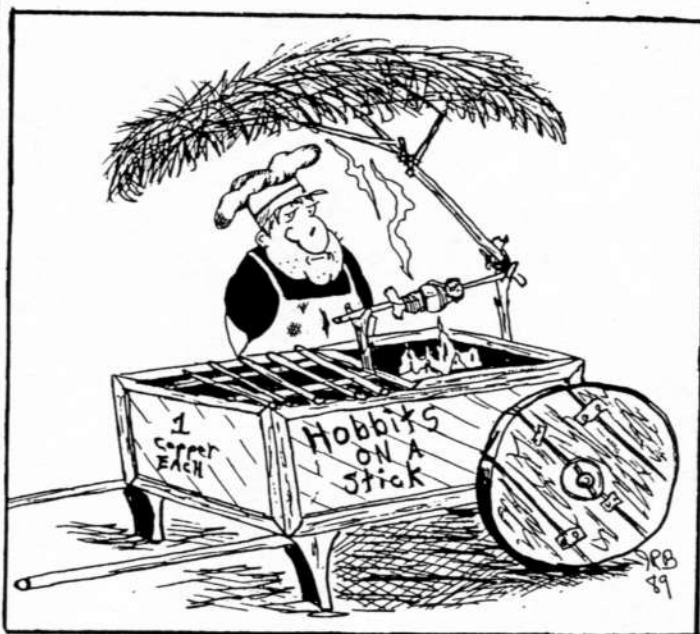
Wincing, she became quiet, talking was too painful.

The others were quiet too. Perhaps because they

were wondering where they were going to spend the night. Or maybe it was because they were worried about Draya.

But when the silence was broken, it was clear that brother and sister were thinking alike, for they both whispered the same question, "In a city like this, how are we going to tell the men from the monsters?"

As they emerged from the inn and headed toward their unknown destination, a dark man made his way behind them, always clinging to the shadows and ever watchful.



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DEALER INQUIRIES INVITED

Of Embers Born



FICTION

By Frank R. VanHoesen

PART II

Day 394 Year 99

Seychelle's breath made small clouds in the cold air as Orric carried her gently up the winding mountain trail. To the south, a pall of smoke lay blanket-like over the smouldering remains of Emberton. Sharp eyes could make out dark specks circling through the smoke as the death-birds gathered to the feast prepared by Rang Taw's band.

All this was lost on Orric. His mind was filled with pain and remorse over the loss of his friends and loved ones. His body had passed from the realm of normal feelings to a numbness that was broken only by the need to reach the mountain cabin that was his destination.

As the sun dipped behind the mountain peaks Orric rounded a shoulder on the mountain and began his descent into the valley that sheltered the village's hunting parties in their search for game to help feed the people during the long northern winters.

The two moons of Alderac, Shadis and Arlora, provided enough light for Orric to follow the trail which brought him to the hunter's cabin. He gently placed his barely-living burden on the

bunk nearest the cabin's fireplace and covered her with blankets. Then he built up a roaring fire with the wood left by last season's hunters.

Harvesting game to feed a village was not a completely safe endeavor. Many hunters were injured on the hunt so the cabin was stocked with bandages and healing herbs. Once the fire was going, Orric prepared a tea from healing herbs and set about cleaning and bandaging the jagged wound in the young Sarlangan's abdomen left by Rang Taw's arrow.

When he had seen to Seychelle to the best of his ability, Orric rolled his massive body into a blanket and collapsed on a bunk, passing immediately into a deep exhausted sleep.

The days spent in the mountain cabin passed in a daze for Orric. He tended the wounds of the girl he had rescued from his burned out-village. She was a stranger to him, but he recognized her as Sarlangan. There was no mistaking the hair, the color of white gold and the slender yet muscular build of the forest dwellers. Sarlangan were reputed to be masters of the long bow and unarmed combat. Orric spent many long hours sitting beside Seychelle's bed lost in thought.

Time and again he relived the day of the Grevan raider's destruction. Long hours he would

stare at his hands; hands that could fit a horseshoe to any hoof on the first try or craft a blade of nearly magical sharpness. Yet for all their strength, these hands also could be as gentle as a woman's when it came to the healing arts. His Gram had been a great mistress of the medicines and had taught Orric much before she went to reside in Castondaa's far realm.

As he again walked the ruined streets of his village, stepping over the corpses of his friends and family, a coldness grew in his heart. As he again looked down on the naked, ravaged body of his beloved and the rest of the women of his village a determination possessed his soul.

Somewhere to the north and west lived Rang Taw; leader of the Grevans. Master looter. Rapist. Destroyer of men's lives. Orric had never seen the Grevan's new Lord but someday, he vowed, he would meet him. Someday Rang Taw would learn the meaning of pain, lost dreams, lost friend and loved ones.

Orric again looked at his hands; educated hands with many skills for creation and healing but completely ignorant of the ways of war. Yes, someday Rang Taw would feel the strength of those hands but first those hands must be taught to kill. The hands that made the blade must learn to swing it. The body must be trained.

Orric raised his eyes from the study of his hands and gazed at the still unconscious Sarlangan girl on the bunk beside him. Yes, there were a lot of lessons to be learned and Orric had an idea where he could find many teachers. What was the key to open the door of admittance to the clannish Sarlangan society? That he also had. Orric smiled and tucked the blankets more snugly around Seychelle's body.

Orric rose and walked to the clearing that surrounded the little cabin. He stood looking westward and felt the wind blowing steadily at his back. This fresh mountain wind blew westward across the Kalinor forest and the Grevan plains. "The wind is carrying your doom, foul Grevan. Feel it

on your face. Let it chill your soul for now you have made it a death wind and one day I'll come riding this wind. Keep yourself safe Grevan, for you are mine and one day I'll come to collect my due," he swore.

Seychelle struggled in her dreams. The bearded face so close to hers, filled her nostrils with the scent of wine borne on a foul breath. The leather cords bit into her wrists and ankles as she writhed on the wagon wheel. The weight of the Grevan crushed her body against the spokes as he raped her body and dirtied her soul.

The Grevan's breath quickened as her struggles to free herself mimicked passionate response. Seychelle's world was now defined by the need to rid herself of the Grevan Lord's invasion. She blooded her wrists and ankles on her leather bonds not feeling the pain. She sought to sink her teeth into his neck and sever his jugular, to no effect, as her bound hair holding her fast to the wagon wheel. Her struggles only heightened the pleasure of Rang Taw who fully sated himself with the desperately fighting Sarlangan's body.

Seychelle cursed the Grevan with every oath she knew, calling down dire punishments from her gods. Rang Taw ignored her fury as he arranged his leathers and mounted his horse. Calmly, he drew his bow and nocked an arrow. He drew the shaft back even with his ear and released it.

Seychelle screamed and her eyes flew open. She struggled to free herself from the wagon wheel and the embrace of the Grevan. Huge hands imprisoned her wrists and the weight of a massive body held her own weakly-struggling body fast on the bunk.

'Hands...Bunk...' Gradually, the smoke-filled air disappeared to be replaced by log rafters and walls. Rang Taw's grinning, gasping face was replaced by Orric's concerned yet calm features. Seychelle stopped fighting and lay limply back on the bunk, memories clashing with reality as the

FICTION

dream slowly faded.

When Seychelle quit fighting to get off the bunk, Orric released her and sat back in his chair. He began to talk softly to the frightened Sarlangan girl. His voice seemed to have a soothing effect for her breathing gradually slowed and sanity returned to her eyes. Then she closed her eyes and dropped into a real sleep replacing the unconsciousness that had claimed her since her attempted murder at the hands of Rang Taw.

As the weeks slowly passed, Seychelle gradually spent more time in wakefulness. She and Orric spent many long hours talking about the raid on Emberton and his plans for vengeance. This pleased Seychelle, for she had her own vengeful plans. She looked in awe upon Orric's great body and felt satisfaction when he would perform some act which so clearly demonstrated the unbelievable

power he possessed. Yes, Seychelle would see that Orric was taught the skills of combat he so eagerly sought. Such a tool as he should not be wasted.

As soon as she was able to travel, they would head for her home in the Kalinor forest. Her father would be pleased to see her and would ensure that her companion was accepted into their village and receive the best training they could provide. But there was another reason to hasten back to her Kalinor home. Rang Taw's rape had made many changes in Seychelle. But it had also left a legacy that no one had counted on. Seychelle rubbed the healing scar on her stomach and felt satisfaction, for even if Orric could not provide her with the means for revenge, Rang Taw had left her with another tool. Yes, Seychelle needed to hurry home to the Kalinor, before her pregnancy was too far along for travel.

From the Scrolls of Greytar Continued

I just happened to have been returning from the Var'Rader-keem's house, where I had shared a very tasty meal of roast-pig. I was just crossing Lame Bear street when I heard a commotion from the direction of that quarter's market-place.

Being most curious, as the hour was quite late, I proceeded toward the noise. I had just rounded a corner when I saw to my great horror the large wolf running at full speed in my direction. I was still trying to decide which god I should pray to, when a mounted guard rode out from a side street and quite unintentionally, broadsided the wolf.

Horse, rider and wolf rolled across the street. The horse regained its footing and was attempting to get away when the Wolf jumped on its back and broke its neck with an audible snap. It then turned its attention to the guard. I never saw what happened to the guard for I was running as fast as my rusty legs could carry me.

Sturm-wolf is actually a mis-translation into the English language from Haagan, since Earth

has no Sturm-wolf counterpart. Apparently, an inept translator, upon encountering the word *Sturm-grada* in the Haagan text saw similarities between the Sturm-grada and the terran wolf.

Actually, the Sturm-wolf is more closely akin to the terran bear. It has powerful fore-paws and the musculature of a bear. However, it has a head and tail very similar to a wolf and hunts in packs as the terran wolf does.

The sheer size and stature of the Sturm-wolf impresses fear upon even the bravest of men. Sturm-wolves have always been purported to have a 'blood-lust', killing not only for food but for the sheer enjoyment of taking life.

Their thick coats and the bulk of their frames make them extremely difficult to kill. Their hides are extremely valuable and are sought after throughout the Empire. Many pot-bellied Senators in the capital proudly show their dinner guests the fur of a Sturm-wolf which they claim to have killed with a short dagger. Such men have paid a sizeable amount of gold for the privilege of telling such tall tales. But alas, I have rambled enough for this issue. I think I'll finish off that bottle of brandy.

Under the Spotlight

In 1984 when I was living in El Paso, a friend of mine invited me to participate in some 'live-action D&D'. I thought it sounded like great fun so I showed up early one Saturday morning with about twenty other people at a local park.

After everyone had gathered, I was given a broomstick with a wedge of foam-rubber wrapped around one end. "Here, yer a fighter!" said someone who was apparently in charge. "Go to that end of the field. You have to protect the King's road from all enemies." I liked that idea. 'Don't let anyone pass!' I didn't know who the King was, but I thought I could handle the task at hand.

So I took my position at the edge of a grove of trees and waited. It wasn't long when two very large players came strolling up to me. "Halt!" I cried in my best English accent.

They kept coming. I readied my sword and squared off with the largest of the two. A few fakes and bluffs were exchanged and then he caught me with a sweeping blow that took half my face off. Well, it felt that way. Picking myself up off the ground I tried again.

What followed was one of the worst ordeals of my young life. The rest of the day I was pummeled and smacked by a dozen 'enemies of the King.' For a while I thought that whopping the snot out of each other was a blast. But when I crawled home with an assortment of bruises and holding my glasses, which were broken in three pieces, I had second thoughts.

I never went back for a repeat. Over the years I have recounted that 'bloody' day and

warned others about the dangers of live-action role playing.

So when Jolly forwarded me the International Fantasy Gaming Society, Inc. (IFGS) Fantasy Rules book and told me it was a set of rules for live-action role playing I scoffed. I had many reservations about taking the assignment knowing I was already biased. If fantasy role-players are perceived by many to be a little offbase and slightly strange, then live-action gamers are really out there. I'm talking about the east coast of Madagascar. That's just how far out there they are.

So I poured a cup of coffee and sat down to write what I knew would be a really scathing review. Then I paused. To be fair I would have to at least look at the book. So I leaned back and flipped through it. It wasn't long before I found myself entranced. This stuff looked like fun.

The crude game I had played in El Paso was simply a war game with sticks. The IFGS rules have been in revision and play since 1981 and there are many innovative ideas in the book.

The rules emphasize role playing over combat, though combat is definitely a part of the scenarios. Teamwork is the keyword here. Everything revolves around building a team of players who can work together and compliment each other's skills.

More importantly the rules stress safety. In fact they go well out of their way to emphasize that safety is first priority. Those who commit unsafe acts during the course of a game are very likely to be barred from playing again. You might

IF.G.S. FANTASY RULES



Under the Spotlight

wonder how a game featuring live-action conflict could be safe.

But after reading the rules, you can see that the IFGS has worked carefully to provide a great measure of safety while at the same time not taking from the medieval atmosphere or the fun.

Weapons are the first concern when considering safety and the role playing aspects of live-action battles. IFGS has provided within its rule-book instructions for construction of safe, cheap, but useable swords and staves. These are constructed from foam padding, sticks and tape. I was able to construct my first weapon in a few short hours and my wife has been threatening to take it away from me if I smack her with it one more time.

To represent the firing of arrows as well as other thrown weapons, oil, rocks, etc., bean bags are used. The color of the bean bag represents different types of thrown objects. For example, grey bean bags represent throwing knives and stars, red bean bags represent acid and black ones represent oil.

Again, there are instructions in the book for constructing your own bean bags.

Player characters can choose one of eight various character classes. These are: Fighters, Rangers, Knights, Magic users, Clerics, Druids, Thieves and Monks. To choose a character class, one simply decides what is best suited to him or her, you don't roll dice for abilities.

Real-life skills may help someone decide what class to become, since the action is realistic. Archery skills for example, can be decided one of two ways. You can either choose to take the scores given on the chart in the book, or you can really test at an archery range. If you decide to test, you have to use the scores from that test for one calendar year, or until testing again even if the chart scores would benefit you greater. The test is administered by an IFGS representative, approved by the IFGS Society or Chapter Board. These scores must be registered with the IFGS bank upon completion of the test. Are you getting the fever

yet?

Thieves have to have a pretty steady hand, for simulated locks are used. Locks are constructed out of batteries and wire. Remember that Milton Bradley game Operation where you had to remove the 'wrenched ankle bone' with a pair of tweezers without sounding off the buzzer? Same principal here. The thief uses a key, constructed of metal wire and maneuvers it along a twisted wire which represents the lock. One mistake and the thief has either failed to open the lock or set off an alarm. This simple simulation helps to measure the thief's dexterity while at the same time putting a time factor on him. Depending on the complexity of the lock the Thief has to be very careful and patient.

Fighters have to be pretty hearty, 'cause the action is real, if not actually dangerous.

Running IFGS sanctioned games requires a great deal of preparation and coordination. Many people are involved. There is a Game Designer (GD), who puts together an adventure. There are Game Aides (GAs), who basically assist the GD with whatever he or she needs to design and produce the game. There are Gamemasters (GMs) who are the head judges who accompany each party of adventurers. There are also Scorekeepers (SKs), who assist the GM with all of the GM's responsibilities.

No game would be complete without Non-player characters (NPCs) who play all the other characters and creatures that players encounter in the course of a game.

The Loremaster (LM) is an individual who receives a challenge from a GD to assemble and lead a team of adventurers and play in the GD's game.

There is also a Watchdog (WD) who is responsible, after a GD has had his or her scenario approved by the governing Sanctioning Committee, for seeing that the design and execution of the game is as safe as possible, is playable, is in conformance with the rules and is run as it was sanc

tioned.

The Safety Officer for a game is the individual who is responsible for seeing that the game is executed in as safe a manner as possible.

Last, and maybe most important to some players, is the Bank representative. This is the individual who passes out gold-piece representations for the game.

The majority of the adventures run by IFGS are of only a few hour's duration demanding perhaps a full day to setup, play and wrap things up. However there are mega-adventures that run for several days. Call me strange but I'm itching to play.

My only regret is that there are no local chapters in my area at the present time. The rules are complete and one could run an 'independent'

game I suppose. As of yet I have not had the opportunity to try the real thing but as soon as I do, and believe me I will, I'll let you know how it turns out.

With a list of participants like that, the whole thing may sound kind of complicated. Well, if the game sounds fun, and you'd like to see some take place in your area, or you just want some more info, you can write:

IFGS

P.O. Box 3555

Boulder, CO 80307-3555

Before I close for this month I would like to ask for your assistance. If there are any companies, game-services etc. that you would like me to look into let me know.

'Til next month.

NEWS FROM AFAR

NEW PRODUCTS, RUMOURS,

New Products

Palladium Books: Fans of the Palladium Role-Playing Game are sure to be pleased with the new supplement *"Further Adventures in the Northern Wilderness"* by Keven Siembieda. Tentatively scheduled for release at the end of March, this 48 page book provides five adventures set in the Northern Wilderness.

In case you missed it, the book *"Adventures in the Northern Wilderness"* released a few months back provides a wealth of background on the Wolfen and the other inhabitants of that treacherous region.

With the release of the live-action movie, *Teen Age Mutant Ninja Turtles* at the end of this

month Palladium should be very busy shipping its new Turtle supplements and Rules. *"Turtles Go Hollywood"* will hit the shelves just in time for the premiere of the movie.

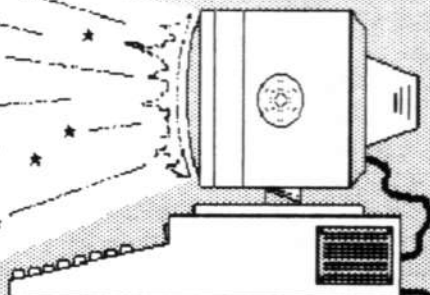
Mayfair Games: The think-tank boys at Mayfair have been very busy lately as well.

Recent releases include; *"Lone Wolf and Cub"*, a solitaire or two player game based on the graphic novels. *"Monsters of Myth and Legend II"* of the Role Aids line, provides creatures from five different mythologies. *"DC Heroes (second edition)"* is packed with new features. It is one of the few RPGs that comes packaged with a Gamemaster's Screen and dice.

DISKS OF WONDEROUS POWER

COMPUTER GAME REVIEWS

EDITED BY FRANK VANHOOSE



Title: *Starflight II*

Company: *Electronic Arts*

Computer: *IBM/MSDOS*

Retail: *\$39.95*

Category: *SF/Space*

Rating: *8.0*

Reviewer: *Frank VanHoose*

As your ship glides serenely through hyper space, you stare at the the walls in total boredom. The distance between stars is vast and there is very little to do to fill the days needed to pass from one star to the next.

Suddenly, the stillness within the ship is shattered by the blasting of the sensor-alert siren. An unidentified object has been detected and the ship has automatically dropped into normal space.

Yes, space combat plays a part in this game but isn't the main focus. As a matter of fact, the space-combat system is somewhat primitive compared to some I've seen.

The attraction that prompted me to purchase this game was the claim, "Over 500 planets. 30 alien races." to explore and interact with written on the back of the game package. I love large uncharted areas to explore. This game offers a vast universe to explore and even though I didn't count, to be sure those numbers sound about right.

The game has decent, if not spectacular graphics and enough small puzzles to keep things interesting while you're working out the main plot.

Using profits from interstellar trade and exploration to equip your ship properly will take a

little time, but once you've figured out the best trade routes, money will not be a problem.

The ending sequence for the game left something to be desired but I enjoyed the overall game well enough to buy *StarFlight III* if it comes out.

Title: *Champions of Krynn*

Company: *SSI*

Computer: *IBM/MSDOS*

Retail: *\$29.99*

Category: *Fantasy RPG*

Rating: *9.0*

Reviewer: *Frank VanHoose*

Since SSI and TSR got together a large number of the type of games I like to play have been their handiwork. I have "*Pool of Radiance*," "*Curse of the Azure Bonds*" and now they've released their first game in the world of Krynn utilizing a combat system similar to those two games.

The combat system will be familiar to anyone who has played "*Pool*" or "*Curse*" but some tremendous improvements have been made since "*Curse*" was released.

Let's talk graphics. When you generate your party, you get to customize an icon for each member that will be used in combat. When viewed on EGA, (as I have), the results are outstanding. Select a head, body and weapon for each character, then choose colors for their hair, face, shield, weapon, body, arms and legs. There is no longer any doubt about which character is which during

combat. And, if your character acquires a new weapon, just edit the icon to show his current equipment.

The towns and dungeons are seen using a 3D perspective. Detailed mapping is necessary, unless you have a better memory than I have. The world is pictured as a map and you move across it in any direction you choose, (Unlike "Curse" where wilderness movement was severely limited).

The major fault I had with both "Pool" and "Curse" was in loading and saving the game. Sloooooooooow! I could go watch a movie on TV while I waited for a game save to be completed. That is a thing of the past with "Champions". Loading and saving the game now goes very quickly.

Another lesser problem was using that

awkward code wheel. Now you just look up a word in either the Rule Book or Adventurer's Journal. Much nicer.

Now for the options. If you don't have at LEAST 512K of memory, don't buy this game. I had to rewrite my autoexec.bat file to keep from loading my mouse drivers to have the memory needed. But if you have 640K you can play the game using a mouse. Either way you can use a joystick if you have one. You can also set game speed and level of difficulty from within the game. The game also supports the C/MS, Roland LAPC and Ad Lib sound boards.

All in all, I feel that this game offers far more than it's predecessors and for less money. My advice is to buy it.

LETTERS PAGE: Continued from page 3

there are many useful services that readers might have wanted in the past but could not find them or did not know someone provided them. This might be one of the essential columns in Shadis. One thing I can suggest that you may want to do for a future subject is to cover any difficulties readers have with certain companies they encounter. Such as never receiving merchandise, difficulties with returning damaged-by-mail or goods not ordered. As the title suggests, Spotlight could illuminate many things for the readers. I see endless possibilities for this column.

I will lump all the fiction together for my final comments. I do this with a great deal of regret, as I would like to address each story in turn. I must start off by saying that the stories were the best part of Shadis. The stories captured my imagination and more importantly, my interest. The biggest drawback was the old 'continued next week, same time, same channel' situation. In other words, I did not get enough of any one of the stories. I see a few solutions to this problem. 1. Cut down the number of stories in each issue, but increase the length. 2. You could start an APA type magazine and write more stories. 3. You could greatly increase the number of pages. (I myself would be willing to pay another dollar for a larger magazine with more articles and fiction.)

I eagerly look forward to issue #2 and I would like to wish you much success. I'm glad someone has the time and intestinal fortitude to make the attempt.

James Minton
Gaston, SC

Shadis has plans to expand it's size to somewhere around 100 pages as soon as it becomes economical to do so.

This should allow us to expand the fiction without sacrificing straight gaming articles. Spotlight will indeed continue and it is intended to serve a dual role. 1. To report those outstanding gamer-services to the readers and 2. to serve as a watchdog against those companies which have a habit of burning people. If anyone has such a complaint write to BA Felton c/o Shadis Magazine. He would love the opportunity to shed some light on these companies.

Dear Shadis,

Congrats on the magazine. I'm looking forward to the next issue. I loved the fiction. How about some scenarios/modules?

I have to hand it to D'Amato for his HackandSlash series. Outstanding. Many of the suggestions are so simple that I can't imagine why I didn't think of them myself. All this time I couldn't put my finger on what was bugging me about AD+D. My clerics, magic-users etc. were indeed being discriminated against. Why should my cleric have to go orc-stomping to make that next level?

I look forward to D'Amato's future installments with great eagerness.

Jose' Corona
Fort Ord, CA

Jack has promised to continue his series. You'll find his latest installment in this issue. From what I understand, he is planning on covering each Character-class.

We are planning on running some scenarios as in sorts. Look for some scenario tie-ins in a future issue.

That's it for this issue. Keep those letters coming!

THE MARKET PLATZ

Issue No.# 3 of Shadis Magazine goes on sale May 15th.

Single Issues: \$2.50 / 6 Issue Subscription \$12.00

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CLASSIFIEDS

'Kane Deathpiper couldn't Beat an Egg!' -Wendel

Wow! You mean I can place a classified for free 'cause I'm a subscriber? -Dirk E.

Wanted any Green Hornet material. Comics, gumcards, toys etc. Send List c/o Shadis Magazine.

Happy Birthday Sherri!
- Barb, Jolly and Amber

Brandor, You left your sword and pack in the back of my buggy. Please contact me to retrieve. -Jenny

Wanted: Gangbuster Players (TSR) for mega-campaign. Several groups will be competing for control of Lakefront City. Indianapolis Area. PBM also a possibility. Call Mike (317) 218-7745

CONVENTIONS

JAXCON SOUTH '90 APRIL 20-22

Write to JAXCON SOUTH '90, P.O.
BOX 4423, JACKSONVILLE FL
32201

OURCON II APRIL 20-22

Write to: OURCON II, 605 Jonesberry
Road, Box 88-7, Carrboro NC 27510.

AMIGOCON V APRIL 20-22

REGISTRATION: 12 until 15 April,
15 at the door. Write to:
AMIGOCON, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso,
TX 79923, or call: (915) 593-1848

The Market Platz is a meeting place to pass along information, barter, trade and gossip. Readers are invited to place classified ads, announce group meetings, seek other players etc.

Subscribers may place classified ads free of charge with a limit of one ad per issue with a maximum of 25 words. Non-subscribers can place ads for 10 cents per word with a limit of 25 words.

Convention announcements, group meetings and public service notices can be placed free of charge.

Ads will be placed on a first-come-first-serve basis.

STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE!

A dwarf, an elf and a human were searching for a lost tomb deep in Orc territory when they were captured by an Orc raiding party.

After a short trial the chieftain announced that the trespassers would be put to death.

As an act of mercy he allowed each prisoner a last request.

The elf said, "I wish to pray to my fathers before being laid to rest!"

The chieftain granted the request.

The human said, "I wish to make a long speech!"

Before the chieftain could answer the dwarf jumped in, "Quick kill me before he makes his speech!"

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By Jolly R. Blackburn

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