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# Monthly adventure role-playing aid Dragon®

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## COVER

"Attack of the Taer" is Daniel Horne's way of saying hello, and our way of welcoming him to the roster of DRAGON Magazine cover artists. It seems as though this brave fighter has made his saving throw against stench, but his real problems may be just beginning.

# Letters

## Info overload

Dear DRAGON,

I have noticed a sudden change in the AD&D game. Rules have been added to and molded, book covers and artists have changed dramatically, novels are appearing, modules are coming out with greater force and frequency, and your articles are hard to keep up with. With all this rush of new material, and the added confusion of many good new games coming out, I am finding it very difficult to keep up on the rules and additions. I think that this is affecting my play, and I feel swamped. Why the changes, and am I alone in these feelings?

Jim Robinson  
Sam Jose, Calif.

*I'm sure you're not alone, Jim, but I don't think the changes you perceive are anything to get really worked up about. One of the strong points of a good role-playing game such as the AD&D® game is that it can be as simple or as complex as you choose to make it. We put out support material because there's a demand for it, but you aren't required to own every accessory product in order to play the game.*

*Don't be dismayed by the abundance of game and game-related material; instead, consider it an opportunity for you to pick and choose, so you can tailor your game the way you want it. — KM*

## House organ?

Dear Editor,

I write with one small point: if DRAGON Magazine is a "Monthly adventure role-playing aid," why do "TSR Previews" and "TSR Profiles" rate their own departments? If the magazine is a house organ, call it a house organ; otherwise treat TSR's advertising like everyone else's advertising! (Of course, the vast preponderance of DRAGON articles are TSR-oriented anyway, so it's really a house organ no matter what you do. . . .)

Rudolph von Abele Jr.  
Washington, D.C.

*It's not good form to answer a question with a question, but I have to do it this time: What does listing "Previews" and "Profiles" as departments have to do with the magazine being (or not being) a "Monthly adventure role-playing aid"? How does this define DRAGON® Magazine as a house organ, considering that the departments list also includes several other regular features that have nothing to do with TSR? I'm not really sure what Rudolph is getting at, especially since his argument seems to circle back on itself at the end of his letter.*

*If you think this magazine is a house organ, nothing I can say is going to change your mind. But some of you might be honestly wondering. So, just for grins, let's look up "house organ" in the dictionary. The term is defined as "a publication typically in magazine format issued periodically*

*by a business concern to further its interest among employees and sales personnel or among agents and customers." The key words, of course, are "to further its interest."*

*If DRAGON Magazine was a house organ, it would not contain advertising for any non-TSR products; it would not include articles on the SPACE OPERA™ and TRAVELLER® games, for instance, both of which are featured in this issue; it would not use articles such as "A different design" (issue #108), which does TSR no good whatsoever; and it probably wouldn't have features such as Snarfquest, Wormy, the convention calendar, and the World Gamers Guide, to name a few.*

*I'm sorry if I've belabored the point, or if I've sounded defensive. Maybe I simply should have said this: If DRAGON magazine really was a house organ, do you think my boss would ever have let me publish this letter? — KM*

## Open question

Dear Editor,

In issue #106, the article about enchanted doors was very interesting and useful, but it doesn't say anything about how to open the Dread Portal safely or without destroying it. Could you give me some advice?

Christian Lainesse  
Arthabaska, Que.

*The description says that "anyone touching the door directly" is affected by the imprisoned wraith — but you don't have to touch a door to open it. Is that enough of a hint, or do I have to knock you over the head? — KM*

## Plans change

Dear DRAGON,

In your answer to Mark Baxter (Letters, #106), you stated ". . . he (Gary Gygax) has no plans at present to preview these classes through articles in the magazine." In "From the Sorcerer's Scroll" in issue #65, Mr. Gygax said he would try to get these classes in the magazine before they get into a book, including putting two in one article.

What caused this discrepancy? Did the Kindly Editor forget about that article after three and a half years?

Brett Hansen  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

*The two words in black type on top of this letter say it all. Time marches on, and intentions sometimes march off in a different direction than they were originally headed. I'll make two suggestions: First, don't hold us to any intentions we expressed in a magazine three and a half years ago. Second, whenever you see the words "we will do this," read in the invisible phrase ". . . unless something happens to change that in the meantime." — KM*

## In the middle of everything

Both of the special attractions in this issue are out of the ordinary, and I think you'll need to know a little more about each of them to fully appreciate them. So, here goes.

Some of you have been politely pestering us to publish posters, and now we're taking our second step in that direction. Bound into this issue, around the GEN CON® Convention preregistration booklet, is your oversized introduction to AGENT 13™ and the Invisible Empire, the first book in a new series of adventure novels from TSR. This dynamic painting by Jeff Butler is a minor variation on the cover art for the book, which will be in stores sometime this summer.

Agent 13, also known as The Midnight Avenger, is the creation of authors Flint Dille and David Marconi. His purpose in life is to foil the schemes of the Brotherhood, a sinister organization that kidnapped him as a child and trained him in the arts of power. When he learned of their evil aims, Agent 13 (the name the Brotherhood gave him) escaped from the organization. Now, in 1937, as the threat of World War II is becoming more real, he has begun to wage a one-man war against the Brotherhood and its plans for world domination.

If you think that sounds like good material for a TOP SECRET® game, well . . . we thought of it first. We're planning to publish some game materials (character and weapon descriptions, maybe a scenario or two) in magazine form within a few months, trying to link AGENT 13 and the TOP SECRET system, and the game department may follow that up with some accessories later.

And what's so special about the convention booklet? We do it every year, and every year a few people grumble about having to pay for something they can't use. Well, first of all, the booklet is not part of the magazine's regular 104 pages, so if it's useless to you then the worst you can say is that you got what you paid for.

Second, the booklet is invaluable to the thousands of people who want to participate in the convention. And, obviously, the magazine is the best vehicle we have for getting the information to a lot of people efficiently.

If you can't use the information, I'm genuinely sorry. Then again, if all of you came, we'd probably have to rent Upper Michigan for the weekend. . . .



# The World Gamers Guide

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you can be included in the World Gamers Guide by sending your name and full address, plus your gaming preferences, to World Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147 USA.

Abbreviations in parentheses after a name indicate games in which that person is especially interested:

AD = AD&D® game; DD = D&D® game; CC = CALL OF CTHULHU®

game; GW = GAMMA WORLD® game; SF = STAR FRONTIERS® game; ST = STAR TREK®: The Role-Playing Game; MSH = MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game; TS = TOP SECRET® game; T = TRAVELLER® game; RQ = RUNEQUEST® game; VV = VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™.

The World Gamers Guide is intended for the benefit of gamers who live outside the continental United States and Canada, in areas where nearby gamers are small in number or nonexistent, as a

way for them to contact other game-players who would be interested in corresponding about the activities that they enjoy. Unfortunately, we cannot extend this service to persons who live in remote areas of the U.S. or Canada, or to U.S. military personnel with APO or FPO addresses. Each eligible name and address that we receive will be published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON® Magazine; to be listed for more than three issues, you must send in another postcard or letter.

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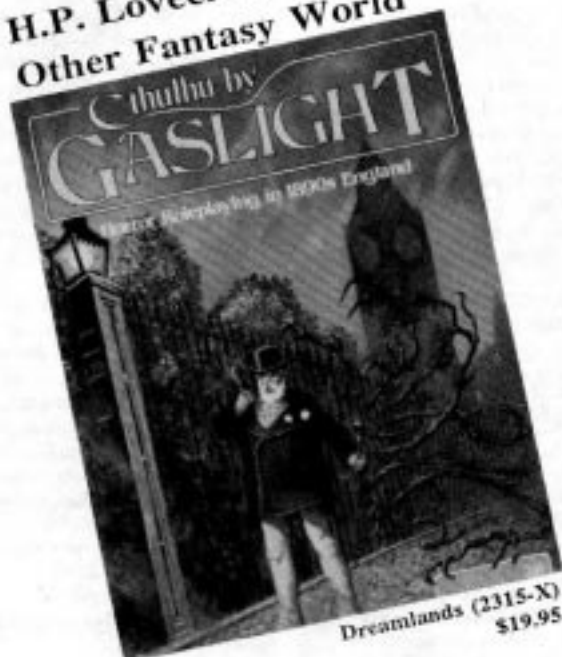
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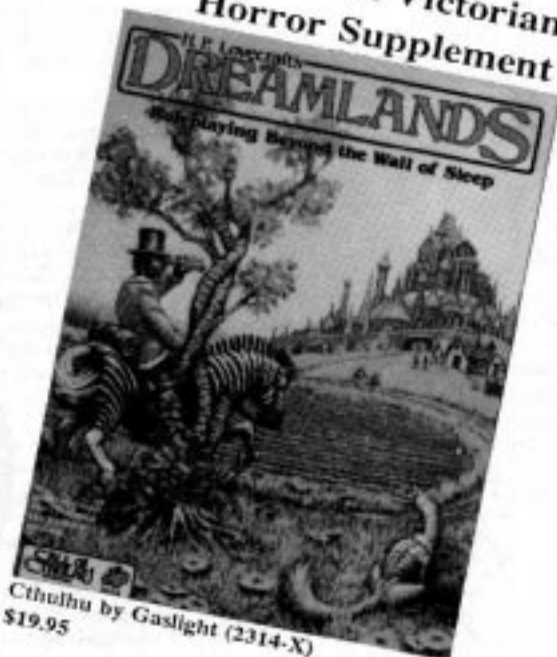
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# The forum

I agree with the guest editorial by Frank Mentzer, in POLYHEDRON™ issue #26, about the negative publicity the D&D® game has received from the media (60 Minutes, Today Show, Newsweek, etc.). As Frank Mentzer says, "We encourage you to get the facts yourself, and do your own thinking. We think that all this noise will die down if the cold light of reason and Truth shines upon it." It is time we get some facts together!

I am a D&D player and a pediatric psychiatrist. It's my hunch that the D&D game and other role-playing games are not only fun, but they offer a way to develop new knowledge and skills, and to make good friends. For most, game-playing is a positive experience. With your help, I would like to gather facts about D&D gaming, facts that go beyond the "opinions" which everyone seems to have plenty of! Please take half an hour and write up (in as much detail as you can) an exciting adventure you have had playing the D&D game and send it to me. The story should describe the game from beginning to end, especially your own experience. With a number of such stories, we can get beyond "opinions." By the way, this is strictly voluntary, and you don't need to sign your name. Just write down your age.

So please — take half an hour and help do some real research to shed light, and hopefully understanding, on D&D gaming!

Dr. John F. McDermott  
1356 Lusitana Street  
Honolulu HI 96813

In DRAGON® issue #107, page 95, Daniel Myers expressed his dissatisfaction with the new AD&D® game rules, especially *Unearthed Arcana*. Daniel summed up his feelings with his statement: "Aside from *Oriental Adventures*, all the new rules seem to be bound to Mr. Gygax's own Greyhawk campaign."

Certainly, pieces of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting pop up in official AD&D rules with frequency. This is not a new trend, though. When I learned how to play the D&D game (around 1976), the first supplement to those three, flimsy, paperback rule pamphlets was titled "Greyhawk" and the second was titled "Blackmoor." A quick glance at the magical spell lists in the *Player's Handbook* will reveal names such as Tenser, Leomund, Bigby, and Mordekainen (all, I believe, from Mr. Gygax's campaign). And now, in *Unearthed Arcana*, we have a dozen or so new magic items labeled with names of personages from Greyhawk (Boccob, Murlynd, Celestian, and Zaggy).

Yes, on page 20 of *Unearthed Arcana*, the barbarian homelands are given for Greyhawk. But, don't forget the very next paragraph that begins, "Using the above as examples, the DM can tailor his barbarians to fit his campaign." Yes, the name of valley elves is derived from the Valley of the Mage in Greyhawk, but the description continues with ". . . valley elves are equally at home in any similarly far-removed section of the world free of other elvish influences."

The point I want to make is: What's in a name? If a DM objects to having "Tenser's

Transformation" in his campaign, he can simply rename the spell. Boccob never was nor will be in my campaign, so the Ring of Boccob became the Ring of Heimdall. It seems that using people and places from the Greyhawk campaign in official AD&D publications simply helps illustrate the meaning or spirit of the rules.

There is one point on which I agree with Mr. Myers. The social class and birth system found on pages 82-83 of *Unearthed Arcana* is "of little value" in an official AD&D rule publication. In my campaign, such a system is useless. However, one bad apple didn't ruin the whole barrel.

My advice to those who are offended by the flavor of Greyhawk found throughout the official AD&D rules is to tailor the rules to fit your campaign, altering or omitting as you see fit. The rules aren't meant to be force-fed to your campaign. If you can't use it, don't buy it. But don't let a name get in the way.

Glen Sitton  
Austin, Tex.

While I was rolling up a magic-user character for the AD&D game, I ran upon a rule that seems illogical to me, the "Maximum Number of Spells/Level" rule on page 10 of the *Players Handbook*. I had never encountered any problems with this before, because the previous magic-users I had played all had relatively high intelligence scores and never had any problems. This character, however, has an intelligence of 12 (I rolled him up the "old-fashioned" way, not one of the new methods presented in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*) and is approaching sixth level. He already has seven spells of both 1st and 2nd levels in his books, and has found another. So, I was forced to give some serious thought to the maximum number of spells rule.

The rule seems illogical, both at first and after a more careful examination. The limitation is not on the number of spells that a character can memorize at once, but it is instead on the number of spells that he can keep in his books. That doesn't seem right.

A character's intelligence is a measure of his overall mental processes, including mental capacity, reasoning power, and ability to cope with new circumstances (see DRAGON issue #107). Intelligence is not a measure of a character's writing ability (although a character with a low intelligence would have difficulty writing well), as this rule seems to imply. It seems to me that the "Maximum Number of Spells/Level" should be the maximum number of spells that a character can memorize at one time within a spell level. Allow me to explain further.

A character's intelligence should certainly effect his powers of memory. A more intelligent character should be able to memorize more spells than a less intelligent character. This principle comes through in the rules in the "Wisdom Spell Bonus" rule, whereby a cleric gains bonus spells for having a high wisdom. Just because a magic-user can't memorize ten spells at once doesn't mean he can't have ten spells in his books, selecting at the beginning of a day which spells he wants to memorize. After all, a person who is not of exceptional intellect can still own a library.

I am definitely in favor of a limit on the number of spells that a high-level magic-user can carry around in his head at once. I am also in favor of applying a little common sense to the subject. From my point of view, the rule should be changed to read ". . . According to the character's intelligence, this maximum number which the magic-user can possibly know at one time varies from six to an unlimited number." Then, to determine the number of spells that a magic-user can know, consult the "Spells Usable by Class and Level — Magic-Users" table on page 26 of the *Players Handbook*. If the chart on page 26 states that the number of spells that the character can memorize of any given level is less than or equal to the maximum number, then everything is OK. If not, the character can only memorize up to his maximum number, no matter how many spells the chart says are usable by a character of his level.

I do not think that this makes magic-users of high levels unduly powerful (at least not any more so than they already are), because of the "Chance to Know Each Listed Spell" rule. This rule states that if a magic-user wishes to learn (place in his spell books) any given spell, he must first roll equal to or less than his percentage chance. If he doesn't make the roll, then he can never know that spell. Not only does this limit the number of spells that a character will have in his books (returning to the example of my character, he will only make his percentage roll enough to know an average of 10 spells per level of spell levels 2-6), it is perfectly logical, considering that real people "get" certain subjects better than others (consider the student, like myself, who has difficulty remembering dates).

There should be a limit on the number of spells that a character can memorize, based on intelligence. This limit should not extend to an arbitrary cut-off on the number of spells that he can have in his books.

Gordon Hull  
Murfreesboro, Tenn.

I would like to give, and perhaps receive, some advice in relation to "The Way We Really Play," by Tom Armstrong (page 38, DRAGON issue #106). I have now been refereeing for two years, an expert in the opinion of a true beginner, yet I still consider myself a beginner. I have played through what Mr. Armstrong refers to as Stage 1, the "Monty Haul" campaign. I have also played through Stage 2, the stage where the referee discovers what he has done, and attempts to turn himself around and stick to The Books. I am now sitting in Stage 3, the so-called "normal" stage. It is here where my agreement with Mr. Armstrong's very accurate account of the development of a DM stops short. He gives one particular piece of advice that is the offender: work with your players. There is a very big problem with this advice. My players don't want to be worked with. Now either I'm unlucky, and most other DMs in the world have nice, sweet, cooperative characters, or Mr. Armstrong is lucky, and most players generally tend to be slightly uncooperative. I would guess the latter. The reason for this is that not many players also referee, and even fewer of the ones that do are at the same stage the DM is. It is for this reason that players very rarely understand the DM's motives in any actions taken.

I have had players get downright flippant and angry when I have laid down new and perfectly sensible rules. They simply didn't understand them or why I thought they were necessary. In addition to simply misunderstanding a DM's motives, most players, if you manage to let the

(Turn to page 97)



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# Customized classes

## How to put together one-of-a-kind characters

by Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

In the Good Old Days, the days of the original three books of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, the number of variants on the rules was roughly equal to X, where X was the number of players of the game.

Alas, we all get older and more conservative, and with the publication of the more detailed, more structured D&D® Basic Set, variant rules tended to become one with history.

There's no reason why that has to be so. The D&D game, by virtue of its inherent simplicity, is an excellent platform for experimental rules — such as these, for allowing a player to design his own character class.

The basic concept is to build up a character class capability by capability, increasing the experience-point costs to rise in levels to match what the character is capable of doing. It is strongly but not insistently recommended that if one player uses this variant, all do. Strange things could happen if someone ran, say, a regular cleric among a party of customized characters.

Also, please note that no progression is provided for customized classes beyond 11th level. If you want to work out the tables for yourself, don't let me stop you — I stopped there because in the campaigns I've played in, I've yet to have a character get as high as 11th level; anything above that seemed a waste of effort.

### One table at a time

First, consult Table 1. This gives the base experience point cost to attain each of the 11 levels beyond 1st. You will note that the numbers are small — but they won't stay that way for long.

What happens is that each capability you choose for your class will increase the base EP cost by some percent. By adding all the percentage costs together and multiplying them by the base EPs, you find the actual EP cost for your class to rise in levels.

For example, consult Table 2 (which is next anyway). This gives the possible hit dice your character can have per level, as well as the hit points gained per level after the hit dice "top out." If all the hit points you wanted were a d3 per level, and no hit points at all after topping out, there would be no percentage cost increase in the base EPs per level and, assuming your character could do nothing else, either, he/she would progress to 2nd level at 400 EP, 3rd at 800, and so forth. (But how you would earn any experience points at all with such a character is beyond me.)

However, if you wanted a d4 per level, and 1/2 hit point per level after topping out, the cost would be +25% for each level, so level 2 would be attained at 500 EP (125% × 400), level 3 at 1000 (125% × 800), and so forth — if the character had no other abilities at all.

You can mix the hit dice as well — that is, for example, have a d6 for each of the first three levels and a d4 after that. In that case, the EP cost for the first three levels would be calculated at the d6 rate (+ 50%), but when the character is at 4th level or higher, only the d4 rate would be paid (+ 25%). Then, if you want to gain 3 hit points per level after topping out, the cost goes up to +200% for every level after the one at which the character tops out.

Table 3 gives the level at which the hit dice top out and the character class begins receiving hit points instead of additional hit dice. For example, for no percentage cost at all, a character will roll hit dice at the first eight levels, then receive hit points at level 9 and up.

Table 4 gives the armor usable by the character. As with hit dice, this could be mixed — e.g., a character might be restricted to leather armor for the first five levels, but be able to wear any armor after that.

Table 5 gives the weapons usable by the character. As with hit dice, the abilities can be different at different levels.

Table 6 gives the cost for a class to possess the special abilities of one of the demi-human races. The character class would then be most likely of that race or a related race (someone constructing a gnome character class, for example, might well choose the dwarven abilities).

Table 7 gives the magic items usable by a character. Each category of item has a cost associated with it. Note that in the case of weapons and armor, the ability to use a *magical* version of an item does not imply the ability to use that type of item to begin with; a character with the ability to use magic weapons, for example, cannot use a magic sword unless he/she has the ability to use a non-magic sword, too.

Next, the saving throw table used by the class is chosen from Table 8. This choice is made only once; it may not change as the character advances in levels. Once a dwarf, always a dwarf. Note again, however, that using the "Dwarf" table does not necessarily mean that a character is a dwarf, just that he *saves* as one.

Table 9 gives the percentage cost to im-

bue a character class with the abilities associated with the various specialists who normally have to be hired. The specialties may commence at a level other than 1, in which case the cost is not paid until that level is reached.

Table 10 gives the number of levels needed to advance one column on the hit table (for example, as written, magic-users need 5 levels to advance one column, clerics 4, and so forth). As with saving throws, this cost is chosen only once, starting at level 1.

If a class is to use magic, the spell progression must be bought. There are seven possible spell progression tables, numbered I through VI plus VIa, a more powerful version of VI. The costs given are for classes using clerical spells; for magical spells, add +100% to the cost. (For example, Table I magic-user spell capability costs +150% per level.) Once a progression table has been bought, it may not be exchanged for a different one at a higher level; however, the use of spells (and payment for same) may commence at any level, like thieving abilities. A class may use both magical and clerical spells by paying both costs, so that Table I progression in both categories costs +200%.

### Other attributes

Each of the special thieving abilities (Open Locks, Remove Traps, Pick Pockets, Move Silently, Climb Sheer Surfaces, Hide in Shadows, Hear Noise, and Backstab) may be purchased at a cost of +10% (or all together for +80%). These skills may start at a level other than 1; for example, a class might have no thieving abilities at all until 4th level, in which case the characters of that class would receive 1st-level thieving abilities at 4th level, 2nd at 5th, and so on; the cost for the abilities would not be applied until the character was at 4th level, moving to 5th level.

A class may possess the ability to turn or dispel undead creatures as a cleric does. This ability costs +50%, and may commence at a level other than 1, in which case it is treated like a thieving ability starting at a higher level.

Although not normally available to player-character races, the following talents and conditions may be allowed by the referee at his or her lordly whim:

Flying: Cost is a base +20%, plus 5% per each 2" of movement rate desired.

Swimming: Includes breathing underwater; cost is a base +10%, plus 5% per each 1" of movement rate desired.



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Regeneration: Repair/regenerate one point of damage per turn, like a troll, unless injured by fire. Cost is +100%.

Infravision: 60' infravision costs +20%.

Shapechange: This is *not* lycanthropy.

The character may freely change between his normal form and that of any other specific, predetermined land-based mammal, taking one melee round to make the transition. The animal form never goes up in levels, but has the hit points and other

characteristics given in the monster list. The cost for shapechanging is +50% per hit die of the animal form the character is able to change into.

### Going on from here

The system as described here has a lot of versatility, and can be used to create an uncountable number of different character classes or character types. But it can be played with even more: abilities and charac-

teristics can be added or dropped on a level-by-level basis at the whim of the player (assuming, of course, the consent of the DM). You might want to give your character spell-casting ability only at every third level, thieving abilities at every fourth level, and the ability to turn undead at 10th level only (just to see what it's like). Every character in a game can, quite literally, be in a class by himself — just like each one of us is in the world we occupy.

**TABLE 1: BASE EXPERIENCE PTS.**

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
	400	2
2	800	3
3	1600	4
4	3200	5
5	6400	6
6	12800	7
7	25000	8
8	50000	9
9	75000	10
10	100000	11
11	125000	12

**TABLE 2: HIT DICE**

Hit dice	Hit points	Cost
d3	0	+ 0%
d4	1/2	+25%
d6	1	+50%
d8	2	+ 100%
d10	3	+ 200%

**TABLE 3: TOPPING OUT**

Level	Cost
8	+ 0%
9	+ 10%
10	+20%
11	+30%
12	+40%

**TABLE 4: ARMOR**

Type	Cost
None	+0%
Shield	+ 10%
Leather	+20%
Any without shield	+40%
All	+50%

**TABLE 5: WEAPONS**

Type	Cost
None	+0%
Axes	+10%
Bows	+15%
Catapults	+5%
Daggers	+5%
Swords	+15%
Pole Weapons (pole arm, lance, javelin, spear)	
+10%	
Impact Weapons (mace, club, hammer)	
+5%	
Staves	+5%
Slings	+5%
Any weapon	+75%

**TABLE 6: RACIAL ABILITIES**

Race	Cost
Halfling	+ 10%
Dwarf	+20%
Elf	+30%

**TABLE 7: MAGIC ITEMS**

Type	Cost
Weapons	+ 10%
Armor	+ 5%
Potions/Rings	+ 15%
Misc. Magic	+ 10%
Wands/Staves/Rods	+ 15%
Protection Scrolls	+ 5%
Other Scrolls	+ 10%

**TABLE 8: SAVING THROWS**

Save as	Cost
Cleric	+ 15%
Dwarf/Halfling	+40%
Elf	+30%
Fighter	+25%
Magic User	+ 5%
Thief	+ 10%
Normal Man	+ 0%

**TABLE 9: SPECIALTIES**

Specialty	Cost
Alchemist	+ 50%
Armorer	+ 20%
Animal Trainer	+ 30%
Engineer	+ 50%
Sage	+100%
SPY	+ 40%
Seaman/Rower	+ 5%
Seaman/Sailor	+ 10%
Seaman/Captain	+ 50%
Seaman/Navigator	+ 40%

**TABLE 10: HIT PROGRESSION**

Progression	Cost
Normal Man	+0%
5 levels	+10%
4 levels	+30%
3 levels	+50%
2 levels	+ 100%

**MAGIC TABLES**

**I: Cost + 50%**

Lvl	1	Lvl	1	2
1	1	1	1	—
2	2	2	2	—
3	3	3	2	1
4	4	4	2	2
5	5	5	3	2
6	6	6	3	3
7	7	7	4	3
8	8	8	4	4
9	9	9	5	4
10	10	10	5	5
11	11	11	7	5

**Table II: Cost + 70%**

**III: Cost + 90%**

Lvl	1	2	3
1	1	—	—
2	2	—	—
3	2	1	—
4	2	2	—
5	2	2	1
6	2	2	2
7	3	3	2
8	4	3	2
9	4	4	3
10	5	4	3
11	6	5	4

**IV: Cost + 110%**

Lvl	1	2	3	4
1	1	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-
4	2	2	-	-
5	2	2	1	-
6	2	2	2	-
7	3	2	2	1
8	3	3	2	2
9	4	3	3	2
10	4	3	3	3
11	5	4	3	3

**V: Cost + 130%**

Lvl	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	-	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-	-
4	2	2	-	-	-
5	2	2	1	-	-
6	2	2	2	-	-
7	3	2	2	1	-
8	3	3	2	2	-
9	3	3	3	2	1
10	3	3	3	3	2
11	4	4	3	3	3

**VI: Cost + 150%**

Lvl	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-	-	-
4	2	2	-	-	-	-
5	2	2	1	-	-	-
6	2	2	2	-	-	-
7	3	2	2	1	-	-
8	3	3	2	2	-	-
9	3	3	3	2	1	-
10	3	3	3	3	2	-
11	4	3	3	3	2	1

**VIa: Cost + 175%**

Lvl	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	1	-	-	-	-
3	2	2	-	-	-	-
4	2	2	1	-	-	-
5	2	2	2	-	-	-
6	3	2	2	1	-	-
7	3	3	2	2	-	-
8	3	3	3	2	1	-
9	3	3	3	3	2	-
10	4	3	3	3	2	1
11	4	4	3	3	3	2

**EXAMPLES**

The first seven examples (A-G) more or less recreate the standard classes. The remaining five classes (H-L) are brand new.

**A: CLERIC**

Cost	Ability/characteristic
100	Base cost
60	Hit dice: d6 to L9, + 1 after
50	Armor: any
20	Weapons: catapult, impact, staves, slings
0	Racial abilities: none
65	Magic: any but protection
15	Saves: as cleric
0	Specialties: none
30	Hit Table Progression: 4 levels
150	Spells: clerical table VI at L1
50	Turn Undead: at L1
0	Thieving Abilities: none

TOTAL COST: 540% at all levels

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	2160	2
2	4320	3
3	8690	4
4	17280	5
5	34560	6
6	69120	7
7	135000	8
8	220000	9
9	405000	10
10	540000	11
11	675000	12

**B: FIGHTER**

Cost	Ability/characteristic
100	Base cost
110	Hit dice: d8 to L9, + 2 after
50	Armor: any
75	Weapons: any
0	Racial abilities: none
30	Magic: weapons, armor, potions/rings
25	Saves: as fighter
0	Specialties: none
50	Hit Table Progression: 3 levels
0	Spells: none
0	Thieving Abilities: none

TOTAL COST: 440% at all levels

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	1760	2
2	3520	3
3	7040	4
4	14080	5
5	28160	6
6	56320	7
7	110000	8
8	220000	9
9	330000	10
10	440000	11
11	550000	12

**C: MAGIC-USER**

Cost	Ability/characteristic
100	Base cost
35/60	Hit dice: d4 to L9, + 1 after
0	Armor: none
5	Weapons: dagger
0	Racial abilities: none
65	Magic: any except armor
5	Saves: as magic-user
0	Specialties: none
5	Hit Table Progression: 5 levels
250	Spells: magical table VI at L1
0	Thieving Abilities: none

TOTAL COST: 460% at levels 1-9, 485% at levels 10 +

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	1840	2
2	3680	3
3	7360	4
4	14720	5
5	29440	6
6	58880	7
7	115000	8
8	230000	9
9	345000	10
10	485000	11
11	606250	12

**D: THIEF**

Cost	Ability/characteristic
100	Base cost
35/110	Hit dice: d4 to L9, + 2 after
20	Armor: leather
60	Weapons: any except pole arms, staves
0	Racial abilities: none
30	Magic: weapons, armor, potions/rings
10	Saves: as thief
0	Specialties: none
30	Hit Table Progression: 4 levels
0	Spells: none
80	Thieving Abilities: all at L1

TOTAL COST: 365% at levels 1-9, 440% at levels 10 +

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	1460	2
2	2920	3
3	5840	4
4	11680	5
5	23360	6
6	46720	7
7	91250	8
8	182500	9
9	273750	10
10	440000	11
11	550000	12

**E: ELF**

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Ability/characteristic</b>
100	Base cost
60/110	Hit dice: d6 to L9, + 2 after
50	Armor: any
75	Weapons: any
30	Racial abilities: as elf
70	Magic: any
30	Saves: as elf
0	Specialties: none
50	Hit Table Progression: 3 levels
230	Spells: magical table V at L1
0	Thieving Abilities: none

TOTAL COST: 695% at levels 1-9,  
745% at levels 10 +

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	2780	2
2	5560	3
3	11120	4
4	22240	5
5	44480	6
6	88960	7
7	173750	8
8	347500	9
9	521250	10
10	745000	11
11	931250	12

**F: DWARF**

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Ability/characteristic</b>
100	Base cost
110	Hit dice: d8 to L9, +2 after
50	Armor: any
60	Weapons: any but pole arms, staves
20	Racial abilities: as dwarf
30	Magic: weapons, armor, potions/rings
40	Saves: as dwarf
	Specialties: none
50	Hit Table Progression: 3 levels
	Spells: none
	Thieving Abilities: none

TOTAL COST: 460% at all levels

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	1840	2
2	3680	3
3	7360	4
4	14720	5
5	29440	6
6	58880	7
7	115000	8
8	230000	9
9	345000	10
10	460000	11
11	575000	12

**G: HALFLING**

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Ability/characteristic</b>
100	Base cost
50/25	Hit dice: d6 to L8, + 1/2 after
50	Armor: any
60	Weapons: all except pole arms, staves
10	Racial abilities: as halfling
30	Magic: weapons, armor, potions/rings
40	Saves: as halfling
0	Specialties: none
50	Hit Table Progression: 3 levels
0	Spells: none
0	Thieving Abilities: none

TOTAL COST: 390% at levels 1-8,  
365% at levels 9 +

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	1560	2
2	3120	3
3	6240	4
4	12480	5
5	24960	6
6	49920	7
7	97500	8
8	195000	9
9	273750	10
10	365000	11
11	456250	12

**H: GENERIC ADVENTURER**

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Ability/characteristic</b>
100	Base cost
50	Hit dice: d6 to L8, + 1 after
30	Armor: leather, shield
35	Weapons: bows, daggers, swords
0	Racial abilities: none
30	Magic: weapons, armor, potions/rings
10	Saves: as thief
0	Specialties: none
30	Hit Table Progression: 4 levels
0	Spells: none
0	Thieving Abilities: none

TOTAL COST: 285% at all levels

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	1140	2
2	2280	3
3	4560	4
4	9120	5
5	18240	6
6	36480	7
7	71250	8
8	142500	9
9	213750	10
10	285000	11
11	356250	12

This represents about the minimum ability a character could have and expect to survive for very long. It might also be used to roll up hirelings.

**I: ORC**

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Ability/characteristic</b>
100	Base cost
70/120	Hit dice: d6 to L10, +2 after
50	Armor: any
30	Weapons: axes, catapults, pole arms, impact weapons
20	Racial abilities: as dwarf
0/10/15	Magic: weapons at L5, armor at L10
25	Saves: as fighter
0	Specialties: none
30	Hit Table Progression: 4 levels
0	Spells: none
0	Thieving Abilities: none

TOTAL COST: 325% at levels 1-4,  
335% at levels 5-9,  
340% at level 10,  
390% at levels 11 +

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	1300	2
2	2600	3
3	5200	4
4	10400	5
5	21440	6
6	42880	7
7	83750	8
8	167500	9
9	251250	10
10	340000	11
11	487500	12

**J: VIKING**

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Ability/characteristic</b>
100	Base cost
100	Hit dice: d8 to L8, + 2 after
30	Armor: leather, shield
55	Weapons: all except catapults, pole arms, staves
0	Racial abilities: none
30/35/45	Magic: weapons, armor, potions/rings at L1 protection scrolls at L6 other scrolls at L11
25	Saves: as fighter
45	Specialties: seaman/rower, seaman/navigator
50	Hit Table Progression: 3 levels
0	Spells: none
0	Thieving Abilities: none

TOTAL COST: 425% at levels 1-5  
430% at levels 6-10  
440% at levels 11 +

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	1700	2
2	3400	3
3	6800	4
4	13600	5
5	27200	6
6	55040	7
7	107500	8
8	215000	9
9	322500	10
10	430000	11
11	550000	12



**K: FAIRY**

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Ability/characteristic</b>
100	Base cost
40	Hit dice: d3 to L12
0	Armor: none
0	Weapons: none
30	Racial abilities: as elf; maximum encumbrance 10 cn; treat as AC0 when in flight
30	Magic: miscellaneous plus all scrolls
30	Saves: as elf
0/100	Specialties: sage at L10
0	Hit Table Progression: as normal man
190/260	Spells: magical table 3 at L1 clerical table 2 at L7
0	Thieving Abilities: none
60	Optional Ability: flying at 16"

TOTAL COST: 480% at levels 1-6,  
550% at levels 7-9,  
650% at levels 10 +

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
	1920	2
2	3840	3
	7680	4
4	15360	5
5	30720	6
6	61440	7
	137500	8
8	275000	9
9	412500	10
10	650000	11
11	812500	12

Some class conceptions won't be covered by the standard rules, as with 3' tall fairies. When this occurs, improvise special Racial Abilities to cover the oddities, as has been done here. As long as there is a balance between special advantages and special disadvantages, there's no need to figure a percentage cost for them.

**L: UBERMENSCH**

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Ability/characteristic</b>
100	Base cost
240	Hit dice: d10 to L12
50	Armor: any
75	Weapons: any
60	Racial abilities: as elf, dwarf, and halfling
70	Magic: any
40	Saves: as dwarf
395	Specialties: all
100	Hit Table Progression: 2 levels
450	Spells: magical table VIa at L1 clerical table VIa at L1
50	Turn Undead: at L1
80	Thieving Abilities: all at L1

TOTAL COST: 1710% at all levels

Current level	Points needed to attain...	Next level
1	6840	2
2	13680	3
3	27360	4
4	54720	5
5	109440	6
6	218880	7
7	427500	8
8	855000	9
9	1282500	10
10	1710000	11
11	2137500	12

This guy probably wears red-and-blue longjohns with a big "S" under his armor. This character can do practically everything except advance in levels at a reasonable rate.

**Editor's conclusion**

Although this system is designed for use with the D&D® game, the principles might also be applied to the AD&D® game system — not necessarily to design customized classes from scratch, but to slightly modify existing classes. If a fighter wants to be able to pick pockets, tack on a 10% experience-point penalty and let him try; if a cleric wants to swing a sword, let him do it at the cost of having to earn an extra 15% in experience points. We'll be interested to hear from you about how this system works in practice. 8

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**Leave Your World Behind**

# The barbarian cleric

No tribe is complete without one of these

by Thomas M. Kane

*A great fire burned at the meeting grounds. As far as the eye could see, the silent warriors stood and watched, arrayed in war paint, ten thousand strong. Before the fire lay an aged man, pierced through the heart by an iron blade. His body was painted with strange symbols, a serpentine tracery of valuable pigments. The old man lay motionless and without breath.*

*Suddenly his chest heaved; warriors close by him gasped and drew back. Slowly the old man awoke and stared at something in the night sky that no one else could see. He lifted a straw doll as the sword hung from the unbleeding wound in his ribs.*

*"The spirits have favored us!" he shouted in a hoarse voice. Pulling the sword from his chest, he rose to his full height. After heating the clean blade in the fire's coals, he touched it to the straw effigy which burst into flame.*

*"The time has come!" he finished. "We attack! We conquer!" The fighters roared, the wave of sound filling the night with bloodlust. The Sabertooth People were going to war. As they left, the tiny straw figure scorched and shriveled into gray ashes, even as orchid fortresses and towns would do only hours hence. . . .*

Among tribes of primitive people, religion is carried out in a different way from traditional worship. A primitive tribe's expectations are different from civilized ones. Most barbarians do not have any basic adoration for a cleric's divine powers. They may fear and hate some deities, while loving others', but religion is used more as a way to cajole magical favors from the gods than a means of honoring divine beings. Barbarian clerics deserve treatment separate from more traditional clerics. They are mystics and the consorts of spirits, seeking their people's safety and control of the world around them.

Most barbarian tribes have only one cleric, who represents every deity worshiped by any member of the tribe. Thus, barbarian clerics serve entire pantheons, and both good and evil deities are served by the same cleric. For example, in a tribe worshipping the American Indian pantheon, the same cleric would supervise races for Hastsetsi, call on Snake-Man to drive off undead, and burn down the huts of those who defy Hastsezini. This makes the position of a barbarian cleric morally troublesome and dangerous. A tribal cleric must resolve the conflicting desires of his deities, or else suffer punishment from one god or another.

Holy symbols vary from tribe to tribe, usually taking the form of body paint, bizarre jewelry, or even shrunken heads.

Due to the practical expectations of tribal peoples, barbarian clerics must constantly display symbols and relics of their power, demonstrating that the gods are showing the tribe their favor because of the clerics' entreaties. Thus, the clerics earn respect, fear, and goodwill from fellow tribesmen. Not that primitive clerics are looked down upon — most tribesmen hold them in great awe. These clerics are usually learned and have a chance to use their knowledge on matters pertaining to the tribe's interests.

Only humans may become barbarian clerics. A barbarian cleric must have strength and constitution scores of at least 15, dexterity at least 14, intelligence at least 10, and wisdom at least 9. Barbarian clerics may be of any non-lawful alignment; they do not have to share the alignment of any particular deity. They do not gain the barbarian fighter's constitution and dexterity bonuses. Only weapons germane to the barbarian's tribe may be employed (typically the hand axe, knife, and spear). They are not limited to the use of blunt weapons, as are other clerics, and prefer to use the weapons employed by their gods. Two weapons of proficiency are initially gained, with an extra one being added every four levels. The non-proficiency penalty is — 3. Barbarian clerics gain full wisdom bonuses for spells. They attack and make saving throws on the cleric tables.

Barbarian clerics suffer no fear of magic. Thus, they may use any item available to clerics, including any magical weapons with which they have proficiency. However, they will not violate taboos on magic in the presence of other barbarians. Primitive clerics see other spell-users as rivals, and encourage the shunning of them.

## Special abilities

Some, but not all, barbarian special abilities are available to tribal clerics. A primitive cleric gains these barbarian abilities: *hide in natural surroundings, leadership, survival, outdoor craft, tracking, first aid*, and, at 8th level, the ability to *summon a horde*. Clerical tribesmen gain no bonuses when attempting to surprise opponents. However, they are surprised themselves only one time in ten.

The extensive knowledge gained by a barbarian cleric allows him to use a sort of *legend lore* power that is not magical (in the manner of a bard's or sage's knowledge)

relating to tribal matters. The chance for possessing correct knowledge on such a topic begins at 50% at 1st level and increases by 5% per level thereafter. The DM should determine what topics would be covered by this *legend lore* ability (local terrain, tribal history and customs, old legends, etc.).

Multi-deity worship allows barbarian clerics to interchange druid and cleric spells. Because of their constant study of mystical arts, they may learn cantrips and magic-user spells as well. In addition, there are certain spells usable only by barbarian clerics. (See below for more information.)

Almost any barbarian tertiary ability may be used by a barbarian cleric, if appropriate to his tribe. Tribal clerics are also capable of using and compounding poison as an assassin who has made a study of it (page 20, DMG). This knowledge is used only in extreme situations. Poison is primarily made for hunting dangerous game or inhuman monsters. Even an evil character is likely to make sparing use of poison, since it invites retaliation.

Finally, this sort of cleric has normal abilities to turn undead, but requires a noisemaker to perform this function. The clerics of some tribes prefer drums, turtle-shell rattles, or cooking pots for this. Other clerics whirl a piece of thin wood on a long piece of gut, making an unearthly noise (a bull roarer). Any of these noisemakers must be *blessed* and *consecrated* (with a *ceremony* spell) to a good deity before their use.

## Level advancement

To rise a level, a barbarian cleric must prove his worth by defeating a supernatural being. This enemy is known as a *nemesis spirit*. When a tribal cleric wishes to rise in status (gain a level) and has accumulated sufficient experience to do so, he must travel alone to the most rugged terrain within four days' journey of his tribe. There, he casts a certain spell to enter a trance in which the nemesis spirit is forced to appear. He then must fight this spirit with whatever spells, equipment, weapons, or tactics are available, until one or the other is "slain."

Neither the cleric nor the spirit will actually die in this combat. If the cleric is victorious, the nemesis becomes a sort of familiar for him. It will train the cleric in the skills of the new experience level, and three times thereafter the cleric may demand its service with a certain spell. If the nemesis wins, it has a choice of actions. It may control the

cleric, as with the spell *magic jar*; injure or humiliate him; or merely kill him (which is rarely done). If the spirit opts for the latter, it materializes on the Prime Material Plane to seek revenge on the cleric and (afterward) the rest of humanity. Though it may not necessarily engage in a "fair fight," the enraged spirit won't have an automatic chance to slay the cleric (who will not have gained his new level).

#### Spells for barbarian clerics

Barbarian clerics serve both clerical and druidical deities. Thus, they may select spells from either category. They also may master magical spells (4th level maximum) as indicated above. Of course, individual alignment and the nature of the tribal religion may restrict this. To cast cantrips or magic-user spells, a barbarian cleric must obtain or create spell books. The tables in

*Unearthed Arcana* or the *Players Handbook* may be used for spell selection. Barbarian clerics also gain special clerical spells available to no other class. These are described below.

#### Hunt Nemesis (Conjuration/Summoning/Alteration)

Level: 1  
 Components: V,S,M  
 Range: Touch  
 Casting Time: 1-4 days  
 Duration: Special  
 Saving Throw: None  
 Area of Effect: Special

Hunt *nemesis* must be used in the ritual in which a barbarian cleric rises a level. This spell forces the nemesis spirit to go to the area where the cleric must battle it. When the spell is cast, the cleric lies down and is encircled by a *sanctuary* spell; he then passes into a trance (treat as *feign death* spell). From the viewpoint of the cleric, the apparition of the nemesis and the subsequent battle are very real; the fight is played out as if a battle were really taking place between two face-to-face contestants who begin 100' apart on a flat plain. The spell lasts until the battle ends in the "death" of a contestant. Any onlookers will merely see the entranced cleric (if the *sanctuary* spell allows).

#### Barbarian clerics table

Experience points	Experience level	d10 for accum. hit points	Level title	Nemesis spirit
0 - 4,500	1	1	Medicine One	Manes
4,501 - 9,000	2	2	Strange One	Lemure
9,001 - 18,000	3	3	Obeah (Voodoo)	Shadow mastiff
18,001 - 36,000	4	4	Air Shaman	Ildriss grue
36,001 - 72,000	5	5	Fire Shaman	Harginn grue
72,001 - 144,000	6	6	Earth Shaman	Chagrinn grue
144,001 - 288,000	7	7	Water Shaman	Varrdig grue
288,001 - 576,000	8	8	Witch Doctor	Shadow demon
576,001 - 1,152,000	9	8 + 4	Arcane Witch Doctor	Red slaad
1,152,001 - 2,304,000	10	8 + 8	Savant Witch Doctor	Blue slaad
2,304,001 - 4,608,000	11	8 + 12	Wangateur	Mezzodaemon
4,608,001 - 8,616,000	12	8 + 16	Fakir	Green slaad

Each level above 12th requires 1,750,000 xp. Four hit points are gained with each such level. A 13th-level cleric must battle a Type V demon, and a 14th-level barbarian cleric must duel with the final enemy: a fully armed grey slaad. After this, the cleric need not face nemesis spirits to advance.

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## Voodoo (Evocation)

Level: 1

Components: V,S,M

Range: *Infinite*

Casting Time: 1 day

Duration: *Special*

Saving Throw: *Neg.*

Area of Effect: *One person*

Although this is a 1st-level spell, a barbarian cleric must be at least 3rd level to cast it. It is used to enspell a creature from afar and, although usually baneful, may be used to help the recipient. A victim saves vs. spell to avoid the voodoo effects, if so desired. If the secondary spell used with voodoo may normally be saved against, another save may be attempted. To cast the spell, an effigy worth at least 500 gp must be constructed of the intended recipient. Since this effigy must be realistic, the sculptor must be quite familiar with the subject. The effigy must then be pierced with ornate pins in a lengthy ritual. Copper pins (3 gp each) cause harm and silver pins (1 gp each) are used to help the recipient. An oil worth 10 gp per level of the caster must then be applied to the doll and the cleric. The available effects of the spell vary with the level of the caster. The effects of the voodoo are identical to the spell resembled, unless otherwise mentioned.

### Voodoo effects

Caster level	Pins needed	Effect
3+	3	<i>curse/bless, scare</i>
4+	6	<i>cause/cure light wounds, portent *</i>
7+	9	<i>cause/cure disease, cause/cure paralysis, cause/cure blindness, bestow/remove curse, charm person</i>
9+	12	<i>cause/cure serious wounds</i>
11+	13	<i>quest, cause/cure critical wounds</i>
13+	20	<i>coma **</i>

\* – The caster is aware of the results.

\*\* – The victim must save vs. death magic or fall into a coma, taking one 1 hp damage per day thereafter. Unless *dispel magic, exorcise, remove curse, dispel evil*, limited *wish*, or *wish* is used successfully, the victim will eventually die without ever regaining consciousness.

### Amulet (Abjuration)

Level: 2

Components: V,S,M

Range: 5' radius

Casting Time: 6 turns

Duration: 1 week/level

Saving Throw: *None*

Area of Effect: *One object*

This is a useful spell, as it allows the

## Spells usable by class and level

Cleric level	Cleric and druid spells					Magic-user spells and cantrips				
	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4
1	1	—	—	—	—	0	—	—	—	—
2	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
3	2	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
4	2	1	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
5	3	2	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
6	3	3	1	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
7	3	3	2	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
8	3	3	2	1	—	4	1	—	—	—
9	3	3	3	2	—	4	2	—	—	—
10	4	4	3	2	1	4	2	1	—	—
11	4	4	3	3	2	4	3	2	—	—
12	5	4	4	3	2	4	4	2	—	—
13	6	5	5	3	2	4	4	2	1	—
14	6	6	6	4	2	4	4	3	2	1

Spell-casting ability does not improve beyond that granted at 14th level.

barbarian cleric to create a minor magical item — a token that will repel one feared being. The wearer of the *amulet* gains a + 1 on all saves and a - 1 bonus to his armor class when faced with the individual for which the amulet is designed. If the victim comes within 10' of the amulet, he is affected as if the *amulet's* creator had successfully cast *cause fear* unless a save vs. spell is made. To make the *amulet*, the cleric requires an object worth no less than 5 gp donated by another character, and a relic of the individual to be affected (hair, clothing, etc.). If the material components are inordinately valuable or obtained from distant locations (farther than 100 miles), the *amulet* will allow double normal saving and AC bonuses.

When the spell duration expires, the *amulet* becomes forever worthless. This spell must be used (along with *chattel spirit*) when creating a sacred bundle (page 12, *Legends & Lore*).

### Death Curse (Alteration/Necromantic)

Level: 2

Components: V,S,M

Range: *Caster only*

Casting Time: 1 round

Duration: *Permanent*

Saving Throw: *Neg.*

Area of Effect: *One being*

This spell is used to avenge the death of the caster. The barbarian cleric may name an enemy and invent a curse to take effect on the foe — if this enemy was the direct cause of the caster's death. If the caster is raised from the dead, the curse is broken, but otherwise it is everlasting. The curse is usually imaginative (and fiendish), but may not exceed the power of a *bestow curse* spell. If the caster commits suicide, the spell will take effect, but obviously this is not commonly done. The material component is a necklace made of the teeth of large carnivores. Only one enemy may be held under threat of a *death curse* at a time.

### Chattel Spirit (Summoning/Enchantment)

Level: 3

Components: V,S,M

Range: 0

Casting Time: 3 turns

Duration: 2 turns/level

Saving Throw: *None*

Area of Effect: *One supernatural being*

Any nemesis spirit that the caster has defeated may be summoned with this spell. It appears with whatever powers and hit points it had when the barbarian cleric fought it. It then must serve the caster or answer questions (to the best of its ability) for the caster. When the spell duration expires, the spirit will vanish, even if its task is incomplete. Although the spirit may complain or attempt to bend the meaning of the command, it is bound to carry out the orders, even if they could result in the spirit's demise. Once slain in an assignment, a spirit may never be called on again. Only three services may be asked of any individual nemesis. In casting this spell, 100 gp of very rare herbs must be burned as the caster performs a chant and dances, gesturing with a holy symbol.

### Resist Injury (Abjuration/Alteration)

Level: 3

Components: M

Range: *Caster only*

Casting Time: 1 turn

Duration: 3 rounds/level

Saving Throw: *None*

Area of Effect: *Caster*

This spell allows the caster to avoid all the effects of damaging wounds. A dagger may be thrust through the cleric's heart during the duration, yet he may function normally. Only a holy symbol is involved, as the casting is a matter of mental preparation and emotional state. Two points of damage per level may be negated. This spell is often used in rituals.

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# Fighters for a price

## Why to use mercenaries and how to find 'em

by James A. Yates

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"As you see, Phalinius, the only things of value which we have at present are our arms and our courage. So long as we have our arms we fancy that we can make good use of our courage; but if we surrender our arms we shall lose our lives as well. So do not imagine that we are going to surrender to you our only valuables. On the contrary, with their aid we shall light for what you value, too."

This excerpt from the memoirs of the Athenian soldier of fortune Xenophon (known variously as *The Ambasis*, *The Persian Expedition*, or *The March of the 10,000*) sums up very succinctly what mercenaries are all about. Xenophon's work begins in 401 B.C., with the attempt of the Persian prince Cyrus to overthrow his elder brother Artaxerxes II. Cyrus gathered together an army of about 50,000 men, including some 13,000 Greek mercenaries, and met Artaxerxes, with a force nearly twice as large, at Cunaxa, near Babylon. The Greek mercenaries presented Cyrus with a stunning victory, but then he was tragically slain during the final stages of the battle.

Cyrus's Asiatic troops either fled or went over to Artaxerxes. The Greek mercenaries found themselves stranded over 1,000 miles from the nearest friendly stronghold, deep within the heart of King Artaxerxes' empire, surrounded by the innumerable Persian host, and torn over what they should do next. Phalinius, a Greek in Persian service, brought an offer from Artaxerxes: if the mercenaries would surrender their weapons, the king would see to it that they were returned safely home. Many of the mercenaries suspected the king's sincerity, and their suspicions were soon proven correct when the Greeks' generals were treacherously murdered while negotiating with the Persians.

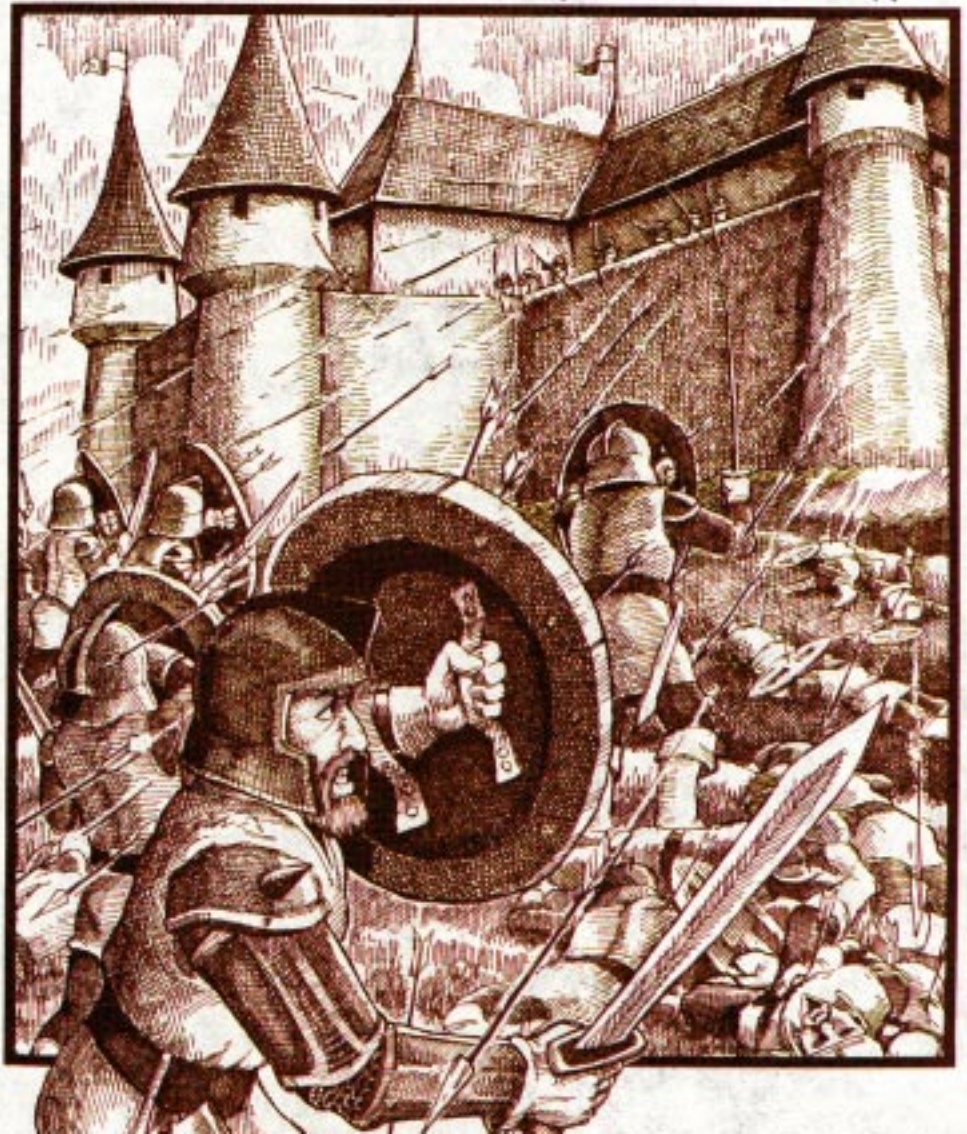
Instead of despairing or throwing themselves upon the king's mercy, several of the mercenaries' junior officers (notably Xenophon) pulled themselves up by the straps of their sandals, got the troops organized, and proposed that they attempt to fight their way to the nearest safe haven, the Greek colony of Trapezus on the Black Sea. Five months later, 6,000 survivors arrived at Trapezus with their heads high. Xenophon and his force had triumphed against all the obstacles the Persians and barbarian hill tribes could place in their path. Their example would later inspire Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander.

*The March of the 10,000* was one of the greatest exploits in the annals of warfare, and Xenophon's account of their march is widely regarded as one of the outstanding military writings of any age. Xenophon's work is filled with vivid portraits of the Greek mercenaries, their battles, their daily life, why they became mercenaries, and, more importantly, what they hoped to get out of being mercenaries. For his part, Xenophon was so broke near the end of the march that he was forced to sell his horse. Yet, before the entire ordeal was over, he became a wealthy man.

Mercenaries existed long before Xenophon's time, and they have continued to thrive right up to the present day. For one reason or another, governments and monarchs have maintained foreign troops in their armed forces, from the Germanic

guards of the early Caesars, to the condottiere and janissaries of the Middle Ages, to the Swiss and other foreign regiments maintained by the crowns of Europe until the last century. The French Foreign Legion survives to this day, as do other mercenaries, often posing under such euphemisms as trainers, observers, advisors, and even "construction workers." Most of today's mercenaries are nothing more than pawns in the shadowy games of the superpowers, so we shall concentrate on the mercenaries of the distant past. The motivations and the aspirations of those mercenaries are more obvious and easier to understand, and easier to relate to AD&D® game play.

Generally, a mercenary is someone who fights for a foreign power in exchange for cash payment or other remuneration, although mercenaries are also hired by pri-





vate individuals and business concerns. Historically, mercenaries arise in areas afflicted by high unemployment, overpopulation, and constant international and civil strife. Being a mercenary can be a lucrative, albeit dangerous, profession. Thousands chose this line of work as a means of advancing themselves.

Money, either in regular cash payments or (as it was more frequently received) in a share of captured booty, is the primary motivating force behind most mercenaries, but it is not the only one. Some soldiers become mercenaries because their nations no longer require their services, and soldiering is the only life they know. Others do it simply because they enjoy the danger and the excitement.

Others live the life of a mercenary in order to seek glory, not shiny coins. Glory can be an extremely powerful motivation; in those days gone by, who you were was not always as important as what you had done. Glory brought prestige, honor, and respect from both the high and the low, and could earn one position and wealth, as well as fame. This quest for glory was not confined to mere common mercenaries; several ancient rulers (King Agesilaus of Sparta, for one) hired themselves out as mercenaries for that very reason.

There are also mercenaries who fight for a person or cause in which they believe. Money might lure them into battle, but if that battle is against a hated foe, then these mercenaries may fight that much harder. Being professional soldiers by trade, most mercenaries have a great respect and admiration for commanders of exceptional ability, and have been known to seek out such individuals in order to serve under them. Alexander the Great was perhaps the best example of this phenomenon. He had great difficulty squeezing levies out of the reluctant Greek city states, and he often had troubles with his homesick Macedonians, yet he never wanted for mercenaries, be they European or Asiatic.

Mercenaries come from all walks of life. They can be of the lowest or the highest stations, noble champions or the scum of the earth, but they all have some things in common. All mercenaries are warriors willing to risk their lives for pay, pitting their martial skills and courage against the ever-present spectre of death in exchange for gold. In the universe of AD&D gaming, there is nothing wrong with this.

### Why mercenaries?

"The reason why I wanted Cyrus to be my friend was because I thought that of all his contemporaries he was the best able to help those he wished to help. But, now, I observe that you have Cyrus's power and retain your own as well; and the King's power, which was opposed to Cyrus, is on your side. With all these advantages of yours, who could be such a fool as not to want to be your friend?

"I will tell you, too, the reason why I have good hopes that you will want to be

our friend. First, there are the Mysians, who, I know, cause you trouble and whom, I feel sure, I could bring to heel with the force I have at present. I know about the Pisidians, too, and I hear that there are a number of equally troublesome peoples, all of whom, I think, I could prevent from constantly interfering with your peace of mind. I am aware that you are particularly angry with the Egyptians, and I do not see how you could get a better force than the one I have now to help you in bringing retribution on them. Yes, and to the states on your borders you could be, if you liked, the most valuable of friends or, if any of them gave you trouble, you could, with us in your service, behave like a dictator, and we would not be serving you merely for the sake of pay, but also because of the proper gratitude which we would feel to you for having saved our lives."

Thus spoke Clearchus the Spartan to the treacherous Persian satrap Tissaphernes after the battle of Cunaxa. In his speech, Clearchus reinforces some of the points about why people become mercenaries, and he also covers the three reasons why people hire mercenaries: intimidation, protection, and aggression. We shall now examine each of these purposes, using the examples of Tissaphernes, had he accepted Clearchus's offer, and that of a wealthy merchant in the AD&D game.

*Intimidation* — Had the Persian hired the Greek mercenaries, the presence of so many excellent soldiers in his forces would have, most certainly, proved very useful in cowing such troublesome subject peoples as the Mysians and Pisidians. They would also have given any states on Tissaphernes's borders cause to think twice before giving him any offense. In the case of the merchant, let's say that he has to spend several days in a city which is known to have a small but active thieves' guild. By hiring three or four burly warriors with broadswords, the merchant can intimidate most of the lesser thieves and discourage many robbery attempts. These bodyguards might also add weight in any business dealings with other merchants not so well-equipped.

*Protection* — The Greek mercenaries would have been of enormous assistance to Tissaphernes against any of those peoples who refused to be intimidated by them. They had nearly won an empire for Cyrus and would have been the best protection the Persian satrap could have had against any potential enemy, be that enemy external or internal. Suppose, too, our merchant must cross a desert infested with bandits, and there is no question of them attacking (only as to when, where, and how much damage they may inflict upon the merchant's purse). By hiring a body of mercenaries to protect him and his goods, the merchant stands a much better chance of minimizing his losses or preventing them altogether.

*Aggression* — Clearchus spoke of the Egyptians, who had rebelled against the Persians. Had Tissaphernes chosen to send

the Greeks to restore the boot of Persian power upon the throat of Egypt, that would have been an example of aggression. The same would hold true had he chosen to send them against any bordering state that had given him offense. Had our merchant lost part of his goods to the desert bandits, he might have hired a large force of mercenaries to recover the goods and to punish the bandits for the affront to his dignity.

These are, of course, rather basic examples, yet one of these three purposes usually holds true. Lords, wizards, and patriarchs who hire mercenaries to guard their strongholds do so to protect their lives and property, and to intimidate anyone who might think of taking either. A thieves' guild that hires a force of mercenaries to exact vengeance upon a community that executed one of its members is practicing aggression, pure and simple.

### Locating mercenaries

Player characters and NPCs may often find themselves in circumstances in which they could use a little extra muscle. Those who have not yet attained a high enough level to have gained men-at-arms or other followers, as well as those who never gain such followers (paladins, magic-users, merchants, and so on), sometimes come across a situation which may prove too much for them and their henchmen. Mercenaries, if used properly, can often equalize the odds on these occasions. The job of mercenaries is primarily to fight other soldiers, and it is most unlikely that any can be lured down into a dungeon setting.

Once you've decided that you need some mercenaries, how do you go about obtaining them? One could use the chart for hiring mercenaries on page 30 of the DMG, but the use of a straight percentile dice roll to determine the type of mercenaries a character finds deprives the character of any say in the matter. Someone out to hire mercenaries might have a particular type in mind, to fulfill the particular need that person has for them, and that person should be given the opportunity to find any particular type of mercenary.

A better way of determining what kind of mercenaries a person can find is to rate each mercenary in a category based upon the frequency with which it is found, and then to give each category a percentage chance for successful location.

### Mercenary categories

Frequency	% chance of locating
Common	55%
Uncommon	27%
Rare	12%
Very rare	6%

It should be noted that these percentages are based not so much upon any actual frequency of any troop type, in any terrain or climate, but upon the likely frequency of such units existing as mercenaries. It is far more expensive and complicated to main-

tain a mercenary unit of heavy horsemen than one of light footmen. Because of this, you are more likely to find a unit of the latter than a unit of the former.

The percentages used for locating any mercenary type are based upon a city of 10,000 people and are modified as follows. For every 1,000 people above 10,000, + 1% is added to the percentage chance (up to a maximum of + 10% at 20,000 or more), and for every 1,000 people below 10,000, - 3% is deducted from the percentage chance (to a maximum reduction of - 27% at 1,000 or less). Normally, only common mercenary types are found in cities with 1,000 or fewer inhabitants; even here, common sense must prevail. You are not going to find a troop of 28 light horsemen sitting around a thorp of 37 souls waiting for an employer to happen along. Mercenaries fight for pay. Because of this, they go where the big money is, and that means large cities.

The general military situation in the region where someone is attempting to find mercenaries also has a bearing upon the success or failure of such attempts. Mercenaries are far more likely to be found in a state at war or some wild border province than in the central provinces of a stable empire. This translates into the following modifiers for mercenary location attempts:

Region is militarily active: + 10%

Region is militarily inactive: - 5%

If a region is militarily inactive, this does not mean that there are no military operations going on there, only that, compared to other regions, the military activity is at a very reduced level. Mercenaries could be found in such a region, but they are more likely to congregate in areas where there is a greater chance of fighting (and the possibility of obtaining booty).

In our modern world, Iowa could be considered militarily inactive, while Central America would be classified as a region which is militarily active. In ancient times, the provinces of Italy under a stable emperor such as Trajan might have been inactive, but Greece during the Peloponnesian War was definitely active. In the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Game Setting, the inner regions of the Great Kingdom could be called inactive, whereas the Bandit Kingdoms or the Wild Coast would be extremely active.

The percentage chance of locating any mercenary type may also be modified by the character or NPC searching for it, using a method similar to that for locating henchmen. Each method may be used once per month, but there is no reduction in effectiveness for using more than one method, in any combination.

Method	Cost	Modifier
Post notices in public	50 gp	+ 1-4%
Hire a crier	10 gp	+ 1%
Hire agents to seek prospects	300 gp	+ 5-20%
Frequent inns and taverns	special	special

The wide range of results for hiring agents to seek prospects is due to the fact that many cities have a sort of unofficial mercenaries guild. A low result means that the agents weren't very much in touch with things, while a high result means that they had connections with the mercenaries in that city. The special cost for frequenting inns and taverns is a combination of buying a round of drinks for the house and a fee for the barkeep to mention the prospective employer to any mercenaries who visit the establishment. Up to 10 such establishments may be worked per month. Each costs 10 gp and may raise the effectiveness by 1%. To determine whether or not this method was successful, a d6 is rolled for each inn or tavern frequented. On a roll of 1-4, nothing happens (no mercenaries visited the place or the barkeep pocketed your money without earning it), but on a roll of 5-6, 1% is added to the effectiveness.

Using all four of these methods can raise the percentage chance of locating any mercenary type by anywhere from 7% to 35%. When all additions and subtractions are applied, you have a final modifier, which is applied to the percentage chance of locating the mercenary unit in question. Percentile dice are then rolled, and if the result is equal to or less than the modified percentage chance, then that mercenary type has been located and is available for hire.

Example: The wealthy merchant from the above examples decides to try to find a common unit of light horsemen. He is situated in a city of 14,000 people, so the base chance of locating any common mercenary type is raised by + 4%, from 55% to 59%. The merchant goes all out and uses all four methods for raising the effectiveness of his search, with mixed results. Posting notices in public raised the effectiveness by 3%, hiring a crier by 1%, hiring agents to seek prospects by 7% (lousy agents), and frequenting seven inns and taverns raised the effectiveness by 3%. The merchant spent a total of 430 gp on the effort, and it raised the effectiveness by a total of 14%. Added to the population modifier, this raised the total chance of locating the light horsemen to 73%. The percentile dice were rolled and the score was 64, meaning the merchant found his mercenaries.

Some might think this method a bit too liberal, in that it would allow a character to simply keep rolling until he found the mercenary type he wanted. This would be the case if there was not a strict limit on the number of location attempts per month which may be made in any given city.

#### Attempts to locate mercenaries

City population	Attempts possible per month
1,000 or less	1
1,001-5,000	2
5,001-10,000	3
10,001-15,000	4
15,001+	5
No more than one attempt per month	

may be made for any particular mercenary type in any given city, although a character could travel from one city to another looking for the same mercenary type. Also, there is nothing preventing a character who has found the type of mercenary he desired from trying to find another type of mercenary as well, as long as the limit on the number of location attempts per month is not exceeded.

#### Hiring mercenaries

Once you have found the mercenaries you wanted, the next step is to actually hire them. Most mercenaries are fairly amiable when it comes to accepting employment, and no character or NPC should have much trouble in getting mercenaries to accept an offer of employment. Here, once again, common sense must apply; a troop of dwarves will not agree to hire on with a half-orc.

The base chance of any mercenaries accepting employment is 75%. If the prospective employer offers to provide the mercenaries with reasonable quarters and support, the chance of acceptance goes up 10%. If the employer does not make such an offer, the chance of acceptance goes down 5%. Mercenaries fight for pay; if you force them to pay for their own food and quarters, this cuts into their profit. Any agreements on increased wages or possible division of treasure must be worked out between the DM (representing the mercenaries) and the employing player at the time, but the promise of such bonuses, depending upon the circumstances, may increase the chance of acceptance by as much as 5% or 10%. Remember that when dealing with humanoid mercenaries, only an offer of loot is appreciated, as they consider a generous-paying employer to be weak. Finally, a character's or NPC's charisma reaction adjustment is added to the base chance of acceptance.

Use of these rules makes it relatively easy for most characters or NPCs to hire mercenaries, while assuring that few things are ever a certainty. Those with low charisma ratings may find it wise to be somewhat more generous in their dealings with mercenaries, but those with high charisma ratings won't have to open their purses quite as wide.

#### Loyalty and morale

"Whoever wants to keep alive must aim at victory. It is the winners who do the killing and the losers who get killed. And those who want money must try to win battles. The winners cannot only keep what they have themselves, but can take what belongs to the losers."

"You are well aware that it is not numbers or strength that bring victories in war. No, it is when one side goes against the enemy with the gods' gift of a stronger morale that their adversaries, as a rule, cannot withstand them."

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Xenophon, speaking of the interrelationship between victory and morale. To win battles and stay alive, soldiers must have better morale than their opponents; yet it is often the prospective fruits of that victory which helps to give soldiers that better morale. This is especially true of mercenaries, particularly humanoid types. Morale also has a great bearing upon the loyalty of any troops, mercenaries included, and those with a high morale are likely to be more loyal than those with low morale.

Morale is a rather intangible element and is based upon many factors. Courage is an obvious starting point. Humans, demi-humans, and large humanoids are capable of great courage, while many of the lesser humanoids cannot display much of it. Size counts also; the larger-humanoids tend to have better morale than the smaller ones, since the larger and stronger a soldier is, the better his morale tends to be. Training, skill, and armament are also important. Skilled veterans, heavily armored and masters of their weapons, have much greater morale than an unarmed, untrained, naked mob.

Intangible elements affect morale as well. Faith, trust, and confidence are often more important than size or strength. Knowing that you can rely on the person next to you can be an enormous boost to one's morale. Belief in your cause and faith in your leaders play their parts as well. Then there are things like greed, lust, and hatred. Fighting

a hated racial foe, with the prospects of eating-the enemy's flesh and enslaving the survivors, can be enormously beneficial to the morale of most humanoids. Humans and demi-humans can be similarly motivated, but not to such unsavory extremes.

Morale for mercenaries is determined much the same as it is for henchmen and other hirelings, on pages 36-37 of the DMG (see also DRAGON® issue #107, "A new loyalty base"), but with a few alterations. All mercenaries have a normal loyalty/morale base of 50%, modified up, or down by their employer's loyalty charisma adjustment. The loyalty base modifiers are the same as in the DMG until you reach the section titled "Training or Status Level." Instead of using the modifiers in that section, use the following:

#### Mercenary morale

rating	Modifier
Poor	-10%
Fair	0%
Good	+10%
Excellent	+20%
Fanatical	+35%

Retain the remaining modifiers from the book, except those for racial preference and alignment. It is a bull market for mercenaries in the AD&D game world, and there is little incentive for mercenaries to hire on with someone they hate; someone else will be along to hire them soon enough. Since mercenaries fight for pay, the minor differences in race or alignment won't bother them enough to worry about modifiers. As a rule of thumb, evil mercenaries usually work for evil employers, as would good mercenaries for good employers. Since there is nothing forcing a mercenary to work for an employer, that mercenary shouldn't have much trouble with that employer's outlook on life if he hires on. The mercenary knows what he is getting into from the beginning. If a lawful good dwarf should happen to sign on with a chaotic evil human, well, you knew the job was dangerous when you took it, Fred. Special considerations and situation modifiers still apply, though.

*[The BATTLESYSTEM™ Supplement provides detailed morale resolution figures for mass-combat situations, on pages 6-7 of the rules booklet. The morale system presented here is sufficient for small-scale combat in dungeons and on regular adventures. - Editor]*

#### Using the mercenaries' tables

There are three mercenaries tables: one for humans, one for demi-humans, and one for humanoids. Each table contains an alphabetical listing of troop types, followed by their frequency ranges, morale ranges, cost range per month in gold pieces, and a range of numbers determining how many troops of each type can be found. When the mercenary type sought is located, a d12 is rolled to find the number of troops available for hire. Generally, any character or NPC may hire as many or as few of the merce-

naries available as he wishes, unless an entire unit (company, troop, squad, or any aides or assistants) is rolled up, in which case the entire unit must be hired.

By giving each mercenary type a range for these several factors, a DM can add a great deal of variety to each mercenary type. Giving a range for the frequency of any troop type could reflect the terrain or climate of the area in which the unit is being sought; a unit of heavy cavalry is far more likely to be found in a temperate plains region than in a tropical mountain region. The morale and cost ranges can be used to gauge troop quality, as better troops usually cost more. "The cost range could also be used as a basis for negotiations between the DM and any character attempting to hire the mercenaries. A bit of haggling and some inventive financing can always add a dash of spice to any campaign.

Human mercenaries pose no undue problems, but demi-humans and humanoids have certain special considerations. Dwarves are not adverse to working for humans, for the right price (a high one!), but if they are being hired to fight for a person or cause in which they believe, the price could be lowered. Elves work for less than dwarves, and gnomes and halflings for less still, but these races won't normally work for someone unless they have an interest in that person or his cause. Humanoids aren't as fussy as demi-humans and are considerably cheaper. The costs for humanoids are based upon their intelligence (or lack thereof) and their worth in combat. The main difficulty with both demi-humans and humanoids is that they are not as easily located as human mercenaries. You are not going to find a company of orcs in a city ruled by a paladin. Unless you are seeking demi-humans or humanoids in an area inhabited by such creatures, the lowest frequency listed for them must always be used when attempting to locate such types.

If five or more human or demi-human mercenaries are encountered, one is a sergeant. As mercenaries represent some of the finest physical specimens their collective races can produce, all have good strength and excellent constitution. For the purposes of hit points, mercenaries are as follows:

- Humans: 0-level men-at-arms, 4-7 hp.
- Elite humans: 0-level men-at-arms, 5-8 hp.
- Dwarves: 1st-level fighters, 8-11 hp.
- Elves: 1st-level fighters, 9-12 hp.
- Gnomes: 1st-level fighters, 7-10 hp.
- Halflings: 0-level fighters, 4-7 hp.

Humanoids have hit points within the following ranges:

- Bugbears: 18-21
- Kobolds: 2-3
- Firenewts: 14-17
- Norkers: 6-9
- Gnolls: 12-15
- Orcs: 4-7
- Goblins: 4-6
- Verbeegs: 32-39
- Hobgoblins: 5-8
- Xvarts: 4-6

It should be noted that there are extremely few units composed entirely of half-elves or half-orcs, although both may be found within units of either parent race. Similarly, ogrillons might be found in units of orcs, and flinds in units of gnolls. Some

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creatures, such as ogres and trolls, won't usually form themselves into mercenary units, due to lack of numbers, lack of law-

fulness, or some other reason, even though they do hire themselves out as mercenaries on an individual basis. While lizard men

might serve a neutral or evil master, they do so out of fear or religious awe, and are not mercenaries in any real sense.

### MERCENARIES TABLE I: HUMANS

Troop type	Frequency	Morale range	Cost	Number encountered (roll d12)					12 ***
				1-4	5-8	9-10*	11**	12	
Archer (longbow)	very rare	good-excellent	4-6	3-8	4-10	5-14	8-20	company	
Archer (shortbow)	uncommon-rare	fair-excellent	2-4	2-10	3-18	6-24	8-32	company	
Artillerist	rare-very rare	good-excellent	5-7	2-3	2-4	3-6	3-8	squad	
Camel archer (shortbow)	very rare	fair-good	4-6	2-5	3-8	4-10	5-14	troop	
Captain	rare-very rare	good-excellent	special	1	1	1	1	aide	
Charioteer	very rare	fair-good	3-5	2-3	2-5	3-8	5-12	troop	
Crossbowman	rare-very rare	fair-excellent	2-4	2-8	4-16	6-24	8-32	company	
Elephant, war	very rare	fair-good	special	1-2	2-3	2-5	3-6	troop	
Footman, elite	very rare	good-excellent	4-6	4-7	6-12	9-14	11-20	company	
Footman, heavy	uncommon-rare	good-excellent	2-4	3-12	5-20	6-36	12-48	company	
Footman, light	common	fair-excellent	1-3	2-8	3-12	4-16	6-24	company	
Footman, medium	rare-very rare	good-excellent	3-5	3-8	5-12	7-18	8-32	company	
Footman, pikeman	uncommon-rare	good-excellent	3-5	3-12	5-20	7-28	10-40	company	
General	very rare	good-excellent	special	1	1	1	1	aides	
Hobilar, heavy	rare-very rare	fair-good	3-5	2-5	3-8	4-14	5-20	troop	
Hobilar, light	uncommon-rare	fair-good	2-4	2-8	4-16	5-20	6-24	troop	
Horseman, archer (longbow)	very rare	good-excellent	7-9	2-7	3-12	4-16	5-20	troop	
Horseman, archer (shortbow)	rare-very rare	fair-excellent	6-8	3-8	4-14	5-20	6-24	troop	
Horseman, cataphract	very rare	good-excellent	7-9	4-7	5-10	7-14	9-18	troop	
Horseman, crossbowman	very rare	fair-excellent	4-6	2-5	3-8	4-10	5-14	troop	
Horseman, heavy	uncommon-rare	good-excellent	6-8	2-8	3-12	4-16	5-20	troop	
Horseman, light	common-unc.	fair-excellent	3-5	3-8	4-14	5-20	7-28	troop	
Horseman, medium	uncommon-rare	good-excellent	4-6	3-8	4-14	5-20	6-24	troop	
Lieutenant	uncommon-rare	good-excellent	special	1	1	1	1	aide	
Sapper/miner	rare-very rare	fair-good	4-6	2-5	3-6	4-7	5-10	squad	
Sergeant	common-unc.	good-excellent	special	1	1	1	1	2	
Slinger	rare-very rare	fair-good	3-5	2-5	3-8	4-10	5-14	company	

### MERCENARIES TABLE II: DEMI-HUMANS

Troop type	Frequency	Morale range	Cost	Number encountered (roll d12)					12***
				1-4	5-8	9-10*	11**	12	
Captain	very rare	good-fanatical	special	1	1	1	1	aide	
Dwarf archer (shortbow)	very rare	good-fanatical	3-8	2-7	3-12	4-16	5-20	company	
Dwarf artillerist	very rare	good-fanatical	6-10	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	squad	
Dwarf crossbowman	very rare	good-fanatical	3-8	3-8	4-14	5-20	6-24	company	
Dwarf footman, heavy	uncommon-rare	good-fanatical	3-8	3-12	4-16	6-24	8-32	company	
Dwarf footman, light	rare-very rare	good-fanatical	2-6	2-8	3-12	4-16	5-20	company	
Dwarf sapper/miner	rare-very rare	good-fanatical	5-12	2-3	3-5	4-6	5-8	squad	
Elf archer (longbow)	very rare	good-fanatical	6-8	3-8	4-10	5-14	6-20	company	
Elf archer (shortbow)	uncommon-rare	good-fanatical	4-6	4-10	5-14	6-20	7-28	company	
Elf footman, heavy	rare-very rare	good-fanatical	4-6	3-8	4-16	6-24	9-36	company	
Elf footman, light	uncommon-rare	good-fanatical	3-5	2-8	3-12	4-18	6-24	company	
Elf horse archer (shortbow)	very rare	good-fanatical	8-10	3-8	4-12	5-16	6-20	troop	
Elf horseman, light	rare-very rare	good-fanatical	5-7	3-12	4-16	5-20	6-24	troop	
Gnome footman, heavy	very rare	good-excellent	3-6	2-8	3-12	4-16	5-20	company	
Gnome footman, light	rare-very rare	good-excellent	2-4	3-8	4-14	5-20	6-24	company	
Gnome slinger	very rare	good-excellent	4-6	2-5	3-8	4-10	5-12	company	
Halfling archer (shortbow)	very rare	fair-excellent	3-5	2-7	3-8	4-12	5-16	company	
Halfling footman, light	rare-very rare	fair-excellent	2-4	2-8	3-12	4-16	5-20	company	
Lieutenant	rare-very rare	good-fanatical	special	1	1	1	1	aide	
Sergeant	uncommon-rare	good-fanatical	special	1	1	1	1	2	

#### Notes

- \* – With lieutenant if 10 or more soldiers.
- \*\* – With lieutenant if 10 or more soldiers, with captain if more than 20 soldiers.
- \*\*\* – Roll d12 again and use that result. If the second result is also 12, use the listings on the "12" column as follows:

A squad is the maximum number of that troop type plus one sergeant.  
 A company or troop is the maximum number of that troop type plus one sergeant for every 10 soldiers, one lieutenant for every 20 soldiers, and one captain if more than 20 soldiers.  
 A general's aides are one captain and two lieutenants.  
 A captain's aide is a lieutenant.  
 A lieutenant's aide is a sergeant.

MERCENARIES TABLE III: HUMANOIDS

Troop type	Frequency	Morale range	Cost	Number encountered (roll d12)			
				1-4	5-8	9-10	11-12*
Bugbear footman, heavy	rare-very rare	fair-excellent	3-4	2-12	3-18	4-24	5-30
Firenewt footman, heavy	very rare	fair-excellent	2-3	3-12	4-16	5-30	5-40
Firenewt, giant strider rider	very rare	fair-excellent	4-5	2-7	3-8	4-10	5-12
Gnoll archer (longbow)	very rare	fair-excellent	3-4	2-8	3-12	4-16	5-20
Gnoll footman, heavy	rare-very rare	fair-excellent	2-3	2-12	4-24	6-36	12-48
Goblin footman, light	uncommon-rare	poor-good	1/2-1	2-16	4-32	6-48	10-60
Goblin slinger	very rare	poor-good	1-2	2-12	3-18	4-24	5-30
Goblin worg rider	very rare	fair-good	3-4	2-5	3-8	4-10	5-14
Hobgoblin archer (shortbow)	very rare	fair-excellent	2-3	2-12	3-18	4-24	5-30
Hobgoblin footman, heavy	uncommon-rare	fair-excellent	1-2	3-12	4-24	6-36	8-48
Kobold footman, light	uncommon-rare	poor-good	1/2-1	4-16	7-28	9-36	15-60
Norker footman, heavy	very rare	fair-good	1-2	2-8	3-12	4-16	5-20
Orc archer (shortbow)	rare-very rare	fair-good	1-2	2-12	3-18	4-24	5-30
Orc footman, heavy	uncommon-rare	fair-good	1-2	2-16	4-24	5-30	8-40
Orc sapper/miner	very rare	fair-good	2-3	2-4	3-6	4-7	5-8
Verbeeg footman, heavy	very rare	fair-excellent	7-8	2-5	3-8	4-10	6-16
Xvart footman, light	rare-very rare	poor-good	1/2-1	2-16	4-24	6-36	12-48

\* – With any appropriate leader types.

**Mercenary troop types**

*Archer (longbow):* Many of these troops are trained from strong and in good health. They can wear any armor except plate and can use most hand-held weapons, fighting as light or heavy infantry as their arms and armor dictates. Most of these troops are similar to the English longbowman, but some could represent the ancient Indian longbowman, whose bamboo longbow was less effective than the English variety. The good-excellent morale rating for longbowmen is representative of the long range of their weapons, their general physical condition, and their ability to wear heavier armor and use most hand-held weapons.

*Archer (shortbow):* These troops won't fight as light infantry when not using their bows, unless the enemy actually brings the melee to them, in which case they employ shortswords, hand axes, and similar weapons. They can wear any armor except plate mail, but generally tend toward the lighter varieties. This is reflected by their fair-excellent morale rating. These troops are often uncomfortable at close range and tend to consider themselves unarmed without their bows. They are also usually built smaller than longbowmen. Shortbowmen can represent just about any nation, in a wide range, of time periods. There can, at the DM's option, be exceptional shortbowmen, such as Viking warriors or Persian Immortals, who fight as heavy infantry when not using their bows, and who have a correspondingly higher morale rating. Such troops, however, may demand longbowman's wages.

*Artillerist:* These troops are required to operate any missile engine larger than a heavy crossbow. They fight as light infantry only *in extremis*. They have a morale rating of good-excellent, because such troops have to be thorough professionals and because the range of their artillery puts them at a relatively safe distance from the enemy.

*Bugbears:* These humanoids make good heavy infantry, as their strength and hit points make them formidable warriors.

Bugbears also make excellent raider types due to their great stealth. Their morale rating is based upon those factors.

*Camel archer:* These light troops are generally nomadic types, undisciplined and hard to control. They fight hand-to-hand only if such circumstances are forced upon them, preferring flight instead. Camel archers can wear leather, ring, or chain mail, and can carry small shields for use when not plying their bows. Their main advantages are that the back of a camel is a higher firing platform than the back of a horse (height is always an important factor in battle) and most horses dislike camels (20% chance of any horse not accustomed to camels refusing to attack). Their morale rating stems from their lack of discipline and unwillingness to stand and fight.

*Captain (centurion, taxiarch, etc.):* A captain is nothing more than a capable leader, a fighter of 5th-8th level (according to the d10 score, 1-4 = 5th, 5-7 = 6th, 8-9 = 7th, 0 = 8th) incapable of working upward. A captain can command as many scores (20 men) of troops as he has levels — *i.e.*, 4th level enables command of 80 men, 5th level enables command of 100 men, etc. A captain may, however, command only one type of troops. Additionally, the level of a captain dictates the number of lieutenants that can be controlled. This is exclusive of sergeants and any auxiliary types such as servants, cooks, etc. A captain serving with a general extends the number of troops the general can effectively command and control. The monthly cost for a captain is 100 gp per level. A captain has a line morale rating, because he is a professional lighter of at least 5th level who has been around and knows his way around a battlefield.

*Charioteer:* These are light infantry who drive two-wheeled horse-drawn vehicles into battle. They are typically unarmored and frequently unarmed, except for a small hand-held weapon of some sort. Any number of chariot types may be used: one- or two-horse types, small Celtic types drawn by a pair of ponies, even the massive four-

horse Indian chariots (capable of carrying up to eight men, but used only for transport). Most chariots carry only one or two soldiers (usually archers or javelinists) in addition to the charioteer. Blades are sometimes attached to the hubs of the chariot's wheels. The price of a charioteer varies by the number of horses he has to control. The fair-good morale rating for charioteers is due to the fact that they are very vulnerable to attack, and many only carry their passengers to the edge of a battle, not into the midst of it.

*Crossbowman:* These soldiers are able to use any sort of crossbow furnished. Each heavy crossbowman typically desires a light infantryman to accompany him to act as a shield bearer. Crossbowmen can wear any type of armor and can bear hand-held weapons, fighting as light infantry if the need arises. Their morale rating depends upon their armor protection and whether or not they have a shield bearer.

*Dwarves:* Dwarven crossbow archers may use only light crossbows. Their artillerists are superior to most human ones and dwarven sappers and miners are the best by far in that category. Dwarves have high morale because they are all at least 1st-level fighters with great strength and constitution. They are also highly organized and have the utmost faith in their fellows. However, they are only fanatical if fighting racial enemies such as orcs. Dwarven captains and lieutenants cost 200 gp per level per month.

*Elephant, war:* These beasts can actually be elephants, loxodons, mammoths, mastodons, or oliphants. Cost is based upon the total cost for the entire crew, plus one additional gold piece per month to assure that the beast has sufficient fodder. The more primitive and cheaper types have only a mahout (a driver who is treated as a light infantryman, no armor, armed with javelins) and a single warrior armed with a bow or javelins. The more advanced types have a mahout and a large fighting tower holding up to four soldiers, usually two archers and two pikemen. Both types can have, iron

hoops fitted around the beast's legs to prevent hamstringing, metal reinforcing on the tusks, and leather or metal barding.

War elephants have many advantages. Most horses won't attack them (80% chance of any horse not accustomed to such beasts refusing to attack), they provide the highest firing platform on the battlefield, and they can be used to force open a gate when attacking a walled town or fortress. Elephants can, however, be difficult to control once wounded. Every mahout carries a stake and a mallet, and will not hesitate to drive the stake into the beast's brain and kill it if it goes berserk. Elephant troops have only fair-good morale because they are never certain how their war beast may react in battle.

*Elves:* Elves are unquestionably the best archers available. They make superb heavy infantry and unmatched light infantry, and their light cavalry is also excellent. Elven captains may be no higher than 7th level, and elven captains and lieutenants cost 150 gp per level per month. Elves have good to fanatical morale rating for much the same reason as do dwarves, and they, too, are only fanatical toward racial enemies.

*Firenewts:* These advanced form of lizard men make awesome shock troops. Whether afoot or mounted upon giant striders, their ability to breathe fire makes firenewts feared opponents. Their morale rating is based upon this ability.

*Footman, elite:* These troops are simply heavy footmen of outstanding quality. Elite footmen are still 0-level men-at-arms, but they have 5-8 hp and a strength of 17, making them +1 to hit and +1 on damage, effectively placing them between a 0-level and a 1st-level fighter. Elite footmen are such troops as Greek hoplites, the *agema hypaspists* of Alexander's army, the 1st cohort of Caesar's 10th Legion, Ottoman janissaries, English or Danish housecarls, and a host of others. Elite footmen have good to excellent morale ratings, but tend towards the higher of the two, due to their higher standards of training, discipline, and experience.

*Footman, heavy:* These troops are trained to fight in close formation, regardless of the type of armor they wear. Weaponry is almost without restriction. Price and morale are often determined by the equipment of such troops. Troop types representing ancient states such as Greece and Rome, and those of medieval Europe, are better armed and armored than most of those representing Asian states, ancient or medieval. These latter types often have little or no armor and carry hide or wicker shields. Still, all heavy footmen have good-excellent morale. They are big men, well-trained, and well-disciplined.

*Footman, light:* These soldiers do not fight in close formation. They are basically skirmishers, such troops as javelinists, and are used to harass the enemy before a battle and to pursue a defeated foe after a battle. They are also useful in rough terrain, woods, or anywhere that heavy footmen

would be unable to charge them. Most light footmen wear very light armor or none at all, but most carry some sort of shield. If not employing javelins, they may use shortswords, hand axes, and other such weapons. Their fair-excellent morale rating is based upon the fact that many light troops are unpredictable barbarian types, although some, such as Roman velites, can be thoroughly dependable.

*Footman, medium:* This intermediate infantry type is typified by the Greek peltast or the early Roman legionaire. They carry pilums (a light throwing spear) or javelins as well as most melee weapons carried by heavy footmen. Medium footmen carry shields and wear medium armor types such as ring or chain mail. They operate in looser formation than their heavy counterparts and are more able to cope with enemy light troops on broken ground. They have morale ratings of good-excellent because they have the best of both worlds, and they can defeat light infantry. When they can't stand up to heavy infantry, they are able to pelt them with missiles or run away.

*Footman, pikemen:* These troops are heavy footmen especially trained to fight and maneuver with pikes. They wear the heavier types of armor but most do not carry shields. Heavy footmen may be placed in the center of a formation of 100 or more pikemen, if these troops have trained with the pikemen for a period of not less than two months. Most of these troops represent medieval European types with 18' or longer pikes, while some could represent Macedonian phalangites. The phalangites carry a 13' pike (sarissa) and carry shields slung around their necks by a leather strap. Archers, as well as heavy infantry, may be placed in the center of a formation of 100 or more phalangites, if these troops have trained with the phalangites for a period of not less than two months. All pikemen have good-excellent morale ratings, because they are able to keep most enemy troops at a safe distance. Phalangites tend to have higher morale because they carry swords as well as pikes, and can defend themselves if the enemy gets to close quarters.

*General (strategosi imperator, etc.):* A general is a leader of exceptional ability, a fighter of 10th-13th level (according to the d10 score, 1-4 = 10th, 5-7 = 11th, 8-9 = 12th, 0 = 13th) but not capable of working upward. A general might be a fighter who never settled down, or a lord with poor lands who is using his military skills to augment his income, or possibly a lord who has lost his lands. A general is able to command as many centuries (100 men) of troops as he has levels, i.e., 10th level enables command of 1,000 men, 11th level enables command of 1,100 men, etc.

In addition, the level of a general dictates the number of captains that can be controlled. This is exclusive of any lieutenants, sergeants, etc. There are three types of generals: generals of footmen, generals of horsemen, and generals of mixed troop types. Only generals of 13th level may

command mixed forces of foot and horse, all other generals may command as many different types of foot and horse, depending upon their type, as they have levels. A 10th-level general of foot soldiers, for instance, could command up to ten different types of foot soldiers, including missile types. There must, however, be a captain for each different troop type. Generals have good-excellent morale because of their level and experience. The monthly cost for a general is 500 gp per level. Demi-humans and humanoids do not have generals as they are expressed here.

*Gnolls:* Gnolls make excellent archers (armed with great bows, assumed to be the same as longbows) and good heavy infantry. They have high morale because they are large creatures, with good hit points, and a fair amount of organization (though they are chaotic as well).

*Gnomes:* These dour little fighters make dependable infantry (either heavy or light) and good, slingers. Gnome captains are rarely higher than 6th level. They have good to excellent morale because they are all at least 1st-level fighters, but they are not as fanatical in their outlook as dwarves or elves.

*Goblins:* These short humanoids make only average mercenaries, as they are cowardly and lack the size and strength of the larger humanoids. The exception to this is the goblin worg rider, a humanoid form of hobilar with one very important difference: the goblins' mounts fight along beside them. For the above reasons, most goblins have poor to good morale, but worg riders have fair to good morale.

*Halflings:* These diminutive demi-humans make good archers and outstanding light infantry, due to their ability to conceal themselves in outdoor settings. Halflings only have fair-excellent morale because most are 0-level fighters without any great strength. Also, halflings are more peaceful than most demi-humans, and even halfling mercenaries are not overly fond of battle. Halfling captains are almost never higher than 5th level.

*Hobgoblins:* These medium-sized humanoids make fair archers and heavy infantry, and they have reasonable hit points and armor class. Hobgoblins are ferocious in combat, particularly toward their racial enemies.

*Hobilar, heavy or light:* These troops are simply mounted infantry (the predecessors of dragoons), able to use horses for movement, but not capable of mounted combat. Thus, hobilars ride to battle, but dismount to fight. Some provision must be made to care for the horses, or the hobilars will leave 25% of the number behind to do so. These limitations are reflected in their fair-good morale rating. Hobilars could be armed and armored as heavy infantry, but their lack of training in mounted combat would place them at a distinct disadvantage if ever forced into that situation. Also, no matter how good their training, most hobilars tend to look over their shoulders at the 25% of

their fellows holding the horses, to make sure that they haven't scampered.

*Horseman, archer (longbow):* There is only one sort of this troop type, the equivalent of the Mongol horse archer armed with a composite longbow. They are formidable opponents, combining speed and great hitting power. These troops can wear any armor except plate but do not normally carry shield. They have good-excellent morale due to their superb training and iron discipline.

*Horseman, archer (shortbow):* These troops can be anything from ancient Scythians to American Indians of the last century. In many respects they are similar to camel archers, although some can be very disciplined and utterly dependable. Their fair-excellent morale rating takes into account the very wide range of possible troop types in this category.

*Horseman, cataphract:* These are heavily armored heavy cavalry mounted on armored horses. Troops in this category represent later Persian types, true Parthian cataphracts, and the medieval Saracen types. Cataphracts wear chain or banded mail and carry shields. They fight with lances, swords, or battle axes, and a short-bow. Cataphracts are thus horse archers who fight as heavy cavalry when not using their bows. They have good-excellent morale, primarily due to the heavy armor of themselves and their mounts, but also because they are big, powerful troops with excellent weapons mix.

*Horseman, crossbowman:* All such troops are armed with light crossbows, as the heavy versions are not usable from horseback. They fight as light troops, but can wear any type of armor, and can use most hand-held weapons in melee. Their fair-excellent morale rating stems from the fact that mounted crossbowmen are extremely vulnerable to attack while reloading. It takes both hands to cock a crossbow.

*Horseman, heavy:* These troops are trained to fight in close formation (stirrup to stirrup). They are normally heavily armored and can use most weapons common to horsemen. They have good-excellent morale because they are big men on big horses and are well-trained.

*Horseman, light:* These troops are not normally trained to fight in close order or formation. They are useful as skirmishers, raiders, scouts, and in the pursuit of a defeated foe. They generally wear little or no armor, but can use most weapons. The wide fair-excellent morale rating is reflective of the broad range of this troop type, which can be found just about anywhere, and in any number of time periods.

*Horseman, medium:* Similar to heavy cavalry, medium horsemen are trained to fight in formation, but they are generally smaller men, less well-armored, on lighter horses, and do not ride as close to their fellows. Their good-excellent morale rating is caused by much the same factors as that of heavy horsemen, size and training.

*Kobolds:* Kobolds can be used as medio-

cre light infantry. They are small, cowardly creatures, who rely upon numbers to win any engagement. Their morale rating is derived from their small size, lack of strength, and other unimpressive qualities.

*Lieutenant (jemadar, enomotarch, option, etc.):* A lieutenant is an assistant to a captain, or a leader in his own right, a fighter of 2nd-3rd level (according to the d10 score, 1-7 = 2nd, 8-0 = 3rd) but not capable of working upward. A lieutenant can command as many decades (10 men) as he has levels; i.e., 2nd level enables command of 20 men and 3rd level enables command of 30 men. In addition, the level of a lieutenant dictates the number of sergeants he is able to direct, in addition to those normally serving with the troops; i.e., two or three additional sergeants who can do special duty. A lieutenant serving with a captain extends the number of troops the captain can effectively command and control. They have good to excellent morale because they are experienced fighters. The monthly cost for a lieutenant is 100 gp per level.

*Orcs:* Orcs make reasonable archers, fair heavy infantry, and pretty good sappers or miners. They are more intelligent than many humanoids and are fairly large compared to some. Orcs still have morale ratings of only poor-good, due to their cowardly nature and inability to get along with most other humanoids — even other orcs.

*Sapper/miner:* These troops are required for any military operations that involve the use of siege machinery, towers, trenches, mines, etc. Although they fight only to preserve their lives, they do fight as heavy footmen. They normally wear only light armor because of their duties, leather or studded leather if they are active. They have only fair-good morale because they find it difficult to defend themselves when working. Sappers and miners are basically construction workers, not shock troops.

*Sergeant (decurio, tesserarius, etc.):* A sergeant is a leader of a small body of troops, a non-commissioned officer equivalent. All sergeants are 1st-level fighters but not capable of working upward. A sergeant can command up to 10 soldiers as an independent unit or assure that the orders from a lieutenant, captain, or general are carried out. There must be one sergeant minimum for every 10 regular soldiers, though there can be one per five men. Sergeants have good-excellent morale because they are experienced veterans, men who must set an example for the common soldiers. The monthly cost of a sergeant is 10 times the rate of the troops he commands.

*Slinger:* Slingers are trained from youth up. They can wear leather, studded leather, padded, or ring mail only, and can employ small shields even when using their slings. They always operate as light infantry and use only the lesser hand-held weapons in melee. Primitive slingers use only stones, while the more advanced types use lead bullets, which give greater range and inflict

more damage. Slingers have only fair-good morale because they are often semi-barbaric types prone to lack of discipline. At close range, their lack of body armor can also be hard on them.

*Verbeegs:* These smallest of giants are fairly intelligent and sometimes organize themselves into small bands of highly-prized mercenaries. Neutral and evil lords have been known to employ verbeegs. Their size, strength, and hit points make them unmatched heavy infantry. Mercenary verbeegs wear leather or furs and carry large wooden shields to be AC 2 in combat. They have high morale, depending on their numbers, organization, and the circumstances of their employment. Verbeegs hired to fight other giants are a little wary.

*Xvarts:* Like goblins, xvarts make only fair light infantry. They are small, cowardly creatures and this shows in their morale rating.

### Care and treatment

Anyone who hires mercenaries, especially a player character, must take measures to ensure that they are content. An unhappy mercenary is much like a dagger which can be turned against its employer's throat. In general, human and demi-human mercenaries should be treated with fairness and respect. The manner in which an employer treats his mercenaries has a great bearing upon their loyalty and combat performance.

Much depends upon the mercenaries in question, but there are a few guidelines. When employing humans or demi-humans, show them that you trust them and have confidence in them, but don't be stupid. A lord who lets a band of mercenaries garrison his stronghold is asking to be put out on the street. Don't let your mercenaries remain idle; they need action to maintain their fighting trim, and inactivity just makes them bored and troublesome. Humanoids must be treated with brutal discipline — and *never*, under any circumstances, turn your back on them.

Much of this is just common sense. If you are going to ask someone to lay his life on the line for you, you had better be treating him in the manner that he expects. Now, 8

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# Worth its weight in gold



A dwarf's beard is more than hair

by John Olson

Two warriors come face-to-face on a crowded street, and instantly an awkward situation springs into being. Neither is familiar with the other, but one of them must move aside and, by doing so, humble himself to a small degree. Both men are aware that duels have been sparked by mishandling meetings such as this. One of the deadlocked pair is a young soldier, full of energy but barely past the stage of being a recruit. The other is a veteran of many campaigns; years of living in the field have replaced his youthful energy with practiced efficiency. Both sets of eyes scan each figure before them. The younger then recognizes and pays the respect due to his superior by giving way to him. The veteran moves past without a glance for the younger.

Any society has a pecking order, and a necessary social skill is the ability to identify one's station within that order. In the above situation, a young man read the small signs that identified his fellow pedestrian as his senior in status as well as in years. These signs are found in things such as clothing, possessions, and bearing. Any of these could have supplied the vital clue which brought the youngster to his decision. Perhaps it was the worn but well-cared-for sword which hung from a broad, scarred, sweat-stained belt. Maybe the elder's confident stance told of many dangers survived over the years. The veteran could have carried or worn a hard-gained symbol of honor, such as a bracer from the lord of the city, denoting that the bearer had slain five-score opponents on the field of battle. The veteran, of course, has no trouble identifying a recruit, even one who might have fooled himself into believing he is not.

Most humans can readily figure out where they stand in regard to another human. But what of non-human races? There are various signs and signals which are used, consciously and unconsciously, by other races to make known their status. A member of any race can learn those symbols. This article examines one of the least colorful (and therefore less expressive) races: the dwarves

Dwarves have several notable racial characteristics, but their most universal one is also the most often overlooked by outsiders. All mature dwarves have beards, and dwarven culture always incorporates the beard as a form of expression or an indicator of status.

Great importance is attached to the first appearance of a dwarf's beard. It marks the beginning of maturity for the dwarf, whether male or female. Although a stoic race, dwarves are very proud individuals. This pride is evident when a father takes his son before the council of elders to announce the first sprouting of the latter's beard. Both parents take no less pride when they announce the availability of their daughter for courtship. In either of these occasions, it is difficult to tell who is more proud, the parents or the offspring. The newly hirsute dwarf of either sex accepts the mantle of

adulthood in honored eloquence.

As the new beard lengthens and fills out, it gains decorations and designs. Beards are carefully washed and groomed by their owners. Unattached females festoon their lesser growths with bits of colorful ribbon and polished gemstones. The young male displays his bristling growth to best advantage by brushing it out in an aggressive flare. These types of adornments or styles mark the dwarves who have come to maturity within the last decade or so. It is only fitting that one of the rituals of a dwarven wedding is the exchange of locks of hair from the beards of the betrothed. These are then worn around the neck on a chain, preferably of gold, thus symbolizing the common beard of the married pair. A dwarf unable to supply a lock of hair from a sparse beard is obviously too young to marry.

Females put away many of their decorations when they marry. Now that the female has found a mate, there is little need to advertise her desirability to the unattached men of her society. Once she begins the serious task of raising young ones and running a household, she puts aside the frippery of youth. Her beard is worn in a more utilitarian manner. Simple braids replace the once-complex weavings. Only on special occasions will a married female dress up her beard with colors or jewels. Festivals and holy days, such as Berronar's First Day, will bring out the young girl hidden within her. Widows are the exception to this rule. All year round and at all functions, they hide their beards completely as a continual display of mourning until their own deaths. Shorter periods of mourning exist for the loss of close kin or a royal demise.

On the other hand, the beard of the male acquires more decoration as his life progresses. The male dwarf shows his prowess and social status by braiding and knotting his facial tresses in patterns. Each braid or knot is more than mere decoration. A discerning eye can locate the battle knots within a campaign braid. The same eye would be able to distinguish, by the turns and twists of the knots, between a dwarf who conducts raids and a home-defense dwarf.

Dwarves not known to one another may read each other's profession or rank by the lay of the hair. A blacksmith would wear his beard forked to help keep it out of the hot coals. Miners wear their beards tucked into their belts to prevent them from hindering movement while crawling on hands and knees in tight places. Tanners' beards have a crowded, matted look to them because they are stuffed into bags to protect them from the harsh chemicals their wearer uses on the job.

The wealth of a dwarven clan, and the source of that wealth, can be displayed in the beard. Gold miners would have gold wire woven into their beards, and silver wire would be found in the braids of a silver-rich clan. Dwarves who specialize in jewels would affix small gems to their beards.

A true appreciation of the many types of hirsute exhibits can be gained by witnessing a major dwarven festival or gathering. A festival such as the anniversary of the founding of the clan brings out all manner of dwarven finery. Once again, womenfolk ply their girlish skills, but now with the richest colored cords, jewels, and precious metals. Men brush their beards, reweave knots and braids, and include their own measure of wealth into their displays. Contests are held during the festival, some of which concern beards. The beard-length competition takes place, along with such skill sports as axe-throwing and splitting stone pillars with hammers. Other hair-oriented titles are "best decorated" (usually taken by a female) and the "True Beard." The "True Beard" is that which is found to most perfectly reflect the spirit of the dwarven race. The owner of this beard is raised above his or her peers as the "Soul of the

children are often raised and educated by word of mouth, being taught of ancient heroes by listening to their elder's tales. All great dwarves are said to have been endowed with long, flowing beards. The females of legendary romances invariably have been blessed with full, beautiful beards of the finest hair. Youngsters are told of the great hero Krudarnen, whose beard was of such length and so filled with battle knots that young children would use it to climb to ride upon his shoulders. They learn the punishment of the renegade Darnolf, who betrayed the secret mountain pass Bikhaalan Gap to orcs and was subsequently captured by the surviving dwarves. Before he was put to death his beard was destroyed — not merely shaved off roughly as is usually the case with a disgraced dwarf, but scorched off with white-hot coals so as not to offend the spirit of a metal blade.



Clan" until the close of the festival.

A gathering of the clans is a more somber occasion, but nonetheless a circumstance for impressive beard displays. The heads of the various clans and their retainers meet during the gathering to take up one or more matters of grave concern, matters that are important to all clans of the kingdom. Such subjects as naming the crown-heir or a dire threat of invasion warrant a gathering of the clans. Because of the background of power struggles and political intrigue these gatherings entail, beard decorations are important to proclaim strength and impress opponents. An outsider finding himself at a gathering of the clans would be struck by both the air of gravity found there and the numbers of braids and knots worn by each dwarf.

Dwarven lore reflects the importance of the beard in dwarven culture. Dwarven

The deities of dwarves share this emphasis of beards. Moradin, the Soul Forger, is said to have a beard of such grand proportion that he wraps it around his girth and carries his hammer thrust into it. Some dwarves hold that the veins of ore that they break free from common rock are, in fact, the tendrils of the Beard of Dumathoin, the Keeper of Secrets. One dwarven tale relates how the great warrior Dunfruth wove his beard to form a shirt and forswore any other sort of armor. The Father of Battle, Clangedin Silverbeard, was so taken with the spirit of this dwarf that he enchanted the hair, causing it to give protection as normal chain mail. The legend further relates how the evil god Abbathor conspired with Vergadain, god of luck, and foully tricked Dunfruth into gambling his beard away. Realizing his disgrace, the morally shattered dwarf sought to redeem himself by





single-handedly attacking an orc village, seeking to slay its chieftain. The defenseless warrior slew thirty of the foe before he was overwhelmed. The beard-shirt now forms a formidable part of Abbathor's armor and is a treasure that would bring great honor and glory to the dwarf who recovers it.

With role models and gods such as these, young dwarves come to associate beards with all things honorable and right, while a naked face is equated with untrustworthiness and immaturity. Given this, is it any wonder that dwarves have an instinctive aversion to the bare-faced elven race?

Pro-beard bias is most strongly felt by dwarves who deal little with the outside world. Those who remain at home in the caverns are seldom exposed to denuded faces except when their home is raided by enemies. Any stranger in the habit of shaving who visits dwarven population centers should be prepared to be treated with very



little respect. Indeed, if he knows well in advance that his business will take him to a dwarven stronghold, he would be well advised to let his beard grow as much as possible. Elves are therefore always at a disadvantage. A good way for visitors to allay suspicion and gain better treatment is to be accompanied by one or more dwarves — better still, by dwarves of that town or burg who are fellow adventurers. Never, but never, should they try to use fake beards.

Dwarves may not initially be aware that women of other races are not capable of growing beards, but they learn to adapt to this situation and not hold it against them too greatly — even if the dwarves cannot help but admit among themselves how unattractive such beardless women appear. In the worst of cases, dwarven males tend to treat beardless women of other races in a condescending manner, while female dwarves treat them with pity.

Dwarves look upon their beards not only as individual badges, but also as a racial trait to be proud of. They can understand an inferior non-dwarf beard not being able to reach superior dwarven standards. Because of this, they do not apply quite the same criteria when judging the beard of a member of another race. This is not to say that just any sort of beard finds favor in the eyes of a dwarf. It is inconceivable to a dwarf that anyone would want to intentionally shave a beard off, because having this done, coupled with exile from the ancestral home, constitutes the punishment of a dwarf who brings great dishonor upon his clan or himself. Beard styles such as the Vandylke, goatee, or Fu Manchu would be viewed with much curiosity, but without approval. A short, cropped beard is more acceptable than one that has been intentionally maimed into a bizarre shape.

Dwarven beard bias can change, but in keeping with the conservatism of the race, this process remains a phlegmatic evolution. Dwarves who venture out of the mountains lose the bulk of their bias as time passes and they are exposed to more diverse cultures. A younger dwarf first setting out will be shocked (but not visibly) by the odd customs and appearances he will see. After only two or three decades of living outside of dwarven society, he will be able to control his automatic revulsion at the sight of an adult naked face. After another decade or two, he may even be able to lessen his distrust response as well. He will learn there is more to judging a person than reading his



beard. Indeed, his first encounter with a devious, long-bearded charlatan will teach him much, especially if his purse is much lighter afterward.

As in any society, separate dwarven communities will develop qualities of their own. Although different clans and burgs will have variations of designs and customs, the beard will remain an important part of their culture. Beards can be likened to the colorful coats of arms worn by cavaliers and nobility, proclaiming place of origin and status. Have care, however — beards could be more than decorative. A dwarven thief could hide small emergency tools such as lock picks in his. An assassin could slip through several searches by careful guards by concealing a fine wire garrot within his luxuriant growth.

The next time your character encounters a dwarf unknown to him, look to the beard. It could reveal something about the dwarf that you might not find out otherwise. Lips don't always speak the truth, but a dwarf's beard hardly ever lies.

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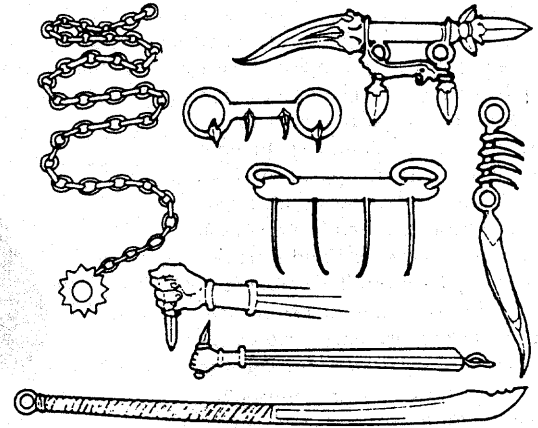
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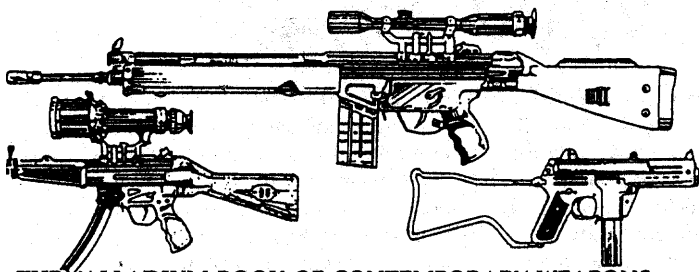
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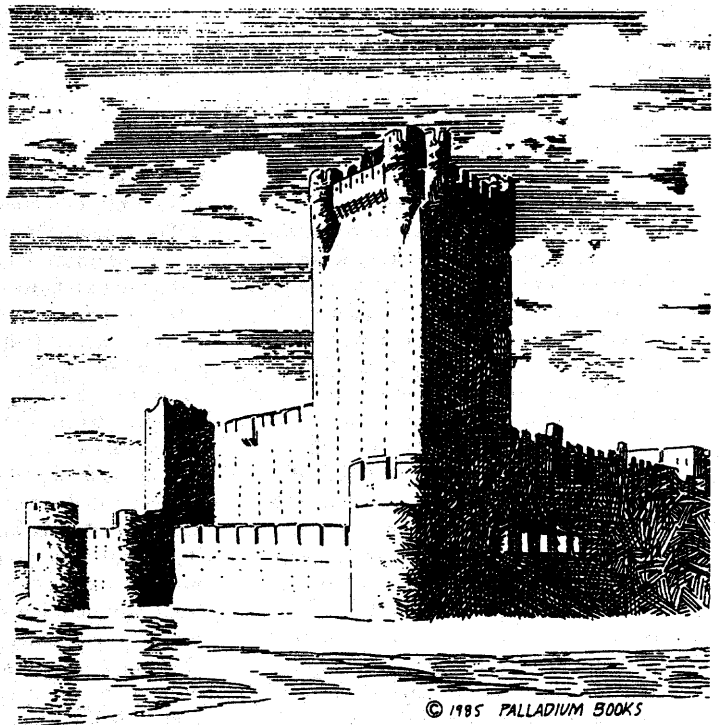
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## DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF PALLADIUM BOOKS!

# The ecology of the displacer beast

by Bill Mickelson

The following was taken from the lecture notes of the mage and naturalist Jen-Ahb, after he was mauled to death by a rogue displacer beast in the bestiary of the University of Sarkawan.

The displacer beast is a magical creature that resembles a large black panther, save for its six legs and the pair of horned tentacles sprouting from its shoulders. Its name derives from its ability to appear up to a full yard away from its actual position, caused by subtle vibrations emitted from its flesh that apparently refract light to distort the beast's apparent location. This enables the beast to avoid most initial attacks, which are directed at the illusionary form which usually appears closer to the attacker. From this power and from their own stamina, ferocity, and lightning skill, they are also highly resistant to magical effects, poison, and attacks that may be dodged (such as a dragon's breath). They are devilishly hard to kill.

In order to learn more about these strange creatures, I had to capture one alive — a task made most difficult by their rarity. What few displacer beasts there are prefer to live in the deep wilderness — in old forests, mountains and hilly regions, on vast plains, and even in the desert. Occasionally a pack of them is found in a swamp. The swamp variety tends to be somewhat larger than other sorts and swims very well. It is especially dangerous because of these facts, and because the swamp provides excellent cover for ambushes.

I was able to obtain a grant from our lordship and a leave from this university to obtain a specimen of this creature for study. I gathered a force of porters and armed men and proceeded into the Broken Spire country, where we searched for three weeks. Finally, we sighted a large male displacer on a mountainside, and one of my more zealous followers cast a net at the beast — missing, of course. It then ran off with incredible speed, apparently without using its front legs for travel. The beast looked for a few moments like a feline centaur.

After a few more luckless days, we were blessed to come across a displacer beast cave, which I identified at once by the abrasions left on the cave mouth from the beast's habit of sharpening its claws and tentacles on bare rock. Realizing our danger as well as our fortune, I deployed the twelve mercenaries with us about the cave in pairs, arming them with short swords as well as their nets. Two of my assistants

## What you see is not what (or where) you hit



carried long darts, especially prepared with a sleeping venom approved by the Council of Scholars and our lordship for use against rogue creatures who share no humanity.

Having prepared my spells and said my prayers to the gods and the university's alchemical staff (who had mixed the sleeping venom), I gave a signal and every man present gave out a roaring shout. We abruptly discovered, as the displacers emerged, that we had found a family lair. An enormous male, purple-black in color, a smaller female of blue tone, and two cubs rushed forth. My amazement could only be imagined, as no young displacer beasts had ever been known in these lands, and it had been assumed that such creatures were somehow generated full-grown. I was barely able to recover myself to raise the iron nail in my hands and speak the words to the spell of holding. The mercenaries hurled their nets at the male, almost forgetting about the rest of the pack in their haste to bring down the greater threat, and chaos

reigned for the space of perhaps a minute.

Merciful are the gods of the university, and wise are the old men in the alchemical department! At our moment of greatest peril, the male beast's natural resistances failed him as the iron nail vanished from my hands and the male displacer vanished — only to reappear several feet away, flat on the ground, paralyzed! Only one of the many nets hurled had even struck him, entangling his horned tentacles and perhaps sparing the life of a soldier that the beast had begun to maul. The soldier himself was caught by the spell, but was no worse for the experience and was quickly treated by Brother Synon of Saint Ardan's, who accompanied us. The blue-black female succumbed to a dart from one of my aides, and the cubs were quickly netted as they tried to escape.

A marvelous find, I must admit. The male was huge, measuring 11' from nose to tail, with 7' tentacles. It weighed in at about 600 lbs. The female was quite a bit



smaller, only about 8' long and 450 lbs., but was in excellent health. Each cub was about the size of a large housecat, but lacked the characteristic tentacles, having only knobby growths instead. In captivity here at the university, the cubs quickly developed their adult size and appearance within a matter of weeks. Their growth rate was astonishing. It appears that they reached full maturity at the ripe old age of four months.

The displacer beast's claim to fame is, of course, its power to appear 3' away from its actual location. The sage Dunmeyer has written extensively of displacers, though he had not studied live ones, and he once conjectured that his remarkable effect was somehow caused by molecular vibrations. Until I was able to shed new light on this mystery, anyone else could do nothing but guess, though my research is far from complete itself. It seems now that the molecular vibrations, stimulated by a specialized group of nerves, occur only in the outer layers of the beast's skin cells. Where as the vibrational movement is too minute to be normally noticed, it is sufficient to bend and redirect the rays of colored light. The refracted light rays form the illusionary image while the true form is masked, virtually invisible. This magical power is automatic, but it may be consciously directed by the beast itself.

It is still unknown, even to me, precisely how the light rays are deflected by the vibrations. Due to the beast's magical nature, I would not be at all surprised if the supernatural had a fair hand in the origin of the talent. Interestingly enough, displacer beasts are able to see each other's true forms and are not deceived by displacing — in fact confirmed by watching them in captivity.

Although only full-grown displacer beasts are found in packs outside the lair, obviously there are young. They never leave the lair until they are full-grown or the family moves to another locale. It seems as if the beasts do not want the young to be out before their displacing talent has been acquired. As violently disposed as they are to other creatures, they do not fight among their own species and exhibit no sense of rivalry among themselves, except for the play of young cubs. This playful behavior vanishes with adulthood. I am currently attempting to familiarize one of the grown displacers in the bestiary to my presence, though without much success.

Given the observations of other explorers who have recently visited the Broken Spires on other quests, we have a more complete picture of the life of the average displacer beast. Lairs contain two adult displacer beasts — male and female, of course — and perhaps as many as four cubs, though usually only one or two are produced. The birth rate among displacers appears to be quite low, given their small numbers. Little is known about their mating or birthing procedures. Unlike most carnivorous mammals, displacer cubs are born with their eyes open and a set of usable teeth for eat-

ing meat right away. Adult females have mammary glands and nurse their cubs until they leave the lair at the age of four months. Newborn kittens have no tentacles and are about the size of small housecats, though after the first eight weeks their tentacles sprout and grow at the rate of an inch or so a day until after about 30 days more have passed. At this time, the cubs will measure close to 4½' long, weigh near 90 lbs., and generally be the same size as a large lynx. At the end of the first year, length and weight will be approximately 7½' and 350 lbs., respectively.

From then on, the length of the tail will be around one-third of the overall body length, and tentacles will typically equal half the total length. When the beast reaches full maturity after two years, 10' is average length for a male, with 9' being the norm for females. Weight is about 500 lbs. for males, females 450. The extremely fast growth is even more impressive when one stops to consider that the beast's average lifespan is perhaps close to 100 years.

Distantly related to the true cats, the displacer beasts hunt in a similar fashion but often for more powerful game, such as giant deer, boars, cattle, buffalo, bears, and (as every child knows) blink dogs. They move silently until within striking distance for a lightning-fast attack made by several adults at once. They generally use only their tentacles, but their fangs and talons may be brought into play in close combat. Though they walk at a quick pace on all six legs when fighting or running, they raise their forelegs to claw at victims if they so desire and can run on their rear four legs without difficulty.

Displacer beasts can leap 20' straight up, 25' across on a standing jump, and double that on a running jump. Unlike many other creatures with more than four legs that have slow metabolisms, the displacer beast can move with great speed and with high dexterity despite the extra pair of legs that might get in the way.

I regret to say it, but a great many of those who have followed my work care little about my discoveries on how the displacer beast hides its form and creates an illusionary one, being more interested in the creature's violent temperament. "Why are they so vicious around blink dogs?" is the most often-asked question that comes from visitors to the university bestiary. Indeed, the murderous fury of a displacer beast is fit only for nightmares, of which I had several after our successful hunting expedition. Not being especially intelligent or cunning, displacers are not subtle when they burst into attack. They have been seen to maul any beast that comes within striking range of them, from humans to small dragons, and rumors abound of howling battles between some large carnivore and a hungry pack of displacers, shrieking and screaming their fury as they savagely tear their prey to shreds.

I know of few things to compare such madness to in the animal kingdom, not

even excepting the behavior of certain berserkers and were-beasts. I have evidence that some process connected to their maturation, likely a growth hormone, affects their minds as they go from amiable kitten to adult killer. From the moment that the tentacles of the two kittens we had captured began to grow, the kittens became irascible and violent. I have scars on my left arm from wounds caused by Emerald Fire, the larger of the pair, that have only recently healed. This terrible nature only grows worse over time, though, as I've said before, they will not attack their own kind. Perhaps the scent of one another is the key element in preventing these attacks; I cannot say, though I have further experiments planned.

As foul-tempered as it is, the displacer beast reserves its most intense hatred for blink dogs. There seems to be a particular reason for this, as my research has shown, but the explanation was hard to come by. The two species both prefer temperate climates, but the displacer beast usually lives in the forests and mountains, whereas the blink dog is generally a creature of the open plains, so there are no territorial disputes or fights over prey on a species-wide basis. The "dog-and-cat" hypothesis holds no water here, as you might guess, since cats and dogs are not enemies by nature.

My explanation is based upon prolonged experimentation (and the deaths of several blink dogs). The very actions of displacement and blinking seem to interfere with the nervous and mental systems of the opposing creatures. I have seen a blindfolded displacer beast jump and yowl when a blink dog was allowed to teleport itself within several feet of the former's cage. The blink dog, in turn, began to snarl and bark in the direction of the displacer even though it, too, was blindfolded, had its sensitive nose covered, and was within the area of a spell of silence. Detection of the other is automatic for each, and appears to trigger hate, ferocity, and violence in both animals, especially the displacer beast, whose special nerves are spread throughout its entire body. This occurs whenever the creatures are within 150' of one another.

Even if the blink dogs are not using their power or if the displacer beasts are asleep and not using theirs, both have learned to identify the other by scent and sight, provoking automatic flight or attack, depending upon the circumstances. Both species can also detect the approximate location of their enemy should their respective special powers be brought into play, and some rather sophisticated wild blink dogs have learned to not use their powers when preparing ambushes for the displacers. Blink dogs get a general feeling for the direction in which a displacer beast lies, but the displacers can find a blink dog as soon as it blinks in with unfailing accuracy.

As a side note, I would be curious to learn the effect upon a blink dog of wearing one of those remarkable displacing cloaks that adventurers talk about. I would wager

that being caught by a pack of the creatures would not be a pleasant experience!

A truly unique and interesting creature, the displacer beast. I am more than happy to spend the rest of my life studying it.

#### Appendix

1. To determine the orientation of a displacer beast and its illusionary form, roll d10. On a result of 1-5, the illusion is in front of the creature (positioned between the creature and an opponent it is facing). On a roll of 6-7, the illusion is to the creature's left; 8-9, to the creature's right; and on a roll of 0 (10), the illusion is behind the creature's actual position.

2. A lone opponent facing a displacer beast has a - 2 penalty "to hit" on any occasion except when the displacer beast has scored a hit earlier in the current round of combat. If more than one opponent is involved against a single beast, additional foes have their "to hit" penalties reduced by 1 for each extra foe involved: the second opponent hits at - 1, and the third and all subsequent opponents have normal chances to hit. (This assumes that the multiple opponents have arranged themselves so as to partially or entirely surround the creature.) If a beast is hit by any attack against it in a given round and it does not move, then all opponents who viewed the successful hit can attack at no penalty in the following round. Infravision will reveal the actual location of a displacer beast, as will *true*

*seeing* or other similar magical means.

3. Displacers rarely use their claws and teeth unless near death or fighting a very large opponent. Each claw attack does 1-6 hp damage, and each bite 2-12 hp damage. Such an attack routine involves two tentacles, two claws, and a bite, though it can claw with the middle and rear pairs of feet as well if it can leap down upon an opponent or attack a prone one. Very large beasts will also be attacked with all available clawed feet.

4. When it is running on four legs, the beast's movement rate is doubled (30") for 3-12 rounds.

5. Attacks for immature displacer beasts are as follows: Treat those 1-4 weeks in age as a normal cat (*Monster Manual II*, and those 5-8 weeks old as a wild cat. The growth spurt begins here, so those kittens from 9-12 weeks old attack as a lynx (with the middle set of claws doing 1-2/1-2 on rakes), but cannot use their tentacles effectively (1-4/1-4 for attacks in the 11th and 12th weeks). Attacks between claws, teeth, and tentacles are evenly divided at this stage. As the cub grows older, it comes to rely heavily upon its tentacle attacks, using them as whips. Displacers 13-16 weeks old attack as adults, using their tentacles to cause 1-6/1-6 damage. Attacks are normal at the end of the first year. Those kittens under one week old have no effective attacks.

6. Although listed as neutral in align-

ment, some displacers have truly evil natures, and this will show up in *detect alignment* spells.

7. Blink dogs will attack anyone wearing a *cloak of displacement* with great ferocity. Displacer beasts, however, are not bothered by those who cast the spell *blink* upon themselves. The cause for the latter's distress lies in the magical biology of the blink dog, not in the nature of the spell itself.

8. A displacer beast's illusionary form is not like a regular illusion, in that it is not dispelled upon contact and it cannot be "disbelieved" out of existence. Striking the illusionary form will not reveal the actual location of the beast, but will of course reveal the illusion for what it is.

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# The role of books

## Fiction with a flavor that gamers will savor

Reviews by John C. Bunnell

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### THE INITIATE

Louise Cooper

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There is a strong feeling of paradox in the first book of the Time Master trilogy: though the gods of Order and their mortal servants are at least loosely on the side of good, Louise Cooper's protagonist, Tarod, eventually finds himself following the forces of Chaos. Yet despite his ambitious nature and his growing dislike of the Circle, which raised him from childhood, Tarod fails to impress the reader as a truly evil figure.

The reason for this is that *The Initiate* isn't a "good versus evil" story at all. Rather, it's a chronicle about balance, or as Cooper's first paragraph describes it, "the eternally conflicting forces of manifest duality." The premise of the tale is that of a world where Order has overtipped the scales in its favor, and where Chaos has been very nearly wiped out of existence.

Tarod's opposition to the Circle, therefore, seems evil to the Circle's members, who represent a powerful philosophical and political voice in their world's affairs. Indeed, Tarod's goals may well wreak havoc on both the land and its people. Yet in the larger context of Tarod's viewpoint, his cause is vitally necessary. In AD&D® game terms, Tarod might well be viewed as a card-carrying chaotic neutral, while the Initiates of the Circle could be seen as lawful neutral characters.

Cooper manages to pull off these difficult characterizations with startling effectiveness, giving the novel an unsettling tone and a very strange moral quality. None of the characters seem truly likable, yet neither do they appear wholly beyond sympathy. The logic by which High Initiate Keridil condemns Tarod — long his closest friend — to death late in the tale is all too reasonable, yet Tarod's own reasons for the actions leading to the condemnation are just as legitimately argued.

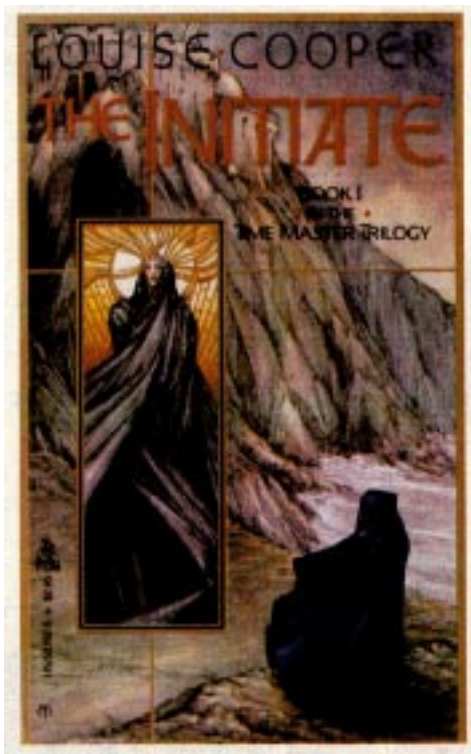
With two books left in the series, it's too early to say how well Cooper will succeed in completing her thematic construct. But if *The Initiate* is any indication, the Time Master trilogy may be one of the most intriguing sequences written in some time.

### SHUTTLE DOWN

Lee Correy

Del Rey O-345-33179-6 \$2.95

Until the last few pages, *Shuttle Down* doesn't really seem to have anything whatsoever to do with role-playing games. But



once TOP SECRET® game players have finished the tale for the first time, they'll turn back to the beginning, looking for the obscure details that indicate all kinds of adventuring possibilities beneath the story's surface.

Lee Correy did not necessarily intend to plant a spy novel underneath his chronicle of a thoroughly plausible space shuttle accident — gamers will have to do most of their own design work. Meanwhile, they can also appreciate the edge-of-the-future accuracy that permeates the tale. It isn't at all surprising that four years after *Shuttle Down* was published in 1981, NASA became involved in negotiations to forestall precisely the crisis Correy describes — an emergency shuttle landing on Easter Island. (Part of a relevant press release appears on the book's flyleaf.)

Correy provides more than enough technical and practical detail for gamers to recreate the general sequence of events, though no great scientific background is required to make sense of what's going on. And though the novel depends far more on its tightly woven plot than on its believable characters, the author also handles a generously sized cast with tolerable skill — especially where bureaucratic conflicts are involved.

Science fiction has always been known as

a seer of the future, but rarely has it been as specifically or promptly accurate as in this case. If only for that, *Shuttle Down* is unusually absorbing reading — even apart from its potential game value.

### THE SEEKERS AND THE SWORD

Michael Jan Friedman

Questar/Pop. Lib. 0-445-20139-8 \$3.50

Judging by the covers, both this novel and its predecessor, *The Hammer and the Horn*, should have been eminently forgettable rehashes of garden-variety Norse mythology. Such judgments, however, are decidedly inaccurate. In fact, Michael Jan Friedman has concocted a beguiling speculation that takes traditional Norse legends and asks the entirely logical question, "But what happened *after* Ragnarok?"

According to Friedman, what happened is that an obscure god called Vidar, tired of the warlike ways of the Aesir, retired to Earth and took up the life of a wandering minstrel. But after some 1,500 years of peace and quiet, Vidar has been drawn back to Asgard and its sister worlds by the appearance of an elusive being whose plans could annihilate both Asgard and Earth.

Though the writing itself isn't especially inspired, Friedman has developed his concept of Norse cosmology with consistency and a wealth of detail — exactly as a Dungeon Master might develop such a background for a series of adventures. And Vidar's own travels are generally broken down into shorter scenarios, something like individual gaming sessions that take place within a campaign.

Both plot and characterization are better than the packaging might suggest. Vidar's time on Earth has given him a rather un-Vikinglike outlook on life (as well as a broader vocabulary than most Norse gods), and the villainous Ygg is a good deal cleverer than the average fantasy adversary. In short, *The Seekers and the Sword* is a tale that should inspire readers interested in the worlds of Odin and Thor to go back and pick up the first book in the series — and to look forward to the next.

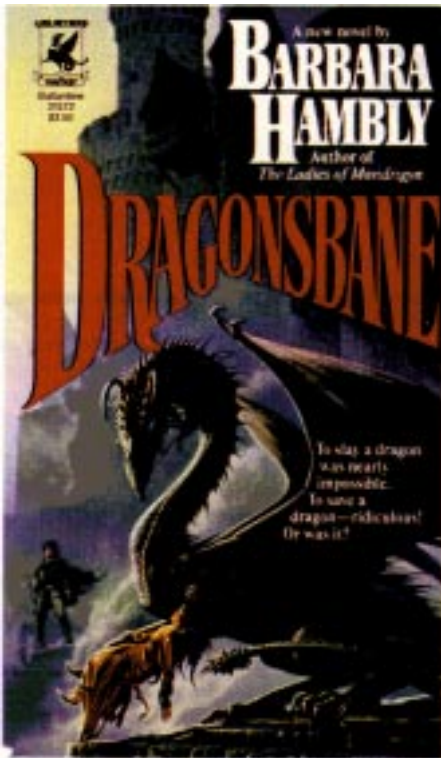
### DRAGONSBANE

Barbara Hambly

Del Rey O-345-31572-3 \$3.50

Why bother with yet another story about adventurers facing a fearsome dragon with a legendary reputation? Barbara Hambly's name on the cover is one good reason. Her





previous novels have earned excellent marks both for their skillful characterization and for their matter-of-fact freshness, and in *Dragonsbane* Hambly's writing is as devious and readable as ever.

As her tale begins, legends and ballads have sprung up in honor of Lord John Aversin, the only living man to have slain a dragon. But when Gareth of Magloshaldon goes in quest of Aversin — for now another dragon has appeared and is threatening to lay waste to the kingdom — he discovers that the *Dragonsbane* is utterly ordinary, and more naturalist than knight.

By the end of the first chapter, it's clear that the novel intends to turn all the normal dragon-slaying traditions inside out. It's therefore appropriate that neither Lord Aversin nor Gareth is Hambly's central character. Instead, *Dragonsbane* is centered on Jenny Waynest, a woman of many talents — among them woodcraft, minor magic, midwifery, and motherhood. Jenny returns with Gareth and Aversin to the king's court, and there the three learn that there's much more to the dragon's arrival than has been suspected.

One connection, for instance, points toward Zyerne, the mysterious new queen whose magical powers are inexplicably strong and whose influence over the king is equally strange. Another hints that the gnomes of Ylferdun, whose caverns are the dragon's first lair and target, know much more about the situation than they are willing to reveal. And before long, there are several indications that the great black dragon is not the danger he seems.

Hambly weaves these and other strands of plot into an absorbing tapestry of political intrigue and remarkably subtle romance. *Dragonsbane*, in fact, may be the first fantasy in a long time to handle romantic triangles (and there are several) with real

maturity and subtlety — and as an integral part of the story rather than a standard plot device. In addition, the lightly cynical wit that usually peppers Hambly's narratives once again lends an air of plausibility to the yarn.

Oh, yes — and then there is Morkeleb, the dragon around whom everything else revolves. Hambly has done an admirable job not only of describing the dragons of her world — through the practical eyes of John Aversin — but also of giving them character. One sequence involving Jenny and Morkeleb in the caverns of Ylferdun is especially noteworthy, and may finally give gamers a dragon's-eye perspective on the value and lure of gold. *Dragonsbane* blends familiar backgrounds smoothly with refreshing, common-sense insight to create much more than just another dragon story, and readers will recall the tale with pleasure long after turning its final page.

#### WHERE DRAGONS LIE

R. A. V. Salsitz

Signet O-451-14055-9 \$2.95

One of the best episodes of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ Cartoon Show described a quest for the graveyard of dragons. A similar journey is the focus of R. A. V. Salsitz's first adult fantasy (as Rhondi Vilott, she writes multiple-plot children's novels), but of the two tales, the book is by far the less successful.

The difficulty lies in the way Salsitz uses the dragons' graveyard device. In the television script, the graveyard is not merely a place to be found, but a setting that shapes the character and direction of the story. By contrast, *Where Dragons Lie* treats the dragons' burial ground merely as a carrot held in front of the protagonists so that they will chase after it haphazardly through the book.

Entirely too much of Salsitz's story simply doesn't have anything to do with the main plot. The opening pages introduce Sharlin, who must find the graveyard to save her people. Yet the remainder of the book completely ignores this conflict, and not till the last page do readers learn that only a sequel will resolve it. (Nowhere else is a hint given that the book is the first of a series, much less that loose ends of this magnitude will be left hanging.)

Dar, the other protagonist, is less interested in finding the graveyard than in riding himself of a powerful enemy, a conqueror called Valorek. As chance (and auctorial decree) would have it, Valorek's power stems largely from a bargain made with a black dragon, and Sharlin's knowledge and powers offer some hope against the creature.

Before Sharlin and Dar are allowed to find out that there is a glimmer of hope, however, they must endure a long journey filled with the inevitable monsters, inconveniences, and would-be associates. Among these are a witch, a demon, a dwarf, a grumbling wizard, and a sea serpent — all

of which serve mostly as parts of a perpetual obstacle course.

Not even Salsitz's dragons can save the tale from being virtually generic. The black dragon is unoriginally named Nightwing, and is given very little chance to do more than growl. And Turiana, the gold dragon Sharlin seeks, seems cloned directly from Anne McCaffrey's novels. Claiming that *Where Dragons Lie* is just another dragon story is all too accurate.

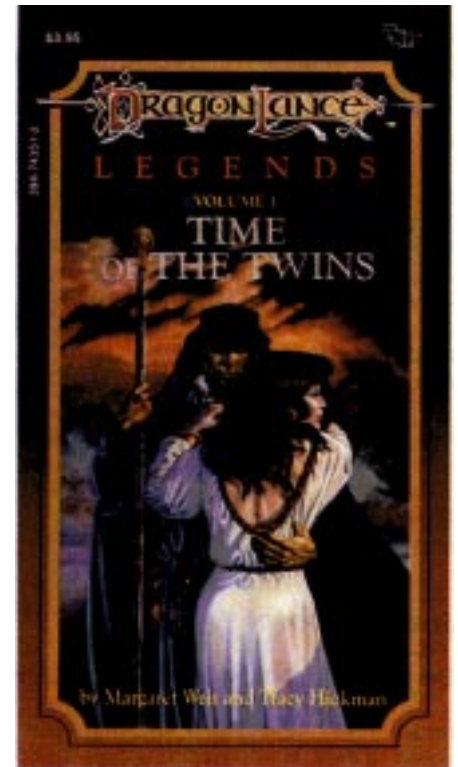
#### TIME OF THE TWINS

Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman  
TSR, Inc. O-88038-265-1 \$3.95

As Sheri Tepper writes quickly, so do Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman. Just six months after publishing the conclusion to the imposing DRAGONLANCE® trilogy, they are presenting the first book of a new series set in Krynn. In some ways, though, *Time of the Twins* is an even more unlikely success than one of Sheri Tepper's books — it's hard to believe that a novel as complex as this one could have been written that fast.

What is perhaps most striking about the book is that it really is a novel in the literary sense, despite the fact that it concludes with a cliff-hanger of cosmic proportions. Though only a part of the larger story its authors are weaving, *Time of the Twins* is also the self-contained story of the fall and redemption of Caramon, Hero of the Lance and brother to Raistlin.

Raistlin's plans form the framework for overall conflict. Now master of the Tower of High Sorcery, he seeks lost spells of Fistandantilus, and dreams of displacing Goddess of Darkness herself as ultimate of evil. But the needed lore is missing,



the time before the Cataclysm, hundreds of years in the past.

Caramon is one of two people who may be able to stop his brother's efforts, but in the two years since the end of the first trilogy, he has become (of all things) an alcoholic. Weis and Hickman present this unexpected development with startling plausibility, and the interplay between Caramon and the normally carefree Tasslehoff Burrfoot is thoroughly convincing. It is Tasslehoff who must nudge Caramon into going after Raistlin, and who impulsively throws an unknown quantity into the magic which takes them backward in time. But the gradual recovery from his illness is entirely Caramon's own achievement.

There are still odds and ends that do not quite mesh: none of the various factions set against each other seem responsible for a mysteriously vanishing tavern, and the master mage Par-Salian seems to have found a way around the AD&D® game restrictions governing magic rings ("several on each hand"?). But these are minor complaints, and what is more important is that the DRAGONLANCE® books appear to be avoiding the hazards of repetitive plotting faced by Katherine Kurtz's Deryni tales. Authors Weis and Hickman promise to deliver a genuinely fresh chronicle of Krynn, and *Time of the Twins* more than fulfills the first third of the bargain.

### THE WARLOCK ENRAGED

Christopher Stasheff

Ace 0-441-87340-5 \$2.95

Six-guns and sorcery, mutants and magic — these are the catch phrases for AD&D® game campaigns combined with vastly different milieus and cultures. Such games are fascinating to play, but can be difficult and tricky to design without throwing one aspect of the combination seriously off balance.

That's why Christopher Stasheff's *Warlock* series is valuable reading for gamers interested in mixing divergent kinds of campaigns. In the magical planet of Gramarye, Stasheff has created a setting in which both science and wizardry function to practical effect. Technology is represented by the extra-planetary society of the Decentralized Democratic Tribunal, an interstellar federation whose emissary on Gramarye is Rod Gallowglass. Magic — the more common variety — arises from the fact that Gramarye's original colonists have long since inbred assorted telepathic and psionic powers into their descendants.

But Rod Gallowglass is also a wild card of sorts, in that he has the ability to tap into magical energies that don't conform to the comfortably explainable genetic norms of the planet's telepaths. And his marriage to a Gramaryan witch has produced four children whose considerable powers also don't match those they are supposed to have.

*The Warlock Enraged* picks up the story as two problems are reaching crisis stage: the phenomenon that released Rod's powers

has had the side effect of making him subject to irrational fits of rage, and a mysterious rogue warlock is threatening to conquer Gramarye's government. A secret spying expedition is clearly called for, and it quickly becomes apparent that something very serious, and very strange, is going on.

Stasheff is a cheerfully irreverent storyteller, and all the *Warlock* novels are marked by a pleasant sense of period and a good sprinkling of puns. And while *The Warlock Enraged* isn't one of the best of the series — the moral of Rod's emotional struggle is a bit strongly presented — it's still a fast-paced adventure that charms as much as it entertains.

### SPINNERET

Timothy Zahn

Bluejay 0-312-94411-X \$15.95

For some reason, an amazing quantity of science fiction and fantasy — novels and role-playing games alike — concerns war and other forms of armed combat. It's more than welcome, therefore, to find an occasional novel that concentrates more on technological puzzles and economic interaction than on ultimate weapons. *Spinneret* is that kind of book.

Yet that doesn't mean that the book is slow-moving or dull. Timothy Zahn begins with a premise full of possibilities: Earth has made contact with aliens who come in a startling variety of shapes and sizes and who are more interested in opening trade relations than in taking over the solar system.

Earth, meanwhile, wants to get busy and colonize the nearest uninhabited worlds. Except that there aren't any — not until Astra, an asteroid-sized planet with absolutely no native metals, turns up. But Astra unexpectedly yields a windfall in the form of a mysterious metal-weaving artifact — and suddenly, everyone in the immediate galaxy shows up on the doorstep.

In part, *Spinneret* is a tale of scientific investigation, though Zahn sprinkles technical data lightly enough that it doesn't take a specialist to follow the clues. The novel is also liberally stocked with political intrigue — Astra is an American colony, but technically falls under United Nations control.

The artifact's discovery disrupts this arrangement, and the Astrans rapidly find themselves juggling orders from two different sources and simultaneously coping with several very interested alien species.

As a whole, the *Spinneret* universe is probably too complex for most game masters to adapt as a role-playing environment, though a full-fledged game might be another matter. But many of its parts could easily fit into a science-fiction campaign, and the story line should give gamers lots of ideas for things to do besides starting wars.

### Recurring Roles

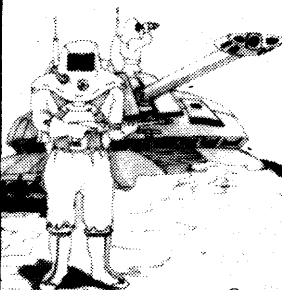
Arabian Nights novels have previously received favorable attention in this column, and Piers Anthony's *Hasan* (Tor, \$2.95) is no exception to the trend. Indeed, Anthony reveals in his postscript that his tale of a young man's voyages in quest of his beloved is adapted from genuine fragments from the original *Nights*. Though faint touches of Anthony's more modern fantasies sometimes intrude on the style, the tale is still well worth reading for lovers of all things Arabian.

As for those more modern books, *Golem in Gears* (Del Rey, \$3.95) is the ninth in Anthony's series about Xanth, and just as pun-laden and backhandedly logical as the rest. The story itself features cameo appearances from a number of previous Xanth adventures, and there's a lexicon describing everything you could possibly want to know about the author's world. More information may be long in coming — according to another postscript, more Xanth novels are likely to be preceded by further stories set in the world of *Blue Adept*.


Sheri Tepper (of course) also has a new novel out, though *Blood Heritage* (Tor, \$3.50) isn't strictly science fiction or fantasy. Still, players of such games as *Call of Cthulhu* or *Chill* may be interested in Tepper's approach to horror fiction, which is both more logical and more overtly magical than is usual for the genre. One warning: this is one case where the back cover description doesn't give a very good portrait of the novel's contents.

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# War Machine revisited

## Details and extra rules for D&D® game battles

by Garry Spiegle

When design began on the D&D® Companion Set rules, one of the tasks Frank Mentzer assigned to me was the formulation of a system to quickly handle mass combat. The result was the War Machine, now a part of the rulebooks. The system had to be short enough to fit into the space allotted, flexible enough to handle most mass-combat situations in a fantasy world, yet still have enough flavor to be something more than a sterile number system.

Recently, while reviewing the rules in preparation for setting up a campaign in my hometown of Birmingham, I realized that the campaign would make heavy use of the War Machine during play, especially in the high-level games. Because of space limitations, many areas of the War Machine were not fully developed or expanded, such as the naval, scouting, and artillery rules. I also felt that some refinements or additions were necessary to prevent distortions during special cases when using the War Machine.

The results of this review are the following optional and unofficial rules for the War Machine. They give the player and DM greater detail and wider latitude in playing the game.

*[All page numbers referenced below are from Book Two of the D&D Companion Set, specifically the section containing the War Machine rules. — Editor]*

### War Machine modifications

On page 12, under Step 1 (Calculate the Basic Force Rating), the method for determining Leadership Factor is given. This rule is accurate and applies to most forces. However, there are cases where the rule is distorted due to unusual circumstances. For example, in the module CM1, *Test of the Warlords*, the king of Norwold has a bodyguard of 20 fighters, all of 12th level. This means that the Leadership Factor is 200 (2 times each 1% of the force at name level or higher, which is 100% in this case). This number, added to the remaining steps, yields a Basic Force Rating (BFR) and Battle Rating (BR) of over 400. Looking at the Combat Results Table, the distortion becomes obvious. The problem does not occur if the force of the king's bodyguard is considered a part of the entire army of Norwold. However, during the play of a single game, you might wish to use only the BR of the bodyguard; in cases of this sort, in which a force of men of less than 500 troops has numerous high-level, name-level characters, the maximum Leadership Factor applicable is 100.

When any force is required to engage in combat with its secondary weapons, such as if a force of archers is attacked and fights hand-to-hand (with swords or daggers), then the BR of the force should be reduced by one-third, rounding up any fractions. This reflects the lesser training with the secondary weapon.

When determining Combat Results (page 14), the first requirement is to determine the troop ratio. The odds table show numbers to 8 to 1. The following additions are recommended:

Ratio	Adjustment
9 to 1	+125
10-11 to 1	+150
12-15 to 1	+175
16+ to 1	+200

### Naval rules

Naval rules, as given in the D&D Expert Set, suffice for handling a few ships in combat, although much is left for the DM to determine. Special activities, such as artillery, boarding, ramming, unusual maneuvering, etc., are not given any extensive treatment, nor do they need it in most cases. If the War Machine is applied to naval combat, a BR is required for each ship or force of ships. If a BR has been determined for a force of ships, a single ship or any part of the ships in that force has the BR of that force.

When using the War Machine mass combat rules during naval actions, the troop ratio for a force of ships is determined by totaling the soldiers (marines) and sailors aboard the ships.

With regard to sinking or capturing ships, the following rules apply:

1. Divide the casualties from a single combat result by the number of ships in the force. This yields a Loss Number per ship.
2. If the total casualties is greater than the number of crewmen and soldiers aboard the largest ship, that ship is either captured or sunk (50% chance of either). Now subtract the number of men aboard this ship (sunk or captured) from the number of casualties. If the remaining casualties are greater than the number of crewmen and soldiers aboard the next-largest ship, this ship is also captured or sunk as above. Continue the process until the remaining casualties are fewer than the number of men aboard the largest surviving ship; then go to step 3.

3. Subtract from the number of men on each remaining ship an amount equal to the Loss Number determined in Step 1. Any ship with a crew numbering less than this Loss Number is also sunk or captured.

When determining the BR of a ship or group of ships, add +1 to the BR of the force for each catapult on board the ship(s).

War Machine modifications to the Combat Results Table include the following: Troop ratio is calculated from the total number of men aboard the ship(s) involved; morale, environment, immunities, and fatigue modifiers are as normal; and, terrain modifiers are not used. Modifications to the Combat Results Table for naval operations include: Retreat and numerical results relating to spaces advanced or retreated are ignored; rout indicates surrender; and, tactics and scouting options are not used.

When two ships are engaged in combat, and at least one of them has a ram, then the ramming attack may be used. A ship must have a ram and roll highest on an initiative die roll to attempt a ramming attack. No ship can ram a faster ship unless the faster ship has decided to engage in combat, thus coming into range of a ramming attack. Use the following steps to determine the results of the ramming attack option.

1. An initiative die roll is made by both attacker and defender by rolling 1d10. The highest number has the initiative. If the winner desires and is able, he may make a ramming attack. If the loser of the die roll wishes to counter-ram, he may do so this round only if his opponent refuses a ramming attack option or if his opponent is unable to make a ramming attack.
2. If the winner wishes to attempt a ramming attack, both the attacker and defender make a percentile die roll. If the attacker rolls a number lower than the defender, then the ramming attack has failed, but the defender cannot attempt to counter-ram (go to step 4).
3. When the attacker rolls a number higher than the defender, then check the Ship-versus-Ship Ramming Table below for modifiers to this roll due to the types of ships involved.
4. Determine the difference (modified) between the attacker and defender's roll. If the difference is 50 or less in the attacker's favor, then the ramming attack has missed and the defender has the option to counter-ram. In this case,



the defender goes to step 2 and the process is repeated, with the defender attempting his own ramming attack (if able).

If the attacker's roll was 51 or higher than the defender, then the defending ship has been successfully rammed and sinks in 2d10 rounds.

#### Ship-versus-Ship Ramming Table

Attacker	Defender		
	War gal.	Lg. gal.	Sm. gal.
War galley	—	+10	+20
Lg. galley	-5	—	+10
Sm. galley	-10	-5	—

Determine the galley types involved in the ramming attack. Only a ship fitted with a ram can use the ramming option. If the attacker has rolled a higher number than the defender in step 2 above, either add or subtract the modifier listed on the Ship-versus-Ship Ramming Table by checking the types of ships involved. For example, if a small galley attempts to ram a large galley, and rolls a higher number in Step 2 of the ramming attack option, then (-5) is subtracted from the attackers roll.

#### Scouting

Use these scouting rules only when an opposing and hostile force is known to be within a few hexes of your forces, or when moving through another area with hostile intentions.

Scouts are not simple foot soldiers hastily looking over an opponent that suddenly appears on your doorstep. Scouts must be fully trained, mounted troops, capable of ranging over miles of territory to seek information about an enemy. Each scout for a force is numbered for purposes of gaming, and each is paid, trained, and equipped as a regular trooper. Scouts are organized as a separate force and given a BFR and BR of their own, unless considered as a part of the regular army. Whenever scouts take part in combat as a separate force, they use the secondary-weapon rule and reduce their BR by one-third.

When scouts take part in combat as part of a larger army, divide the number of men in the larger army into the number of men in the scout force. The number results in a percentages. Reduce the Training Factor of the army by an amount equal to this percentage when figuring the original BFR of the army. Thus, a force of 1000 men with 50 scouts has its Training Factor reduced by 5% (50 divided by 1000 = .05, or 5%).

Scouts earn the same pay as a mercenary swordsman, wear no better than AC 7, but may be armed with any weapons save the lance. Each scout must have a good horse (not necessarily a war horse). All scouts train together and not with other types of troops. They are treated as light horsemen.

No force may use more than 100 scouts for game purposes. Write down the number assigned for each scout; as scouts are lost, add others by placing new men in the places

of those already lost. If a force contains 25,000 troops or more, the DM may allow more than 100 scouts, but they should be in groups of 100 and listed as Scout Group 100A, Scout Group 100B, etc.

Each scouting attempt is made prior to combat. This is necessary because players can often note the presence of opposing forces on a map during play. Thus, scouting rolls are made before Combat Results are determined.

A scouting attempt is considered a dangerous mission. After any scouting attempt, those scouts who took part in the mission and survived should have a mark placed by their numbers. Each mark allows the character owning the scout force to modify the Scout Roll (see below) by one, to a maximum of 15 for all scouts. Thus, if a scout force contains a scout with four mission marks and another with three mission marks, the character is allowed to modify the Scout Roll by any amount up to 7. Scouts with one or more mission marks are considered veterans.

Once the opposing forces are in the same hex, those forces sending out scouts are allowed a Scout Roll. All effects are applied during the scouting period before the Combat Results.


A character may send out as many scouts as he wishes up to the maximum he possesses in his scout force, with an upper limit of 100. The character then makes a Scout Roll, using percentile dice. If the percentile

roll is higher than the number of scouts sent on the mission, the scout attempt has failed. Check the Unsuccessful Scouting Results Table. If the Scouting Roll is lower than the number of scouts sent on the scout attempt, then the mission is successful. Check the Successful Scouting Results Table. In addition, each scout surviving the mission after losses are applied is allowed a mark by his number, showing veteran status.

Unfortunately, almost all scouting missions result in losses. To determine the number of losses, find the difference between the number of scouts sent on the mission and the number rolled on the Scout Roll, higher or lower (unsuccessful or successful). This number is the percentage of scouts lost on the mission. Thus the closer the Scout Roll number is to the number of scouts sent on the mission, the lower their losses. A player may modify his Scout Roll by using his veterans' mission marks, as noted above.

Thus, a scout force of 75 sends out 40 scouts before a battle, including several veterans with a total of nine mission marks. The player rolls the Scout Roll and gets a 65, modifying the roll to a 56 (closer to the number of scouts sent out). The difference between the number of scouts and the modified Scout Roll is 16, or 16% losses on the mission (seven scouts — round all fractions up). The character now checks the Unsuccessful Scouting Results Table and finds that he must subtract five from the BR of

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his main force during the coming battle. In addition, the scouts were part of the main army and the losses (seven men) reduce the number of troops for figuring Troop Ratio.

Suppose that the Scout Roll had been 11 instead of 65. Then the character would have modified the roll upward (closer to 40) by nine, making the Scout Roll a 20. The difference between the modified Scout Roll and the number of scouts sent out is 20, or 20% (meaning a loss of eight scouts). However, the scouting attempt is successful. The player checks the results on the Successful Scouting Results Table and gives his surviving scouts a mission mark. The Successful Scouting Results Table shows the player that he may add (+ 10) to his BR.

Thus, the more scouts you send on a mission, the greater their chances of success – but their losses could be devastating. Players should use their own judgment when preparing to utilize this rule as to whether a situation warrants the use of many scouts or not.

When determining losses, each veteran sent on the mission has a 25% chance of being one of the casualties. Remove all dead veterans first, then remove non-veterans in any order.

#### Unsuccessful Scouting Results Table

Scouts lost	Results
40% +	- 10 to BR of main force
6-39%	- 5 to BR of main force
1-5%	no effect

#### Successful Scouting Results Table

Scouts lost	Results
6% +	+ 10 to BR of main force
1-5%	+ 20 to BR of main force
None*	+ 50 to BR of main force

\* – If the modified Scout Roll is exactly equal to the number of scouts on the mission. A character may use up to the maximum marks his scouts have, or 15, whichever is higher. The character does not have to use all of the modifier, only as much as needed.

#### Positioning of forces

Forces maneuver across the game map using the movement rules from the D&D Basic and Expert Sets. Once hostile forces have entered the same hex, the combat rules from the War Machine are used. However, it is sometimes difficult to determine who has the position, terrain, etc. One method, the positioning of forces option, is described here.

Determining which force has what advantage within the rules before a battle requires that the force commanders give their troops a standing set of orders before engaging an enemy. There are three types of standing orders possible in this option: seek and destroy, defensive battle, and probe. Once the opposing forces are in the same hex (after the scouting option is used) check each forces' orders on the Positioning Table

below. Locate the letter code and apply the results described immediately before the battle, unless otherwise specified.

If there is more than one battle, then the force commander may secretly change orders before each subsequent battle. Knowledge of an opponent's standing orders should not be made to any character unless some sort of spying is used.

The following are different types of standing orders.

1. *Seek and destroy.* This type of order allows a mobile force to actively seek out an opposing force and attack it immediately. Order of march, supplies, etc., are such as allow fast movement and quick battle. Forces with seek-and-destroy orders march 15% faster than their normal movement, but they cannot use the optional tactics hold or withdraw during the battle.
2. *Probe.* Probe orders allow a force to penetrate hostile territory, but with slightly greater caution than with the seek-and-destroy orders. Forces with probe orders move their normal movement rate. Probe orders allow a player to use all optional tactics during the battle.
3. *Defensive battle.* The defensive battle orders dictate that a force seek favorable terrain before engaging in battle. Forces under defensive battle orders move 10% slower than normal movement rates and cannot use the optional tactics envelope, attack, or withdraw during the battle.

Once a force has been given its standing orders, those orders cannot be changed during play except by direction of the code results described below. An exception is the use of the scouting option. A force that successfully scouts an opponent may, change its standing orders once before the battle occurs. If both forces are successful in scouting their opponent, then both may secretly change their standing orders before checking the Positioning Table below. Any force that was unsuccessful in scouting may not change its standing orders before battle.

#### Positioning table

	SD	DB	P
SD	a	b	c
DB	b	n	d
P	c	d	e

SD = Seek-and-destroy orders

DB = Defensive battle orders

P = Probe orders

a = Each force rolls percentile dice (d100). The force with the highest number has the + 20 terrain advantage from the Combat Results.

b = Each force rolls percentile dice. If the force with the SD orders rolls higher, it receives the "on the march" attack bonus from the Combat Results (+ 30 Morale). If the force with the DB orders rolls higher, it receives the + 20 Terrain bonus.

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c = Each force rolls percentile dice. If the force with the SD orders rolls highest, the opponent must revert to DB orders on any immediate and subsequent battle. All casualties for that opponent are increased by 5%. If the force with the P orders rolls the highest number, that force may opt to change its standing orders and reroll the dice roll, or it may refuse battle and retreat one unit of distance in any direction without battle. If the force decides to reroll and engage in battle, the opposing force suffers a 5% increase in casualties during that battle.

d = Each side rolls percentile dice. If the force with the DB orders rolls higher, the opposing force has an automatic -10 to its BR for the next battle, and is also under automatic DB orders for any immediate subsequent battle. If the force with the P orders rolls the highest number, the opposing force has an automatic -10 to its BR during this battle only.

e = Both sides make a percentile dice roll. Whichever side has the highest dice roll is allowed to take the results from note a above, or to avoid combat and move one unit of distance in any direction.

n = No battle occurs.

Scouting (at the DM's discretion) is required by the losing force to locate and bring the winning character's force to do battle again. If able to accomplish this, a new positioning-of-forces check is made before the new battle can occur. Forces that have engaged in battle and remain in contact for additional battle(s) do not normally require more position checks. However, if the forces have been disengaged for a period of time (overnight, for example), the positioning-of-forces option may be used again. Ideally, the check should be used to allow the DM to determine which force maneuvered to advantage during the time their forces moved before the battle.

#### Officers and promotions

There are three types of officers normally used when outfitting a force: sergeants, lieutenants, and captains. The command responsibilities of each vary from force to force. A sergeant in one force might have commanded a hundred men, while the same rank in another force might command only five. Thus a general system of officers and promotions should be established for use with the War Machine. The following data is for use as a guideline only. Each officer type should have a level as follows: sergeants are level 3, lieutenants are level 5, and captains are level 7.

Armor class and weapons are variable, but most officers have the same general arms and armor as the troops they lead.

Quality may be different, but this should not affect game play.

Pay rates for various command figures are as follows:

*Sergeants* — Double normal pay for the type of troops they command

*Lieutenants* — Five times normal pay for the type of troops they command.

*Captains* — Seven times normal pay for the type of troops they command.

Additional monies can be paid to officers at the discretion of the force owner, but the DM must decide if this has any game effect.

Promotions are available for troops as follows:

A normal, 1st-level soldier who has served with a distinct force for one game year, and has survived at least one battle (win or lose), is qualified to be a sergeant. Sergeants can lead up to 40 troops in a force.

A soldier who has served at least one game year with a distinct force as a sergeant, and has survived at least two battles (one of which must have been a victory), is qualified to be a lieutenant. A lieutenant can lead up to 160 troops in a force.

A soldier who has served for at least one game year in a distinct force as a lieutenant and has survived at least three battles (one of which must have been a victory), is qualified to be a captain. A captain can lead up to 500 troops in a force.

Other types of promotions and ranks (colonel, general, castellan, field marshal,

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etc.) are up to the DM and the player owning the force. It is recommended that if this system is used when calculating the BFR of a force, only those officers meeting the above criteria be counted. Otherwise, the level of officers is up to the DM.

When deducting casualties after a battle, the force owner should reduce the number of officers based on the number of casualties. One sergeant is lost per 40 men, one lieutenant per 160 men, and one captain per 500 men, cumulative. Thus the loss of 170 men also means the loss of four sergeants and one lieutenant.

### Types of troops

When calculating the BR of a force, we took into account the use of bows, cavalry, and movement (including flying). Other modifications are possible, such as for type of infantry (light, medium, or heavy). By dividing the soldiers in a force into these different types, outfitting costs can be more easily and exactly determined, as well as the effects such types have on Combat Results. The reasoning for this is that a low-paid force of light troops should not have the same chance to win, in most cases, as an equal force of well-paid, well-trained, and well-equipped heavy troops. A character who arms, armors, and equips a force better than his opponent should have a better chance for victory, at least in game play.

The following is a list of three types of infantry and three types of cavalry. Each type is listed with suggested arms and armor, as well as the normal secondary weapon for such troops. Note that the weapons and armor listed are not cumulative; a light infantryman would have either a bow, a sling, or javelins, but not all three. While the exact outfitting of troops is up to the DM and the player, this list can make the task easier.

### Light infantry (LI)

Armor — none, leather with shield  
Arms — long or short bow, sling, javelins  
Second weapon — short sword, dagger

### Medium infantry (MI)

Armor — leather with shield, scale mail  
Arms — spear, pike, long or short bow, 2-hand axe  
Second weapon — long sword

### Heavy infantry (HI)

Armor — chain mail, banded mail, plate mail with shield  
Arms — spear, lance, long sword, mace  
Second weapon — long sword, mace

### Light cavalry (LC)

Armor — none, leather with shield  
Arms — javelin, short bow, lance  
Second weapon — short sword, dagger

### Medium cavalry (MC)

Armor — leather with shield, scale mail, chain mail  
Arms — lance, long sword, 2-hand axe  
Second weapon — short sword

### Heavy cavalry (HC)

Armor — banded mail, plate mail with shield  
Arms — lance, long sword  
Second weapon — dagger

If using the basic types of infantry and cavalry listed above, certain additions must be made to the section of the War Machine rules dealing with calculation of BR. See page 13 (Book Two) for the section on which the following changes are based; conditions b and c are listed therein. Each time one of these statements is true, the bonus described in the rules is added to the BFR of the force.

### Mounted:

- b1 : If b is true, and 40% or more of the mounted troops are medium cavalry (MC).
- b2: If b and b1 (given above) are true, and 40% or more of the mounted troops are heavy cavalry (HC).

### Missiles:

- d1 : If c is true, and 50% or more of missile troops are bow-armed light cavalry (LC).

### Infantry:

- m: If 50% or more of the infantry is medium (MI).
- n: If 50% or more of the infantry is heavy (HI).
- o: This bonus is added after the terrain on which the battle takes place is known. Add the bonus if 40% or more of the force is light infantry (LI) and fighting in mountains, hills, woods or swamps.

The descriptions of b1, b2, and d1 are added to the existing headings in the rulebook. The heading "Infantry" should be added to the list when calculating the BR of a force using the types-of-troops optional rules above.

### Basic outfitting costs

When outfitting a force, the calculations for costs of arms, armor, and other equipment can be extensive. To make this task simpler, use the tables below. This list gives some standard outfitting costs for various types of soldiers, including cavalry. After each type is listed the following: the main weapon for that type of soldier; a set of numbers separated by a slash, representing the monthly and yearly pay of that soldier in gold pieces; a list of armor, weapons, and (if needed) horses, with costs in gold pieces; and, the total cost of outfitting the trooper with that equipment. The player may change the weapons or armor as desired, paying the different costs as determined by the DM or the equipment lists in the Basic and Expert D&D Sets. Note that, AC 7 is leather armor, AC 6 is leather with shield, AC 5 is chain mail, AC 4 is chain mail with shield, AC 3 is plate mail, and AC 2 is plate mail with shield.

All costs and pay are in gold pieces (gp) unless specified otherwise. A silvered weapon costs 20 times the basic cost of an average weapon. To obtain a good- or excellent-quality silvered weapon, pay the basic weapon cost times 20, then double or triple that for the better weapon quality (see page 12, Book Two). For example:

Sword (average) — 7 gp  
Silvered sword (average) — 140 gp  
Silvered sword (good) — 280 gp  
Silvered sword (excellent) — 420 gp

### Light infantry, short bow: 5/60\*

AC 7 . . . . .20  
Short bow w/ 20 arrows . . . . .30  
Short sword . . . . .7  
Total . . . . .57

### Light infantry, sling: 5/60\*

AC 7 . . . . .20  
Sling . . . . .1  
Short sword . . . . .7  
Total . . . . .28

### Light infantry, javelin: 3/36\*

AC 7 . . . . .20  
Two javelins . . . . .6  
Short sword . . . . .7  
Total . . . . .33

### Light infantry, long bow: 10/120\*\*

AC 7 . . . . .20  
Long bow . . . . .40  
Short sword . . . . .7  
Total . . . . .67

### Medium infantry, spear: 3/36

AC 6/AC 5 . . . . .30/40  
Spear . . . . .5  
Short/long sword . . . . .7/10  
Total . . . . .42-55

### Medium infantry, short bow: 8/96\*

AC 7/AC 5 . . . . .20/40  
Short bow w/ 20 arrows . . . . .30  
Short sword . . . . .7  
Total . . . . .57-77

### Medium infantry, long bow: 13/156\*\*

AC5 . . . . .40  
Longbow . . . . .40  
Short sword . . . . .7  
Total . . . . .87

### Medium infantry, 2-hand axe: 4/48

AC5 . . . . .40  
Two-handed axe . . . . .7  
Dagger . . . . .3  
Total . . . . .50

### Medium infantry, long sword: 3/36

AC 6/AC 4 . . . . .30/50  
Long sword . . . . .10  
Dagger . . . . .3  
Total . . . . .43-63

### Medium infantry, 2-hand sword: 6/62

AC5 . . . . .40  
Two-handed sword . . . . .15  
Short sword . . . . .7  
Total . . . . .62

<b>Heavy infantry, sword: 3/36</b>	
AC4 .....	50
Long sword .....	10
Dagger .....	3
Total .....	63

<b>Heavy infantry, spear: 3/36</b>	
AC4 .....	50
Spear .....	3
Long sword .....	10
Total .....	63

<b>Heavy infantry, crossbow: 4/48**</b>	
AC5 .....	40
Heavy crossbow w/30 bolts .....	60
Short sword .....	7
Total .....	107

<b>Heavy infantry, 2-hand sword: 10/120</b>	
AC3 .....	60
Two-handed sword .....	15
Short sword .....	7
Total .....	82

<b>Light cavalry, short bow: 15/180*</b>	
AC7 .....	20
Short bow w/20 arrows .....	30
Short sword .....	7
Riding horse .....	75
Total .....	132

<b>Light cavalry, javelin/lance: 10/120*</b>	
AC6 .....	30
Lance/two javelins .....	3/6
Long sword .....	10

<b>Light cavalry, javelin/lance (cont.):</b>	
Riding horse .....	75
Total .....	118-121

<b>Medium cavalry, lance: 15/180</b>	
AC4 .....	40
Lance .....	3
Long sword .....	10
Riding horse .....	75
Total .....	128

<b>Heavy cavalry, lance: 20/240</b>	
AC 4/AC 2 .....	50/70
Lance .....	3
Long sword .....	10
War horse .....	250
Barding (optional) .....	150
Total .....	313-483

\* — Range less than 100', for purposes of determining the BR of a force.

\*\* — Range greater than 100', for purposes of determining the BR of a force.

Heavy cavalry horses must be trained war horses in order to fight in groups with other war horses. Lances are normally used in a mass charge; then the cavalrymen switch to their swords (or other hand weapons). However, when these cavalrymen use their swords, no secondary weapon penalty is assessed to the BR of the force, as these men are trained in both lance and sword as primary weapons.

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# The uncommon tongue

## Modify modern English to add spice to your game

by Gregory Andersen

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In most AD&D® game campaigns, the Dungeon Master tries to introduce some elements of language. Different kinds of speech may be encountered in different parts of the world, and old or forgotten kinds of writing may be found in ruins and libraries. Depending on the languages known by a character, he may or may not be able to read certain documents or communicate with those around him.

This can be an effective way to develop the cultures in a world, but in terms of game presentation it does present problems. Alphabets such as runic forms can be used to represent unfamiliar writing, and whole languages can even be invented when required. However, since players will usually not be able to understand these without some study, the DM must be willing to translate them or have them remain unreadable.

A particular character usually knows a number of languages. Indeed, scholarly types (*i.e.*, magic-users and clerics) will probably make a study of them, and traders will probably learn several as good business practice. It cannot always be assumed that a party will be so sophisticated, though. Also, while the languages of neighboring lands may be familiar, what reason is there to think that an adventurer should be able to learn the archaic words on some crumbling piece of parchment from centuries past?

Languages do die out, sometimes abruptly. For example, by the time of the Caesars, there was perhaps only a handful of Romans who could still understand Etruscan, which had been widely spoken in central Italy only a few centuries before. More often, languages evolve into other languages over time; from the Latin of the Roman Empire, we now have a number of languages ranging from Spanish to Romanian. English, too, has undergone and is still undergoing this transition. To someone whose view of medieval Britain comes from a diet of Shakespearean plays and Hollywood epics, it may come as a surprise that the language of the period was not anything closely resembling Shakespeare's Elizabethan prose, but something closer to a mix of about equal parts English, French, and Low German. Old English, spoken a few centuries earlier, is hardly recognizable as an ancestor of English at all, resembling perhaps one of the Scandinavian languages.

All of this does not really have anything to do with gaming, of course, except to provide us with a model with which to construct the languages of a world. Suppose that for the "common tongue" there is a related, archaic "ancient tongue." Such a language would be but a distant memory for most men. Possibly only a few masters of the arts of learning can understand it fully, yet it promises untold knowledge to those who can fathom the secret and magical writings of that bygone period. Suppose, as in our previous example, a character comes into possession of a piece of script hundreds of years old. Will he be able to read it? Could you read something, say, 600 years old?

Such a scenario is not difficult for a DM to simulate. In fact, no exotic words or language learning rules need be developed. Instead, English (more specifically, Middle English) is used as a model. Spoken from A.D. 1150-1450, it is close enough to our own language to be understood by the careful reader or listener, but still retains enough unfamiliar elements to sound like something appropriate to fantasy. With a little practice, it is fairly easy to write simple sentences for game use with the aid of this guide. Exact grammatical correctness is helpful, but not necessary for gaming purposes.

Depending on the degree to which the language is used, different purposes can be achieved. At the simplest level, flavoring a message written in ordinary English with a few words like *scrowle* for scroll, *wysard* for wizard, and *he loketh* for he looks makes it more interest-

ing and gives it a familiar archaic sound. Sentences written out completely in Middle English add to the authenticity; depending on the degree of complexity used, they can become a kind of word puzzle to test the cleverness of the gamer. Finally, words which have lost or changed their meanings may be used to confound or tantalize players. For example, the cryptic word *woodnesse* (madness) scratched on a potion flask might not be decipherable, but it will give the wise character enough reason to pause before drinking. Old English, or Anglo-Saxon, is easily adapted to this use, but it is the author's recommendation that it be used sparingly, if at all.

The process of creating sentences, as well as their uses, is best understood by going through it a few times. As an example, suppose I am planning a game around a rampaging dragon. No one has seen this particular dragon in the region for a few hundred years, so knowledge about it is rather sketchy. Characters searching the local archives for records may find an old rhyme:

*From caverns creeps a loathsome beast;  
The red dragon flies from lands east  
To steal the treasure of distant lords.  
In dread, men name him Gormithor*

Not the best verse ever composed, perhaps, but it does reveal some useful information. Now, to convert this into "authentic ancient tongue," I collect the words I want to use and lay them out:

*from/cavern/crepen/a/loothly/beest  
the/rede/dragoun/fleeth/from/londes  
to/stelen/the/tresor/of/ferne/lords  
in/drede/men/clepen/him/Gormithor*

I did not bother to look up the most basic words like *from*, *a*, or *of*, and did not alter *lords* because it is part of the rhyme. The two unfamiliar words, *ferne* and *clepen*, are taken from Chaucer, but substitutes could have been found without going to the extra effort. Finishing the exercise is simple a matter of putting the final grammatical touches in:

*From caverns crepeth a loothly beest;  
The rede dragoun fleeth from londes est  
To stelen the tresor of ferne lords.  
In drede, men clepen him Gormithor*

Note that, in this case, *rede* and *ferne* were found with final *e*'s already attached, and *him* did not need to be changed (as per the grammatical rules below).

From this poem, it can be learned that the dragon comes from a cavern in the east, the dragon's name is Gormithor, and some sort of treasure is hinted at. More lines may reveal more information. But is the poem too hard to understand? Possibly. Words like *ferne* and *clepen* are rather tricky, and the key word *est* might be missed. Assuming that these elements will leave players baffled, I might make substitutions such as putting a few of the old words back until it makes sense. But if you don't want to reveal everything right away, it can be left as is. Here is one more example:

*These books are relics of ages old,  
When dwarves bore axes of iron cold;  
In them, you will read of walking death  
That slept not, 'neath stones great.*



# Important Notice

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*in/them/you/will/reden/of/walking/deeth*  
*that/slepen/not/'neath/stoon/great*

*These bookes been relikis of ages oold,*  
*Whan dwerfes baren sparthes of yren cold;*  
*In hem ye wol rede of walkinge deeth*  
*That slepede nat, 'neath stoones greet.*

Again, I did not look up all the words, and *sparth* is only included for interest; *axe* would serve just as well. Neither have I necessarily followed the grammatical rules to the letter. If I wished, I could put some of the original words back to make the meaning clearer. A DM could also allow for some type of translation abilities if it seemed appropriate. By itself, though, the language creates some of the grey areas that exist in any new and unfamiliar language, even after one has studied it for some time.

Obviously, this language system is easiest to use in written form, as in books, old maps, inscriptions, etc. It does offer a few possibilities for speaking encounters. Creatures that might logically speak an ancient tongue include all types of undead (who says a long-dead ghost must speak modern American English?), beings awakened from a long, enchanted sleep, or isolated groups, like a lost clan of warriors on a remote island. Such encounters will quickly become unmanageable if allowed to turn into a question-and-answer session with slow and painful translation. It would be best to have the creature give a short speech and then do something else, like attack, or else have a short list of stock replies ready for it to use.

It should be noted that this article is intended as an aid to gaming only, and should not be regarded as a complete reference for any other purpose. If the reader is interested in the finer points of Middle English grammar, including the numerous exceptions to the rules presented here, further study is encouraged.

## From English to "ancient tongue"

### Step one

Write the message out in everyday English. The word order and syntax will remain virtually the same in the translation.

### Step two

Select the proper word equivalents from the lists provided with this article, and write them out in the same order as given in the original message. There are four alternatives to choose from when making word selection:

1. Use a modern word. There is a good chance that it will be the correct word in any case.
2. Make up your own word by converting a currently used word into pseudo-Middle English. Similar-sounding Middle English words can be used as a guide for doing this, or you can develop your own system. For example, an *-ow* ending could be changed to a *-we* ending, or *-le* to *-el*.
3. Look the word up. A good English dictionary will give the Middle and Old English (ME and OE) equivalents for most words. Other forms, such as Old French (OF) or Old High German (OHG), may be given as well, and may be useful.
4. Use a word equivalent which has lost its meaning. These require some research, usually in original language editions of works of literature, such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Grammar books and the like tend to be too technical to be of interest to the average reader. Often, the word used will be a matter of choice. For example, Chaucer uses at least three words for "dagger": *anlas*, *boydekin*, and *dagger*.

### Step three

Correct the grammar of the sentence as much as possible. Note the following guidelines:

1. Most simple articles and prepositions (such as *of*, *in*, *on*, *a*, *the*, etc.) are the same as their modern equivalents. There are a few exceptions, such as *eek* for *also*.

2. A selection of commonly used first-, second-, and third-person pronouns follows:

### Singular forms

1st person	2nd person	3rd person
I	thou	he/she/hit (it)
my	thy	his/hir/his
me	thee	him/hir/him

### Plural forms

1st person	2nd person	3rd person
we	ye	they
oure	youre	hir
us	yow	hem

### Forms of *be*

Present tense	Past tense
I am	I was
thou been	thou were
he/she/hit is	he/she/hit was
we/ye/they been	we/ye/they were

The negative form adds the word *ne* before *is*, *was*, etc. (e.g., thou ne been, I ne was). This can be contracted to *nis*, *nas*, etc.

3. To conjugate a verb, first cross out the ending, if it was listed with one. (Dictionaries usually list them with an *-en* ending; for example, *finden* would be changed to *find-*.) Then decide which tense to use. For the present tense, tack on the following endings:

Pronoun	Suffix
I	-e
thou	-est
he, she, hit	-eth
we, ye, they	-en

For past tense, decide whether the verb is strong or weak. If the modern form takes an *-ed* ending (as do most words, like *love/loved*), use the weak ending. If it does not take an *-ed* ending, but changes its central vowel in the past tense (like *run/ran*), use the strong ending.

Pronoun	Weak suffix	Strong suffix*
I	-e de	(a) -
thou	-e dest	(a) -e
he, she, hit	-e de	(a) -
we, ye, they	-e den	(a) -en

\* — The (a) indicates that a central vowel change involving a, o, or u occurs in the word.

The future tense is denoted by *wol* or *shal* (*will* or *shall*); for example: *he wol finde* and *he shal finde*. The use of the future tense requires an *-e* suffix to the verb.

The imperative form (involving a command, like *come here!*) depends on whether it is addressed to one person or several. If to one person, no suffix is added. If to several, an *-eth* suffix is used ("Findeth my ring, varlets!").

The infinitive form (e.g., to give, to find, to have) requires an *-en* ending to the verb (such as *bidden*, meaning to *ask*).

Any verb can be changed into a negative by adding *nat* (*not*) after it. Example, *he findeth nat* and *he shal nat*.

Participle suffixes that may be used are below:

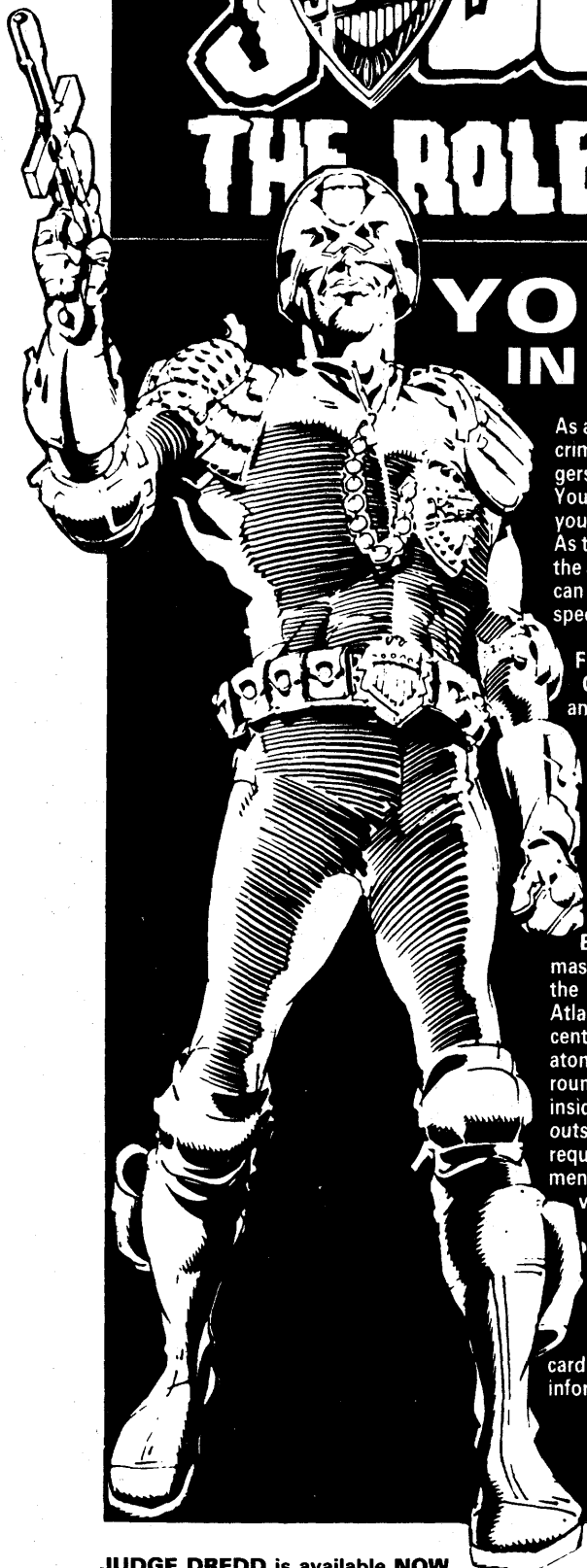
Present	Past, weak	Past, strong
-ing	-ed	-en

Common sense and experimentation will yield any other verb forms necessary for gaming purposes.

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**NEW!**



4. The following are a few rules concerning nouns and related modifiers.

When modifying a noun, an adjective takes an -e ending. For example, when using *oold* with *wysard*, we get *the oolde wysard*.

Plurals are created by adding -es or -s to the noun. For most words ending with a consonant, -es is the preferred ending. For example, *lond* becomes *londes*.

A possessive is created by adding -es or -s. Again, -es is preferred for words and names ending with a consonant; for example, *the knyghtes tale*.

### Pronunciation

Consonants are pronounced in the modern manner, except that all of the consonants present are pronounced, such as the *k* and *gh* in *knyght*. The *gh* sound corresponds to the *ch* in the German word *ich*. [Those who recall the manner in which the Frenchman pronounced the word "knights" in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* ("ka-NIK-its") should grasp this more easily — Editor].

Vowels are pronounced as done in German, French, or Italian. If that doesn't sound right, pronounce them as in modern English. See the table below.

Vowel	Pronounced as
a	a in <i>far</i>
e	a in <i>fate</i> or in <i>fare</i>
e*	a in <i>comma</i>
i,y	e in <i>he</i> , or i in <i>pin</i>
o	o in <i>go</i>
u	u in <i>pull</i>

\* — The final e in a word, such as in *fere*. This is written as an upside-down e in pronunciation guides.

The final syllables -e, -ed, -en, and -es form an additional and separate syllable. Pronounce one more syllable than is currently pronounced in these cases; for example, *fere* (fire) is pronounced *fer'-e*. Silent e sounds are not used.

### Suggested reading

#### Literature:

Look for editions of Old or Middle English texts in the original language, with glossaries, footnotes, or translations. Books are listed here in reverse chronological order.

*Le Morte d'Arthur*, Thomas Malory (1485).

*Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer (1387).

*Troilus and Cressida*, Geoffrey Chaucer (1385).

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, unknown (14th century).

*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, unknown (9th-12th century).

*Beowulf*, unknown (7th or 8th century).

#### Reference:

Stratmann, Francis Henry. *A Middle English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. Springfield, MA: G&C Merriam Co., 1981.

### Archaic word lists

#### Nouns

arrow . . . . .	arwe	chain mail coat . . . .	.hauberk
axe . . . . .	.sparth	cloak . . . . .	.cloke
bag . . . . .	.poke	copper . . . . .	.coper
barbarian . . . . .	.barbre	cup . . . . .	.coppe
battle . . . . .	.batel	death . . . . .	.deeth
beast . . . . .	.beest	dice . . . . .	.dees
bottle . . . . .	.botel	dog (large) . . . . .	.alaunt
bow . . . . .	.bowe	dragon . . . . .	.dragoun
buckler (shield) . . . .	.bokeler	drugs . . . . .	.drogges
castle . . . . .	.castel	dungeon . . . . .	.donjon
chain . . . . .	.knettinge	dwarf . . . . .	.dwerf

elf . . . . .	.elf	pen . . . . .	.penne
eye . . . . .	.eie	poison . . . . .	.poyson
fire . . . . .	.fere	priest . . . . .	.preest
food . . . . .	.mete	rhyme . . . . .	.rym
forester . . . . .	.forster	scroll . . . . .	.scrowle
ghost . . . . .	.goost	sea . . . . .	.see
giant . . . . .	.geaunt	secret . . . . .	.prevey
goblin . . . . .	.gobelin	shield . . . . .	.sheld
gold . . . . .	.gold	ship . . . . .	.schip
guild . . . . .	.gild	silver . . . . .	.silver
hand . . . . .	.hond	slave . . . . .	.thral
harp . . . . .	.citole	sound, voice . . . . .	.stevens
helmet . . . . .	.helm	spear . . . . .	.spere
horse . . . . .	.courser,	spider . . . . .	.loppe
	.hors	squire . . . . .	.squyer
horse (war) . . . . .	.destrier	staff . . . . .	.staf
inn . . . . .	.in	stone . . . . .	.stoon
iron . . . . .	.yren	street . . . . .	.strete
island . . . . .	.yle	sword . . . . .	.swerd
jewelry . . . . .	.perree	table . . . . .	.bord
knight . . . . .	.knyght	thief . . . . .	.theef
land . . . . .	.lond	town . . . . .	.toun
lute . . . . .	.ribible	trap . . . . .	.brike,
magic . . . . .	.magik		.trappe
man . . . . .	.wight	treasure . . . . .	.tresor
maze . . . . .	.mase	wine . . . . .	.wyn
mirror . . . . .	.mirour	witch . . . . .	.wicche
monster . . . . .	.monstre	wizard . . . . .	.wysard
number . . . . .	.noubre	wood . . . . .	.shawe
ornament (jeweled) . . .	.nouches	word . . . . .	.word

### Adjectives

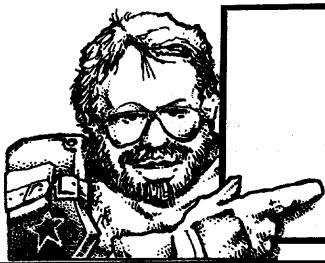
black . . . . .	.blak	near . . . . .	.ny
blue . . . . .	.blew	old . . . . .	.oold
dead . . . . .	.deed	perfect . . . . .	.parfit
distant . . . . .	.ferne	red . . . . .	.rede
fair . . . . .	.fair	secret . . . . .	.prevey
false . . . . .	.fals	small . . . . .	.smal
foolish . . . . .	.nyce	such . . . . .	.swich
great . . . . .	.greet	true . . . . .	.trewe
green . . . . .	.grene	white . . . . .	.whytt
hideous . . . . .	.loothly	wicked . . . . .	.wikked
high . . . . .	.hie	wise . . . . .	.wys
low . . . . .	.lah	yellow . . . . .	.yelwe
mad . . . . .	.wood	young . . . . .	.yong

### Verbs

awake . . . . .	.adaw	read . . . . .	.red-
ask . . . . .	.bidd	rescue . . . . .	.rescow
break . . . . .	.brek	ride . . . . .	.ryd-
burn . . . . .	.brenn	sail . . . . .	.seil-
bury . . . . .	.berit	shoot . . . . .	.shot-
catch . . . . .	.hent	sing . . . . .	.syng-
creep . . . . .	.crep	slay . . . . .	.sle-
dread . . . . .	.dred	sleep . . . . .	.slep-
eat . . . . .	.et	sleep (put to) . . . . .	.aswev-
escape . . . . .	.scap	speak . . . . .	.spek-
fight . . . . .	.fight	steal . . . . .	.stel-
find . . . . .	.find	summon . . . . .	.somon-
fly . . . . .	.fle	swim . . . . .	.swimm-
guess . . . . .	.devyn	throw . . . . .	.throw
have . . . . .	.hav	walk . . . . .	.walk-
heal . . . . .	.sound	write . . . . .	.endyt-
hear . . . . .	.her		
look . . . . .	.lok		
name . . . . .	.clep-		
open . . . . .	.open		

### Other words

also . . . . .	.eek
such . . . . .	.swich



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Macbeth, V.iii  
William Shakespeare

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**WHERE ENCOUNTERED:** At the head of the forces of good.

**NUMBER ENCOUNTERED:** 1 (unique)  
**HIT POINTS:** 15

**ARMOR:** Full +2 plate

**WEAPONS:** Enchanted sword (2d3+3)

**ATTACK CHANCE:** 75% with sword; 65% with other weapons.

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:** Immune to poison.

**Notes:** The Count may lead any of the forces of good.

**K'KANTHLATL THULUSSUN**

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**WHERE ENCOUNTERED:** Usually at or near the sea.

**NUMBER ENCOUNTERED:** 1 (unique)

**HIT POINTS:** 15 on land; 30 at sea

**ARMOR:** As plate and mail

**WEAPONS:** Great axe (2d6)

**ATTACK CHANCE:** 80% with axe; 70% with other weapons

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:** Anyone seeing Thulussun's face must save as if they had seen a medusa, or have his sanity shattered.

**Notes:** -1 to morale die rolls of units attacked by Thulussun.

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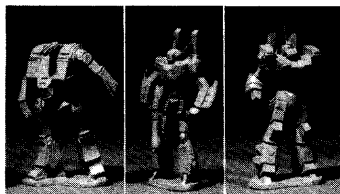
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Dun is also very useful in the complex colorings of several kinds of horses. There is, of course, a kind of horse called simply a "dun," and his body is mostly of this color with dark brown and black detailing in the legs and mane. . . . There are many other color schemes that use Dun heavily.

# Locals aren't all yokels

## In town, adventurers may not hold all the aces

by Ralph Sizer

---

'Way back in issue #91, in this magazine's letter column, someone claimed that townsfolk and peasants would be very wary and respectful of adventurers because they know that, say, a fifth-level fighter could easily kill five of them each round, while they couldn't hurt him. Well, in general that's true, but the exceptions can kill you very fast. Here are some reasons not to abuse the locals.

First, there's history. If there has been a war recently in the area, most of the local people probably fought in it, and quite likely gained a level or two; some of them, the better natural fighters, may have gained half a dozen levels, or even more if it was a long war. These guys aren't going to stand for being pushed around by a bunch of punk adventurers. They'll just go home, put their old armor on again, and come back and teach you a lesson. This is essentially what happened to the James-Dalton gang in Northfield, Minnesota — they ran into too many Civil War veterans who hadn't forgotten how to shoot.

Second there's geography. If you decide to pick on people in a small farming village in the middle of a large, peaceful, civilized area, you're probably safe — but what are you doing there in the first place? Adventurers, meaning you, are usually out on the edges of civilization, and frontier towns are a different proposition altogether. If a town has survived for any length of time in the foothills of the troll mountains, it is a very safe bet that the people know just how to deal with troll raiding parties. A troll raiding party can consist of up to a dozen 6 HD monsters. If your adventurers are stronger than that, by all means start something. At least you'll be putting some excitement into their daily routine.

The same goes for single houses. The old woman who lives in that small hut next to the evil swamp registers as neutral good to a *know alignment* spell, so she hasn't survived because she's one of the monsters. That leaves two alternatives. Possibly she is very dumb and very lucky, but it's much more likely that she's a retired adventurer of least 15th level. ("Don't the monsters bother you?" "Only the suicidal ones." Evil doesn't mean dumb; she has them well trained.) People who live in dangerous regions can usually handle the dangers — and they can probably handle you, too.

Third, there's the police. Monsters in a dungeon don't scream for help when you start to beat them up, but people in towns do, and the watch usually comes running

fast. They may not be ace fighters (unless, as mentioned already, they have tough neighbors), but they can give you problems. For one thing, the law is stacked in their favor. They're wearing armor, and carrying both missile and large melee weapons. You aren't. You either checked yours at the gate when you entered town, or left them in your room at the inn. The local ordinances simply do not allow fully armed thugs (you) to roam the streets. Civilians who want to keep out of jail wear at most the equivalent of a leather jacket for armor, and carry a dagger or short sword. Also, you can't win by intimidating the local guard. If the guard fails to keep peace in the town, the mayor will call out the militia; if *that* fails, a regiment of the regular army will be next.

Fourth, there's competition. The dangers and opportunities that attracted you to the region around this town have probably also attracted other parties of adventurers who are also making this town their headquarters. One of these parties would probably be glad to accept the mayor's urgent request to "Throw these bums out for us — we'll let you keep their money and equipment."

Fifth, there's shyness. Some powerful people do not want to be known as powerful. For example, some vampires think it's fun to terrorize a whole area, but others are smarter and realize that becoming well known means getting onto the hit list of every paladin for 200 miles around; this is very hazardous to one's health. So the old peasant couple living in semi-retirement on the outskirts of town may well be just what they seem; but if they happen to be keeping house for the local vampire you had better not bother them, at all.

Finally, there's retirement. If the townspeople and the town guard can't handle you, the local lord may not bother to hire other adventurers or call out the militia; he may just come after you himself. That's because a lord is very likely to be an adventurer who got too powerful for the dungeon, so he retired from adventuring, set up a castle, and became the lord. Since you haven't retired yet, that means he has more (probably a lot more) levels than you do, and so do his two captains and six lieutenants. If he needs magical help, he's on good terms with most of his neighboring lords, a couple of whom are retired magic-users and can get here in a day if he sends an urgent call for help. And of course most of the local clerics are on his side. Assuming only a conservative response from one neighbor, let's add it up: One 15th-level fighter, two

11th, six 8th and dozens of lower-level fighters, plus one 15th-level M-U, one 11th, two 8th and five lower-level magic-users, plus clerics as needed. Does your party of half a dozen 5th-8th level adventurers really want to stir up that much trouble?

Lords aren't the only ones who retire. The venerable cleric who presides at the local chapel *probably* never got past level 4 and has obviously not fought in many years. On the other hand, she just may have been Chief Priestess in the capital city, and a leading member of the Imperial Council before she retired to her native village to live out her last years. Do you really want to take on a 22nd-level cleric, even if she has forgotten how to swing a mace? This one you do have a fair chance of spotting in advance, if you notice that the local inn is obviously prepared to handle parties that expect the finest, and ask why. There is perhaps a 10% chance on any day that she will be receiving 1d6 important visitors from the capital, and their retinue, who have come to ask her advice on matters of religion or state. (Make that a 100% chance of d10 + 10 visitors if it happens to be her birthday or a high holy day.)

I trust I don't have to spell out the kind of reaction the central government would have to the murder of a retired Imperial Councillor.

Not all dangerous retirees are famous. For example, you come to a nice country inn and start to bully the proprietor. His middle-aged wife quietly slips out of the room. A few minutes later she comes back wearing her old *girdle of cloud giant strength*, +4 plate armor, and a helmet that projects a *globe of invulnerability* around her; she's carrying a +3 *vorpals blade* and has on a few other magic items. Before she fell in love, married and settled down she was a 14th-level fighter, and you are about to learn that under AD&D® game rules, age does not seriously affect fighting ability until you reach 60. If you suddenly become very polite and apologize profusely, she may let you go.

In general, remember that the ace gun-fighter whose only desire is to settle down and run his own ranch is a standard figure in Western novels. Presumably, many characters in your fantasy world have the same desires. According to the DM's version of Murphy's Law, if you keep taking advantage of helpless peasants and townsfolk, you'll soon find one of the not-so-helpless ones — and at the worst possible time for you.



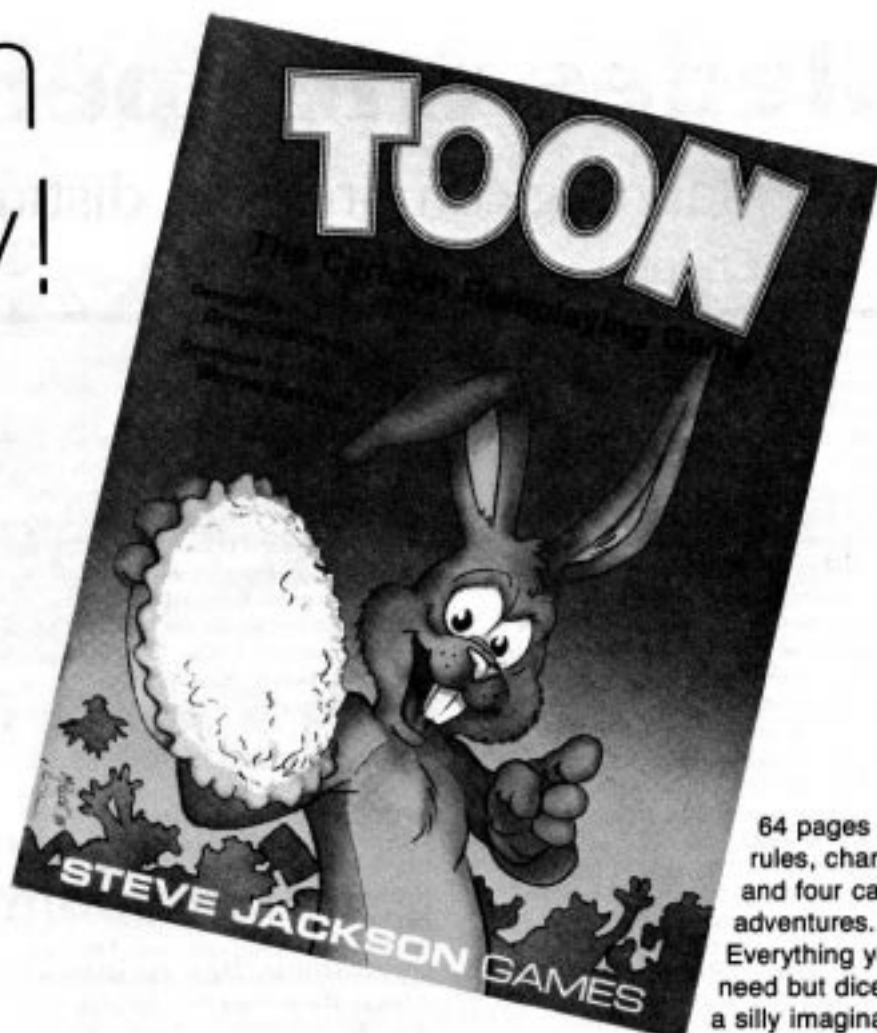
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# Blades with personality

## DM's planning can produce distinctive swords

by Sam Chupp

---

*Stormbringer* — an evil, sentient sword that drained men's souls. *Excalibur* — a weapon of kings. *Scalpel* and *Heartseeker* — blades of a barbarian and a thief. What are they in AD&D game terms? A *sword of life stealing*, a *sword of sharpness*, and two normal blades.

Not very colorful, are they?

No doubt you have a number of fine magical swords or similar weapons in your campaign. In time, however, the glint on that *longsword* +3 dulls — after all, it just modifies the dice roll — and, in order to make dungeon-delving a little more exciting, you throw in a special sword, a *vorpal weapon* or a *sword of wounding*. Even using these weapons can grow old to sword-using characters, and your players may demand something more. You may introduce them to intelligent swords, but, a few personality conflicts later, it becomes clear that you have nothing else to give your sword-using characters, and the players keep looking for something new.

What your campaign may be suffering from is a glut of colorless, boring, magical swords. Even the sharp-edged blades of *vorpal weapons* are dulled if your sentient swords have no life or individuality at all. You need to give your magic blades character, whether they have strong magical powers or not, by giving them legendary backgrounds and by changing the way they affect the characters themselves.

Giving a sword a past will create intriguing and interesting gaming sessions, as well as for giving a common sword new life. Consider the *sword* + 1. At first glance, it's terribly boring. But, what if it were made known to the wielder that this particular *sword* + 1 was made 30 years ago by Tolrat the Wizard, now the mage-king of the Royal Court of Triviana (your campaign's main country)? It was constructed long ago for use by the mage's son, who mysteriously vanished after a long period of time fighting in the Trivianian Army. Suddenly, the blade has a meaning and purpose. *Legend lore* would reveal more of its history, but until then, only the secret rune-mark of "T" on the tang under the handle would denote the sword's origin and background.

Now suppose, as the character with the sword gains levels, the mage Tolrat discovers that the character has his long-lost son's sword. This could happen during another adventure in which that particular character was caught red-handed, stealing from the mage-king's castle. You can see easily that giving a legend and a purpose to a magic

sword, even if it is the weakest of magical swords, can produce adventures from other adventures.

Now, consider a *frost brand* sword. Since it is one of the special-power swords and can do such amazing things as stop fires and glow when it is extremely cold, the average DM would think it colorful enough. What would happen, however, if the DM decided that he was going to spend a little time figuring out certain details like: 1) Who made the sword? 2) Why did he make it? 3) What's the sword's history? and, 4) How did it get to the place where the adventurers found it?

A possible result could be that the evil wizard of the Ice, Nolrem, constructed the sword because the fighter-mage Ulrik required the sword in payment for exploring a relatively unknown part of Gulicia, Nolrem's homeland. While exploring Gulicia, however, ice devils surprised Ulrik in the night, slew him, and carried the blade to the Nine Hells, where it became non-magical. It remained there for hundreds of years and its ownership changed several times, until it was given to the devil-loving cleric Solphar as part of a pact the cleric made in order to get magic weapons for his cleric/assassins. It was stolen from Solphar's temple in the dead of night by thieves from the local guild and was eventually fenced so that it came to be purchased by an outlaw named Kkeepo, who placed it in the castle (now in ruins) that your group has been exploring.

The above legend provides the DM chances for several new adventures, if only the DM gives the legend the chance to take off.

What about the most powerful blades, the intelligent swords? Intelligent swords can aid the DM even more. Not only can they have very vivid legends, but they can also have strange and diverse personalities.

The best legends surface about intelligent swords, because they are able to talk about their past. Of course, the truth of the tale, how complete it is, or whether the sword will speak of its past at all is a matter involving not only its intelligence and ego, but its personality as well.

Some intelligent swords (especially those with high-and-mighty special purposes) will lie and cheat in order to accomplish their own personal goals. Some swords with big egos will boast about their supposed "past deeds" usually lying when it suits them. But what if a sword says it was once wielded by the lieutenant of the local lord's army

and claims it knows where the lieutenant stashed a cache of priceless gems? Can the party really afford not to check out the braggart sword's story?

How do intelligent-swords get their personalities? When a magic-user creates a sword, its personality could be formed in one of three ways:

1) The personality of the sword could be the personality of a person or being who was slain in order to imbue the sword with intelligence during the *enchant an item* spell. These swords are known as sentient swords, because they have a creature's soul inside them.

2) The magic-user creating the sword could have used a *wish* to give the sword its intelligence and personality.

3) The sword's personality and intelligence evolved by chance from the residual magics of the *enchant an item* spell.

How do you design the sword's personality? Those DMs who enjoy randomly generating things instead of going through an extensive creative process will find the General Tendencies Table of the Non-Player Character section of the DMG (pp. 100-101) helpful in establishing the sword's personality. Other tables in this section will also prove beneficial, such as piety, morals, and interests. Certainly, this can provide the DM with some bizarre and interesting diversions with swords — consider a sword with an interest in fauna wanting to pursue a particular species of butterfly while the rest of the party is trying to fend off an attack from a beholder!

As an alternative to dice-rolling, you may spend as much time creating the personality of your swords as your players spend creating the personalities of their characters. After answering the first four questions detailed above, simply ask the question "What would a person be like who has a history and a background such as this?" Also worth considering are the sword's alignment and special powers, if any. Other questions you might want to answer are, "What are the sword's primary and secondary interests?" "How egotistical is this sword?" (Not all swords with high ego scores need be arrogant. Like real people, some swords don't show their egos as much as others.) "What are the sword's likes and dislikes?" These and other questions will help clarify the sword's nature.

Intelligent swords can offer exciting modifications to encounters, if both their personality and their background, as well as their intelligence and ego, are represented.

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# Giant-sized weapons

## The bigger the monster, the bigger the blow

by Stephen Martin

As described in the Monster Manuals and the FIEND FOLIO® Tome, most giant types do the same amount of damage no matter what weapon they use. Hill giants do 2-16 points of damage with "any weapon available," stone giants "with stone weapons" do 3-18 points of damage, and fomorian giants using weapons that "range from huge clubs to chains with heavy balls attached" do 4-32 points of damage.

Humans, demi-humans, and humanoids do damage by weapon type. This article is based on the contention that giants and other large, weapon-using creatures should have that same characteristic.

Table I accompanying this test gives damages of weapons for large races as a function of damage for human-sized weapons. To use the chart, locate the damage a human-scaled weapon does and read across to the appropriate column to see what the larger race's version of the weapon does.

The basic assumption used in creating Table I is that weapon lengths and damage figures vary proportionately with the height of the wielder's race. Thus, larger races use larger weapons (and do correspondingly more damage with them) even if they are weaker than some smaller races.

### Strength bonuses

A number of races have great strength, and add a bonus to damage done whenever they use a weapon. They do not gain "to hit" bonuses, because these are subsumed by the combat matrix. Table II lists damage bonuses due to strength for all creatures mentioned in the group lists under Table I.

These bonuses have been taken from rule-book descriptions where possible. Other creature types were assigned bonuses equal to those of a known creature that does roughly the same amount of damage. The exception to this method is the ogre mage, assigned a +6 to make him weaker than a hill giant but as strong as smaller races. Comparison with ogre leaders, who do 2-12 points of damage or gain a +3 with weapons, could justify a bonus as low as +3.

Other creature types and individuals can easily be fit into Tables I and II by comparing their sizes and damage figures with the creatures discussed here.

### Wrong-sized weapons

Any creature can use a weapon scaled for a smaller creature, assuming the weapon is large enough to hold, with no penalties. A creature may use a weapon designed for a larger creature if the weapon is no longer

than 1½ times his height and it weighs no more than his normal size's version of a two-handed sword.

Table III gives information on how to gauge the length and weight of larger-than-human-scaled weapons, plus figures for the increased range of large missile weapons (add the given amount to the upper limit for all three ranges). It also includes a row of "penalty" figures, used as described below:

Any creature using an oversized weapon will suffer a penalty equal to the difference between the "penalty" figure given for his size category and the "penalty" figure for the category the weapon was designed for.

This penalty applies to both "to hit" and damage rolls. Characters will also suffer a non-proficiency penalty for trying to use a weapon type they are not accomplished with, unless and until the owner of a giant-sized weapon gains proficiency with it.

Creatures smaller than human size suffer even greater penalties when trying to use an oversized weapon. Those about the size of dwarves and elves suffer an additional -1 "to hit" and on damage, and can use weapons weighing no more than 150 gp. Those about the size of halflings and gnomes suffer an additional -2 penalty (in addition to the penalty for humans) and can use oversized

TABLE I: Weapon damage figures

Human-scaled	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	1-2	1-2	1-3	2-3	2-4	2-5
1-2	1-3	1-4	2-4	2-5	2-7	2-8
1-3	2-4	1-6	2-6	1-8	3-9	2-12
1-4	1-6	2-6	2-8	1-10	3-12	2-16
1-6	2-8	1-10	2-12	3-13	3-18	5-20
1-8	1-12	3-12	2-16	2-20	3-24	3-30
1-10	3-13	2-16	2-20	2-24	3-30	4-32
1-12	3-17	2-20	2-24	6-24	3-36	5-40
2-5	2-8	1-12	2-12	3-12	3-18	5-20
2-7	2-12	3-12	2-16	2-20	3-24	3-30
2-8	2-12	3-13	3-17	3-21	6-24	5-30
2-12	3-18	3-21	4-24	3-30	6-36	7-42
2-16	3-24	6-24	4-32	6-36	6-48	3-60
3-9	2-16	3-18	3-21	4-24	4-32	6-36
3-12	2-20	5-20	6-24	7-28	5-40	6-48
3-18	3-30	7-28	6-36	7-42	3-60	8-64

Group A (7 1/2'-9' tall, 340-690 lbs. weight) includes cyclopskin, verbeeg giant, ogre, planetar, qullan.

Group B (9 1/2'-11' tall, 691-1200 lbs. weight) includes dao, djinn, firbolg giant, hill giant, ogre mage, solar, giant troll.

Group C (11 1/2' -13' tall, 1201-2000 lbs. weight) includes efreet, ettin, fire giant, stone giant, large spriggan.

Group D (13 1/2' -16' tall, 2001-3600 lbs. weight) includes fomorian giant, frost giant, mountain giant.

Group E (16 1/2'-19 1/2' tall, 3601-6500 lbs. weight) includes cloud giant, fog giant, marid, titan.

Group F (20' + tall, 6500 + lbs. weight) includes storm giant.

TABLE II: Damage bonuses

0	qullan	+8	dao, ettin (right arm), stone giant
+2	cyclopskin	+9	efreet, fog giant, frost giant
+2-+4	ogre	+10	firbolg giant, fire giant, fomorian giant
+3-+6	verbeeg giant	+11	cloud giant, mountain giant, marid
+6	ogre mage	+12	storm giant, solar
+7	djinn, ettin (left arm), hill giant, planetar, spriggan (large), giant troll	+14	titan

weapons weighing no more than 80 gp. Humanoids with a height listed as "7' + " (such as gnolls) can use weapons weighing up to 375 gp, but penalties still apply.

*Example 1:* Brute the Barbarian has just defeated a stone giant that had a short sword and a dagger. The giant's weapons are 2 times as long and 8 times as heavy as the human versions. Thus, the short sword is 4' long and weighs 280 gp. Brute can't use it because it's too heavy — not too heavy for him to lift, but too heavy for him to use with any hope of success in combat.

The dagger is 2 1/2' long and weighs 80 gp. A human-scaled dagger does 1-4/1-3 points of damage, so the giant's does 2-8/2-6. However, Brute would suffer a - 4 penalty on both "to hit" and damage rolls, and an additional - 1 "to hit" for non-proficiency with a giant dagger. He hefts the dagger, decides it would be tough to handle in combat, and keeps the sword instead: He can't swing it, but it will make an impressive trophy.

Later, an ogre finds the dagger. He suffers a - 2 penalty on "to hit" and damage rolls with it. He'd be better off using the dagger than using some ogre-sized weapons, but can usually use his talons more effectively anyway.

*Example 2:* Before he became renowned as a giant-slayer, Brute fought many ogres. While doing so, he acquired an ogre's trident. Fortunately, it was a small one, only 6' long and 150 gp in weight, and he could use it in battle with a - 3 "to hit" (counting non-proficiency) and a - 2 on damage. Since it did 2-12/2-20 points of damage, Brute liked it despite the penalties.

Once when a small group of bandits kidnapped some elven dignitaries, Brute led a few friends to rescue them. The rescuers sneaked into the bandits' camp and freed the prisoners, but were seen when they tried to sneak out again. In the ensuing fight, Brute was knocked out and one of the elves, a fighter whose weapons had been taken, grabbed Brute's trident. He was able to use it, but at - 3 penalties for its size and an additional - 2 "to hit" for non-proficiency.

### Large-sized creatures

With respect to the damage a weapon causes, a large (size L) creature is any creature larger than the creature type for which the weapon was designed. Man-sized (size M) creatures are those of approximately the same size as the creature type in question, and smaller (size S) creatures are any smaller than that type. Thus, Brute's tri-

dent will only inflict 2-12 points of damage on an ogre, not 2-20, because an ogre is size M in relation to another ogre (or another ogre's weapon).

### Missile weapons

A true giant's most effective missile weapon is the hurled boulder. These rocks are about 1' in diameter and weigh 80-90 lbs. each. Throwing such rocks affords the benefits of high damage figures, good ranges, no "to hit" penalties for medium and long ranges, and not allowing the target to apply a dexterity bonus to its armor class. The rocks are cumbersome, however, and giants found in eareas where rocks are not readily available will probably carry no more than one or two, if any at all.

A more suitable size of rock for carrying is the 14-21 lb. size that the wearer of a *girdle of giant strength* can use. Such boulders would do less damage, of course, and intermediate-sized boulders would do intermediate damages. Table IV lists the range and damage figures of standard boulders for those giants who throw boulders, followed by modifications for non-standard sizes.

**TABLE IV: Hurlled boulders**

Giant type	Range	Damage
Hill giant	20"	2-16
Mountain giant	20"	2-16
Fire giant	20"	2-20
Frost giant	20"	2-20
Fog giant	24"	2-20
Cloud giant	24"	2-24
Storm giant	24"	3-36
Stone giant	30"	3-30

### Non-standard boulders

Weight	Damage	Range
15-30	- 3 per die	150% normal
31-50	- 2 per die	135% normal
51-75	- 1 per die	120% normal
76-100	no change	normal
101-125	+ 1 per die	75% normal
126-150	+ 2 per die	50% normal

Weight given in pounds.

Minimum damage: 1 point per die.

For simplicity, round range figures to the nearest whole number; e.g., 135% of normal range would be 27", 32", or 40".

The damage figure for the storm giant's boulder was taken from Appendix E of the *DMG*; the range figure was assigned on the basis of size. The other giant races are assumed not to possess the ability

which allows effective boulder-throwing and are thus not included in the table.

Other large creatures may prefer other types of hurled weapons, such as darts, javelins, and spears. For such weapons, long range is determined by adding 1" per "plus" of the thrower's damage bonus to the long range for a human-scaled weapon. Short and medium range limits are 1/3 and 2/3 of long range, respectively.

Ranges for propelled missiles such as arrows, bolts, and sling stones are calculated differently. Short range is equal to the human-scaled short range, plus the range modifier from Table III. Medium range is equal to human range plus double the modifier, and long range is equal to human long range plus triple the modifier.

### Tactics and exceptions

A number of weapons have special uses, and intelligent creatures of larger-than-human size will be familiar with those that benefit them the most. In the hands of all, creatures mentioned here except the quillan, the sap can be a most effective weapon, especially for gathering slaves. It may be possible in some worlds for ogre magi to learn to use martial-arts weapons, including the weapon catch and weapon breaker maneuvers. In isolated areas, there may be tribes that fight from mounts such as elephants or baluchitheria.

In some cases a large creature may have a special proficiency with a weapon, such as the giant troll's spiked club or the mountain giant's club. In these cases where damage with a specific weapon is given in the creature's description, the assigned damage should be used instead of that determined by Table I. This does not necessarily mean that the weapon is the best available at all times, however. Whether any strength bonuses are included on top of the listed damage is a question for the DM to resolve. (It may not be overpowering to give a giant troll a + 7 damage bonus with his spiked club, but it seems devastating to award a mountain giant an extra + 11 to damage with his club.)

Likewise, other special weapon properties are retained. Quillan swords are still + 3, for instance, while the weapons of solars and planetars are usually magical.

Use of this system for giant-sized weapons will slightly increase the power of the larger humanoid creatures. But, more importantly, it will allow a little variety in an interesting set of foes, and can be used to make these foes a challenge for characters over a wider range of levels.

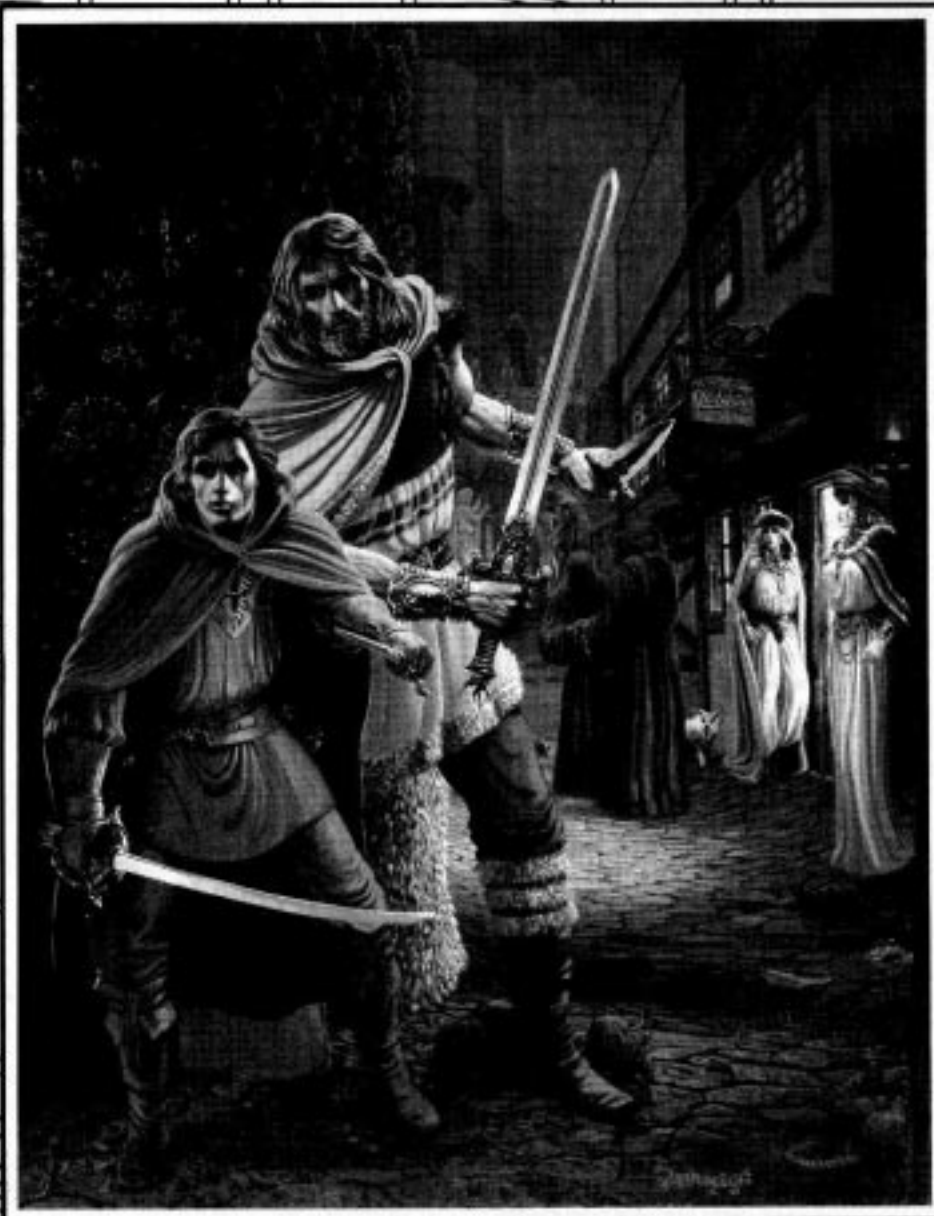
**TABLE III: Comparative information**

	Human-scaled	A	B	C	D	E	F
Length:	x 1	x 1 1/2	x 1 2/3	x 2	x 2 1/3	x 3	x 3 1/2
Weight:	x 1	x 3	x 5	x 8	x 13	x 27	x 43
Range:	+ 0"	+ 2"	+ 3"	+ 4"	+ 5"	+ 6"	+ 6"
Penalty:	0	2	3	4	6	8	10

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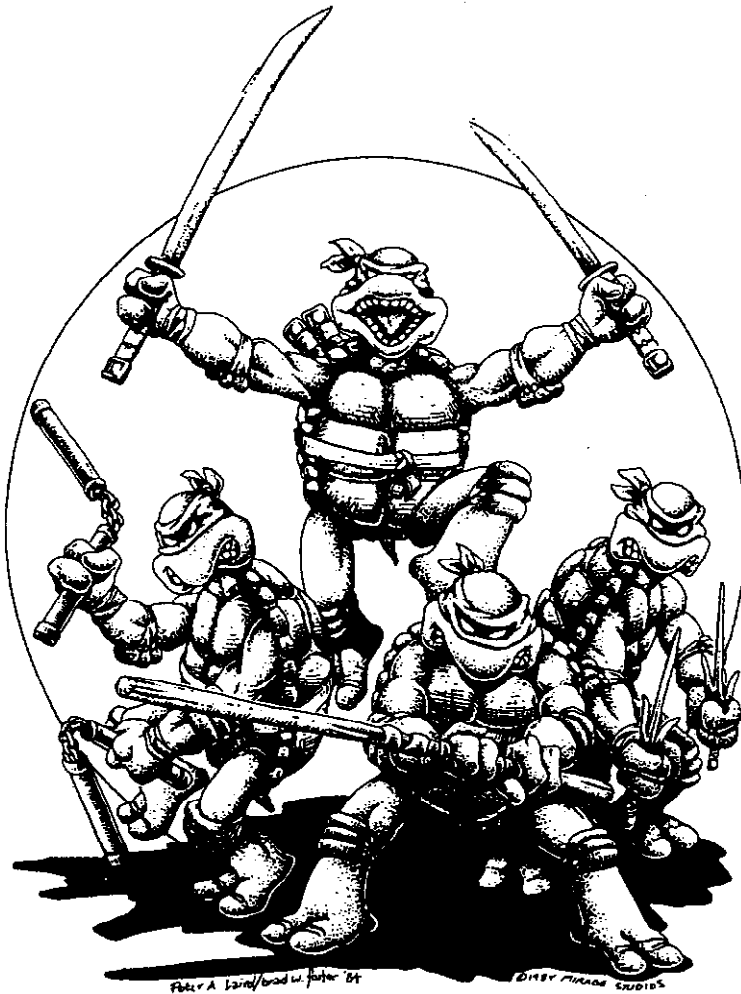


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by Bennet Marks

Satyrs and dryads have a peculiar connection in the AD&D® game universe. They are both members of one species in which the males and females have widely varying abilities and attitudes, and the males and females do not make a habit of dwelling together. The child of a satyr father and a dryad mother is either a satyr or a dryad, depending on gender. Both dryads and satyrs can mate with humans as well, and the children of such unions possess distinctive capabilities and talents. Half-satyrs and half-dryads are usable as non-player characters in many AD&D game settings.

### Half-satyrs

The male offspring of human mothers and satyr fathers are called half-satyrs. These cross-breeds are rare, but perhaps not as rare as many would suppose. Scandalous as it seems, a woman who falls under the *charming* influence of a satyr's pipes may, some months later, find herself with a child whose paternity owes more to music than to marriage. Sometimes even the piping may be dispensed with; in many human communities near forests, one may hear gossip about a woman — naive maiden or bored matron — who meets secretly with a lover in the woods, not caring that he may be something slightly *other* than human.

In addition, the male child of a dryad and a male human will also be a half-satyr, developing all the abilities and traits of half-satyrs. Commonly, the dryad mother of a half-satyr leaves the infant in the care of a nearby human community — either the father's, or a druidic enclave, or some other convenient choice.

In infancy and early childhood, a half-satyr looks almost entirely human. His only distinguishing characteristics are a callousing of the skin of his feet, and a slight bend at the knees which gives him an odd gait. At this age, the half-satyr usually blends into the human community of his birth without difficulty.

However, as he reaches adolescence — generally between the ages of 11 and 13 — the half-satyr undergoes various physiological changes (even more so than his human peers). The calloused feet harden and darken until they more resemble hooves than human appendages. He develops a heavy beard and thick body hair (although not thick enough to be called fur). Finally, two short, knobby horns sprout from his upper forehead. A half-satyr who wishes to

conceal his race always keeps his boots on and wears his hair down over his forehead.

At about this same age, almost all half-satyrs develop a deep interest in the forest and spend increasing amounts of time walking alone in the woods. Over the years, this interest turns into a profound and abiding yearning for the life of the forest. The half-satyr may also develop a corresponding dissatisfaction with his place in human society. There is no mystery about this unease. His physical "abnormalities" may all too often single him out for censure in his mother's community. His former playmates may shun or bully him; adults may frequently treat him as a freak or an embarrassment. This judgment may be exacerbated by the half-satyr's illegitimacy, in cultures where such a distinction is important. Also, the young teen-age half-satyr shows a romantic interest in girls and women earlier than his wholly human peers, which may bring more disapproval down upon his head. Consequently, it is no surprise that most half-satyrs eventually leave home to dwell deep in the forest. There, after a time, they often find a band of satyrs to live with — without even knowing that this is what they were seeking all along.

Satyrs seem to accept the half-satyr without question, and willingly teach him the satirical way of life: drinking wine, playing pipes, chasing dryads, and the like. Generally, however, no satyr ever admits to (or is even aware of) being a particular half-satyr's father. The half-satyr may live with a satyr band for many years, and in some cases may even become its spokesman to elves, humans, or others.

Some half-satyrs stay with their satyr kinsmen for their entire lives, but most eventually remember their human half, and feel an attraction for the wider world beyond their small portion of the forest. It is at this point that a half-satyr may ask a human, elf, or half-elf for training, and become an adventurer. When this happens, the half-satyr may combine his dual heritages in unusual and fascinating ways, much as a half-elf may do.

### Character classes and talents

A half-satyr character may be a druid, lighter, ranger, magic-user, thief, or bard. In each of these classes, his level advancement is limited, as detailed in Table I. A half-satyr may also choose to be a multi-classed fighter/magic-user, ranger/magic-user, fighter/thief, ranger/thief (neutral

good alignment only), or magic-user/thief. Half-satyrs cannot enter the thief-acrobat split class.

Because of their close connection with nature, half-satyrs are acutely uncomfortable in metal armor, and therefore refuse to wear it, regardless of profession. The only exception to this rule is elven chainmail, which may be presented as an award to a particular half-satyr by grateful elves. Because of its make, elven chainmail also does not interfere so sharply with this "natural connection," and so can be worn by half-satyr fighters and rangers (including multi-classed characters), and bards.

Half-satyrs may, however, use any kind of shield that their class ordinarily permits. Multi-classed characters may use the armor and weaponry available to either of their classes, so long as the armor does not interfere with the performance of the abilities of their classes. For example, a half-satyr fighter/magic-user would wear no armor, but could carry a metal shield and use any kind of weapon. Multi-classed half-satyr thieves should consult the new armors-available to thieves in *Unearthed Arcana*. Being closely associated with nature and the forest, half-satyrs have a 50% chance of correctly identifying plant and animal types, as well as identifying pure water. The character must be concentrating on the particular thing to be identified in order for this ability to work.

Half-satyrs are 50% resistant to *charm* spells cast by any creatures basically associated with nature (dryads, nixies, etc.), or to spells that are cast through music or singing (a harpy's song, a bard's playing, a true satyr's pipes, etc.). Even if the 50% resistance fails to negate the effect, the normal saving throw is applicable.

Half-satyrs speak the following languages: common, satyr, dryad, and elvish. They also, of course, speak their alignment tongue and professional language (if a thief or druid). For each point of intelligence over 15, a half-satyr is capable of learning one new language of any ordinary kind, or two new "forest" languages — that is, centaur, gnome, green dragon, and the others listed for druids (*Players Handbook*, page 21). For example, a half-satyr with an intelligence score of 17 could learn either four forest languages, or one "ordinary" (non-forest) language and two forest languages, or a pair of ordinary languages. Half-satyrs learn new languages in the usual manner, as outlined in the *Players Handbook*, page 34.

### The half-satyr viewpoint

Half-satyrs are the-product of two cultures, but truly belong to neither. For this reason, they seem quite contradictory to those who know them. On the surface, half-satyrs may seem playful and even frivolous. They love good wine, music, and dancing. Most play panpipes of a non-magic sort. When they drink, it is often to excess, and they may become overly friendly and familiar — particularly to women of the human, elven, or half-elven kind. Despite this forwardness, most half-satyrs are considered charming, and women of these races find them attractive.

But beyond this gregariousness, half-satyrs have a deeply private side as well. No matter how well accepted by their friends and colleagues, many half-satyrs never completely outgrow an acute sense of being an outsider. It is not unusual for a half-satyr, when not actively adventuring, to slip away from a group and sit alone in the forest. There he may be found, playing his pipes to the forest creatures or just thinking. Half-satyrs may seem like frolicsome and even irresponsible individuals, and in some ways they are, but those who know them well realize they are also capable of great depth and commitment. These traits are often most evident in half-satyr rangers as well as magic-users, many of whom are intense and dedicated scholars.

Half-satyrs love the forest and most of the creatures who dwell there. They are not overly fond of large cities. A half-satyr character may, of course, be of any alignment, but most are neither lawful nor evil. Among the other character races, they prefer elves and gnomes, treat humans and half-elves with goodwill or tolerance (often tempered by their early experiences with humans), are neutral to dwarves, and react to half-orcs with antipathy. In the world of adventurers, they are interesting and valuable companions.

### The half-dryad

And what of the female offspring of these unusual pairings of human and woodland parents? The daughter of a satyr and a human woman, or of a dryad and a human man, is known as a half-dryad. Half-dryads share many characteristics with their half-satyr kin. The main differences between the half-dryad and the half-satyr are detailed below:

1. *Appearance* — The half-dryad appears as a normal (and usually quite attractive) human woman, with one exception. When the dryad is about 12 years old, her hair color turns to a brilliant green. Half-dryads are + 1 on charisma, but - 1 on constitution (adjustments made to originally rolled scores). (See “*The ecology of the dryad*,” *DRAGON*® issue #87, for more information on dryads in general.)

2. *Life history* — If born to a dryad, the half-dryad may be raised by her mother until adolescence. At that time, the youngster, realizing she is not a true dryad, may seek out human, half-elven, or elven com-

pany. On the other hand, a half-dryad born in human society may develop an unusually intense interest in the forest and its inhabitants. In any case, half-dryads, like half-satyrs, become acquainted with both human and woodland ways.

3. *Racial talents* — Half-dryads have the same 50% chance as half-satyrs for identifying plant type, animal type, and pure water. They are 90% resistant to *charm* spells cast by creatures associated with nature, but they have no resistance to spells cast by

music and singing.

4. *Point of view* — On the whole, half-dryads are more serious than half-satyrs. They are not given to excess drinking of alcoholic beverages. They do, however, love to sing and dance, and are quite proud of their beauty and its effects on men. Half-dryads can be quite flirtatious. Other differences are detailed in the tables that follow. Otherwise, half-dryads have the same characteristics, class opportunities, and restrictions as half-satyrs.

**Table I: Class level limits for half-satyrs & half-dryads**

Character class	Limiting characteristic	Value of limiting characteristic		
		16 or less	17	18
Druid	wisdom	6/7	7/8	8/9
Fighter	strength	6/5	7/6	8/7
Ranger	strength	6/6	7/7	8/8
Magic-user	intelligence	5/5	6/6	7/7
Thief	dexterity	10/10	11/11	12/12
Bard	charisma	12/12	13/13	14/14

Figures to the left of the slash indicate maximum level attainable by half-satyrs with an ability score of the given value; figures to the right of the slash are for half-dryads.

For example, a half-dryad ranger/magic-user with a 14 strength and a 18 intelligence can reach 6th level/7th level — a Guide/Enchantress.

Half-satyrs and half-dryads cannot be barbarians, cavaliers, clerics, paladins, illusionists, assassins, thief-acrobats, or monks.

**Table II: Ability score limits**

Ability	Minimum	Maximum
Strength*	3/3	18/18
Intelligence	5/5	18/18
Wisdom	3/3	18/18
Dexterity	3/3	18/18
Constitution	3/3	18/17
Charisma	5/8	18/18

Figures to the left of the slash are for half-satyrs; figures to the right are for half-dryads.

\* — Half-satyr fighters and rangers may have 18(90) strength; half-dryad fighters and rangers may have 18(50) strength.

**Table III: Half-satyr & half-dryad age categories**

Young adult	Mature	Middle-aged	Old	Venerable
19-30	31-70	71-120	121-170	171-225

**Table IV: Starting ages for various classes**

Druid	29 + 1d6
Fighter	19 + 2d4
Ranger	21 + 2d4
Magic-user	27 + 2d8
Thief	20 + 2d6

### Other information

Listening at doors (*DMG*, p. 60): 15%  
Height and weight (*DMG*, p. 102):

half-satyr:

height: as half-elf male

weight: as half-elf male, + 2d10 pounds

half-dryad:

height: as human female, -d6 inches

weight: as human female, - 2d4 pounds

**Table V: Racial adjustments to thieving functions**

	Half-satyr	Half-dryad
Pick pockets	—	—
Open locks	—	—
Find/remove traps	—	—
Move silently	-5%	—
Hide in shadows	+ 5 %	+ 5 %
Hear noise	+ 5 %	+ 5 %
Climb walls	-15%	—
Read languages	—	—

### Acknowledgments

For their contributions, the author would like to thank the members of the Brimiston Town Guard — and, of course, Algernon, the foremost half-satyr.

## JEFF EASLEY

As you can see by his photograph, Jeff Easley is one of the more conservative dressers at TSR.

"It was either the armor or my fly's head," Jeff said, recalling the immense fly head he wore to the office last Halloween, but I went with the more conservative look."

Jeff is actually one of the quieter and calmer people on the TSR creative staff (a wild and crazy bunch, to be sure). With his soft-spoken Kentucky drawl and gentle self-deprecating tone, you would never suspect the weird creatures and violent scenes that characterize his work.

Jeff's major projects for

*Easley*

TSR have included virtually all the new AD&D® game's hardback book covers, including *Players Handbook*, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, *Monster Manual*, *Monster Manual II*, *Legends & Lore*, *Unearthed Arcana*, and *Oriental Adventures*. He also painted the **BATTLESYSTEM™** cover, the revised **GAMMA WORLD®** cover, and lots of modules and **ENDLESS QUEST®** book covers. Currently, he's working on the cover for the new *Dungeoneers' Survival Guide* hardcover and the new **DRAGONLANCE®** Calendar cover, both due out in July.

In addition, Jeff is well-known as a sculptor and model maker. His Halloween costumes are always the hit of the company — ranging from the armor you see here to an amazingly realistic fly's head to an incredibly complicated robot costume. "One of my ambitions is to work in movie costuming or special effects," Jeff said.

Jeff was born in Nicholasville, Ky., in 1954. He drew a lot as a kid, primarily ghosts and monsters. "I watched lots of monster movies on the late show, and built every monster model kit I could get my hands on," he said.

His first oil painting was of Woody Woodpecker, which he did on a piece of notebook paper.

He went to high school in Nicholasville, and then to college at Murray State University in Murray, Ky. There he met and married his wife Cynthia. They now have three children, Casey (5 years old), Christopher (4 years old), and Cara (1 1/2 years old).

While in college, he and a friend produced an animated short subject, *Space*. They entered it in the Kentucky Educational Television Film Festival, and tied for runner-

up. "Then we sent it off to have a duplicate made, but the lab lost it, and so it vanished. Oh, well, another summer down the drain," Jeff said.

Cynthia was an art major, too. "We met because we were taking the same art class," Jeff said. After they both graduated, Cynthia went on to graduate school while Jeff started working for a company that manufactured springs for oil seals. "That lasted about six months," he said.

When Cynthia finished with grad school, they moved to Massachusetts with some friends. It was there that Jeff began his career as a professional artist. "I did freelance work for Warren Publications, including covers and comic strips for *Creepy*, *Eerie*, and *Vampirella*, and for Marvel magazines, including covers for *Savage Sword of Conan* and *Bizarre Adventures*. But my real income came from my job at the Okey-Doke Popcorn Company. . . .

"I had met Larry Elmore through a mutual friend in Kentucky," Jeff continued. "When I heard that Larry was planning to leave Fort Knox to join TSR, I got in touch with him and discovered that there might be other job opportunities there. So I applied with TSR, got the job, and started here in March 1982. My first project was to paint gemstones on the spines of the first four **ENDLESS QUEST®** books, but it was definitely uphill from there."

"I guess my only advice for would-be artists is to keep practicing," he said. "It worked for me, anyway."

Jeff's hobbies include collecting science fiction-related toys, including robots, space guns, flying saucers, etc. He has also recently started a collection of old movie posters. His office (actually, just a drawing easel in the Artist's Bullpen) is filled with

mementos of various costumes.

And there Jeff can be found every working day, his quiet demeanor contrasting strangely with the bizarre, demented images that people his work.



Profiles

"My father taught chemistry and physics at Clinton High School," she said, "but was also interested in calligraphy and drawing. He was a big influence on me, and all through my childhood I could never decide whether I wanted to go into science or art.

"As a child, I did a lot of natural history illustration to combine my two interests, but found myself drawn more and more to typography, logos, and graphic design. By the time I got into junior high school," she continued, "I had gotten into advertising design. I took art classes from grade school all the way through high school, and entered a number of poster design contests. I always won first prize," she said.

She graduated from Craig High School in Janesville, Wis. "I didn't go to college right away," she said, "because I was pretty **burned out on schooling. Instead, I decided** to travel around the U.S. for a while, got married and then divorced, and finally decided I was ready to start college in 1976."

Ruth attended the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater, majoring in art with an emphasis in graphic design. "I always had a lot of different interests, though, so instead of going after a B.F.A. in Art, I took a general B.A. degree,

it's hard to get started. So, I did a lot of freelance and volunteer work to build my portfolio."

Her first job was with the Lane Blackbourne Gallery in Janesville, where she was a picture framer and art salesperson. "We mostly handled corporate art for office buildings. I would help choose the pieces, frame them and place them. It was interesting work, and I stayed there for about a year."

One of Ruth's girlfriends from school had a son who worked for TSR, which led to an interview with then-Art Director Jim Roslof, and a follow-up interview with Pat Price. "I was more interested in an advertising art job, but the opportunity was in TSR's Pre-Press department, so I joined the company as a Keyline Artist in 1982."

Keylining is the process by which type and art are pasted on boards to be sent out to the printer. It's a complex job, requiring a good eye, careful placement, and understanding of the effect the graphic designer is trying to convey.

After six months she was promoted to the position of Graphic Designer. "This was an exciting period in TSR's growth," Ruth said, "and I was delighted to help design a new look for the company's products."

During her first year at TSR she met and soon married Bill Hoyer, who at that time was Assistant Manager of the RPGA. He now works for the government in Milwaukee, and they live



Ruth M. Hoyer

## RUTH HOYER

Ruth Hoyer is TSR's Art Director. She designs the overall "look" for all of our product lines, creates advertisements for DRAGON® Magazine, prepares catalogs that we send to trade buyers on our upcoming releases, and supervises our graphic designers and keyliners. "I really love graphic design," she says, "especially typography, logo design, and colors."

Ruth was born March 19, 1950, in Richland Center, Wis., which is northwest of Madison, but moved to Clinton, Wis., (just down the road from Lake Geneva) when she was three.

and studied philosophy, Eastern religions, and anything else that interested me.

"One of my instructors, David Saylor, was a particular influence on me," Ruth said. "David was a graduate of the Pratt Institute of Design in New York, and he had a strong New York style — clean and functional. That appealed to me very much, and I found that our ideas about graphics had a lot in common."

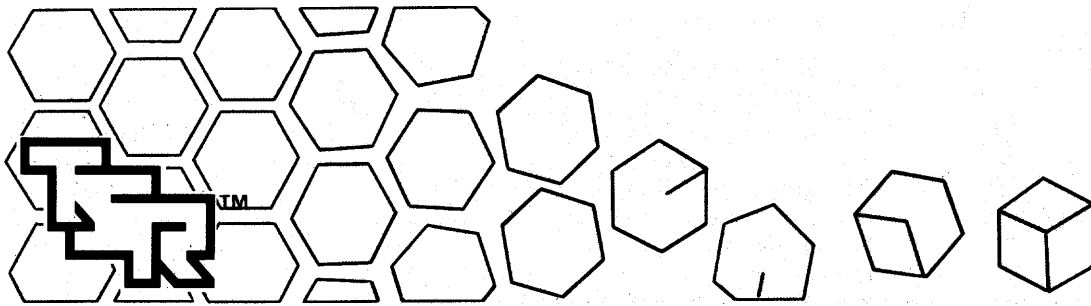
Ruth graduated *magna cum laude* with a B.A. in Art. "I couldn't find a job for quite a while after I graduated," she said. "The graphic arts field is always crowded, and

in a suburb of Milwaukee with their three cats.

Ruth was promoted again in the fall of 1983 to Senior Designer, and then to Art Director in December 1985, when Ivor Janci left TSR.

"I love my work, because I get to design the look for an entire product line. I created the formats for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®, STAR FRONTIERS®, the DRAGONLANCE® Legends novels, and the BOOT HILL® revision. Recently, I did the new department headers for AMAZING STORIES® magazine. Some of the individual products I'm most proud of are the 2001™ and 2010™ modules for STAR FRONTIERS®, the *Art of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Fantasy Game* book, and the new AGENT 13™ novel series."

"My hobbies and interests include sleeping, which I don't do enough of since I became Art Director, gallery hopping, museum shows, and reading. I love to read, especially Mark Twain, Sartre, and books on Eastern religions. Recently, I've been getting interested in film animation. And I've still kept a strong interest in science," she said.



# P R E V I E W S

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# P R E V I E W S

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# P R E V I E W S

# Administrator's advice

## How to make and maintain a TOP SECRET® campaign

by John J. Terra

When I originally introduced the TOP SECRET® game to my AD&D® game players, the response was less than overwhelming. Out of the fifteen people in my campaign, only four showed any interest in trying out the game. Everyone else was either unexcited about a "modern-day" role-playing game or disliked dealing with real weapons and actual world problems such as terrorists, spies, and the like. It seemed a bit too close to reality.

That was eighteen months ago. Today, our TOP SECRET campaign contains ten players out of those fifteen, and one of the first four is an Administrator, too. Some of these players even like it better than the AD&D game! How was this turnaround achieved?

This article will try to give some answers. The TOP SECRET system is an excellent espionage role-playing game that should enjoy more popularity than it currently has. Of course, since any game is only as good as the person who referees it, perhaps the observations and advice included here will help other Administrators develop more fun and interesting campaigns, and perhaps win over some of those hesitant players.

### The organization

One of the first things an Administrator (or Admin, for short) should have established before starting a campaign is a good espionage organization for player character spies. The organization is responsible for sending the agents on missions, paying them upon successful completion of said missions, and disciplining them for rules infractions, among other things. To create a strong, believable spy organization, answer for yourself the following questions:

1. Who started the organization, and why?
2. What are its goals, and how does it go about achieving them?
3. Is it a known agency, or is it secret? If secret, why?
4. Where is it located?

For example, I created an organization called I.C.I.C.L.E., short for InterContinental Investigation, Confiscation, and Law Enforcement. It was established by thirty Western and neutral nations to be a pool of agents that cannot be traced to one single country. It exists to keep national stabilities, prevent wars, foil Eastern-bloc espionage activity, and combat terrorism. The agency is unknown, to the public and to most non-member nations, since the agency feels secrecy is one of its best weapons. Its main

headquarters is in Coventry, England.

As you can see, the international flavor of the group justifies many different agent nationalities working together in a logical way. Also, its multi-faceted role promises the full gamut of missions with the whole world available as possible locales. Consequently, the agency has many enemies to deal with, since they cannot achieve their goals without stepping on a few toes.

Since there are no moral alignments in TOP SECRET gaming, the Admin may wish to assign a code of ethics and rules for the organization. Such rules could prevent "over-enthusiastic" agents from torturing, looting, and firing twenty rounds at the nearest KGB agent who looks at them the wrong way. Spies, after all, are supposed to be subtle.

Of course, a nice, healthy agency bureaucracy can put a damper on agents who do things such as taking equipment from enemies that they have killed. When my agents defeated a piracy attempt by a group of machine-gun-wielding terrorists, suddenly everyone wanted to keep the AK-47 assault rifles left by the terrorists. So, everyone found themselves filling out form P-152a, requesting permission to keep items they found. A percentile dice roll of 20% plus 5% per level of agent gave the lucky applicants the weapon they wished.

Additionally, as the Admin, I sometimes give one or two agents a special assignment. Usually it involves keeping an eye out for "abnormal behavior" in his or her teammates. Any act of unjustified malice is reported, and goes on the agent's dossier. This sort of mission is usually delegated to a member of the Investigation bureau.

If you are not interested in designing your own agency, you can choose an agency already in existence, either an actual one (FBI, NSA, Mossad, DI-5), or a fictional one (U.N.C.L.E., CONTROL, IMF). The advantage with these groups is they already have a defined structure, origin, etc. There is very little preparation necessary on the part of the Admin, though a bit of research can help in playing the organization the way it is meant to be. [See *DRAGON® issues #93 and #97-99 for potential organizations that may be used in TOP SECRET games.* — Editor]

### The reality factor

The tone you set for your game is very important. You can expect players to behave for the most part in the same manner that you do. Ask yourself just how realistic you

want your campaign to be. Is your setting one that includes robots, lasers, clones, and other things not exactly commonplace in our time period? Perhaps you want something like the television show "Get Smart," where everything is either tongue-in-cheek or downright crazy. The above-mentioned settings allow for a truly interesting, not to mention bizarre, campaign. However, things can get out of hand. Games like this can disintegrate into nonstop joke fests. This in itself is not so bad, if you wanted it in the first place.

My favorite approach is the realistic one. While I have run certain secret organizations which steal nuclear bombs or create lethal gasses and such, my missions for the most part are based on things that exist today. My standard is this: Can the situation that occurs in this adventure possibly happen or have already happened?

The world news section of your paper can offer some truly exciting ideas for adventures. The recent West German spy scandal, with its wave of defections on both sides, provides some interesting possibilities for missions. Also, there's illegal arms shipments to Iran to be stopped and cocaine smuggling from South America to be foiled. What about the recent attacks on NATO installations by terrorists? These are the sorts of things from which good adventures come.

By the same token, it is strongly suggested that if you do use current events for inspirations, good taste should prevail. Sending agents out to avenge assorted car bombings or hunting down Salvadoran death squads seems to be a poor reaction to the tragic and confusing goings-on in some parts of our world, especially when such events are embroiled in controversy and it is hard to tell who the bad guys are.

Making the agents do too much, or making them do something so far-fetched that if it happened in the real world it would be the end of civilization as we know it, is another trap into which Admins may fall. Take the following adventure. See if you can spot where it starts to get a bit unrealistic. The agents are supposed to go to the Soviet Union and book passage on the Trans-Siberian railroad. They are to go to this remote area where a secret lab is located. Once at the lab, they are to break in and steal a particular object. After they take it, they are to go to Vladivostok and steal an experimental submarine, then sail it to Pearl Harbor.

If anyone out there raised their eyebrows



at the words “experimental submarine,” then give yourselves 500 experience points (plus an extra hundred if you are an Investigator). Does anyone have any idea how tight Soviet Naval security is? If you remember the true story of the Soviet destroyer that tried to defect to Sweden, only to be stopped by a massive force of maritime strike aircraft and naval vessels, you know that the Soviets would be even more paranoid about an experimental submarine.

A mission like the above mentioned one is certainly spectacular, but tell me, what does one do for an encore? How can the Admin outdo himself now? Only by making the situations more and more impossible. While some Admins find this acceptable, I think that AD&D gaming has a good term for it: Monty Haul.

If you intend to run a campaign that meshes with our current world situation, then forget such missions as assassinating Qaddafi, Khomeini, or any other irksome leader. Don't bother trying to overthrow Castro, blow up the Soviet aircraft carrier Kiev, or spark a war between China and the Soviet Union. Stay with things that could be happening “behind the scenes.”

### Scenario work

Now that you have an agency from which you can send agents, and you have determined the overall tone of your campaign, your next step is to provide your players with exciting, challenging, and fun missions that will keep them on their toes, and possibly even attract new players. First, let's look at the ready-made scenarios available at your local hobby shop.

The one common denominator in all of the TOP SECRET modules is the feasibility, however remote, of the situation really happening. Just recently, PLF terrorists hijacked the ocean liner *Achille Lauro* in the Mediterranean, which is exactly what happens in one particular module. (I won't reveal which one . . . It's supposed to be a surprise for the agents!)

The two most far-fetched modules are TS 002, *Operation: Rapidstrike!*, and TS 008, *Operation: Seventh Seal*. They deal with mad scientists and nuclear terrorism, respectively, and are very challenging. Situations in real life along these lines are possible, but not probable.

TS 004, *Operation: Fastpass*, is a classic East-West defection scenario. The maps provided give the Administrator some fine inspiration for further adventures in Eastern Europe.

TS 006, *Operation: Ace of Clubs*, is a nice whodunit, and offers a good chance for players to really role-play their characters, as well as bone up on old skills or learn some new ones. Like *Fastpass*, it can be used over and over again.

My favorite is TS 005, *Operation: Orient Express*, which gives not one but six different adventures on the European Rail system. This module is a real bargain. Like *Fastpass*, it too, can be used over and over, and is a valuable resource for traveling in

Europe by train. It is also perfect as an escape route for your NPC villains who have been foiled by your intrepid players!

If you do not have the Administrator's screen, this is another good item. Not only do you have the charts at your easy reach, the mini-module is challenging as well. The same holds true for the recently released TOP SECRET Companion volume.

I will not go into the modules included in DRAGON Magazine, due to the difficulty in locating the issues that have them. If you can, by all means get “Operation: White-out” (DRAGON issue #87).

The other scenarios available to an Admin are the home-grown variety. Unlike the preplanned modules, design-your-own modules offer you the advantage of complete freedom of design. Since the campaign hinges on the missions it features, extra care should be taken in preparation of scenario. A constant string of badly planned games will lead to a decline in players.

The missions you give your agents should be consistent with the goals of the organization to which they belong. The first thing that should be considered is what locales are to be used as backdrops to the mission. Taking a package of plans from point A to point B is easy enough, but add the Soviet Union as the scene of the adventure and things become harder to do. Recovering the remains of a ditched U.S.A.F. B-52 may seem routine, but if the bomber crashed in Libya, well . . .

Which leads to another point, namely the objective. Let's take the crashed B-52 bomber as an example. It crashed in Libya, so why are a group of NATO agents trying to salvage it? It just so happens that this particular plane has some state-of-the-art elint (electronics intelligence) equipment on board, commonly used by the majority of the NATO nations, and it cannot fall into the wrong hands. There's your objective. Find the equipment and bring it back. If you cannot do this, then destroy it. thus far, this still seems like your basic recovery mission, rehashed from movie, television, and book plots. Ah, but now comes the next element!

Call it “complications” or “plot twists.” Nothing is ever as it first seems. This can be information either unknown to or withheld by the case officer assigning the mission. Murphy's Law reigns supreme in the field of complications. Back to the example: The agents are briefed and sent packing to Libya. What the agency does not know is that the KGB was immediately tipped off about the crash, and Soviet agents have already dispatched a team to retrieve the equipment. Also, a group of nomadic terrorists are converging on the wreckage, and a group of anti-Qaddafi partisans have seized the surviving crewmen in an attempt to bargain for military aide from the U.S.A.

Does this sound complicated? Of course it does! But if the Admin is organized, there should be minimal confusion. Once again, plausibility should take precedence over complications. It certainly would not make

sense to have a squad of militant neo-Nazis also converge on the plane. Everything thrown at the players should have a logical (and not far-fetched) explanation.

Notice that the last plot twist is not necessarily bad, if the agents play their cards right. In theory, the Western agents and the anti-Qaddafi faction are pursuing the same goals. If the agents find these people, both groups could benefit. Always give the agents an even break. Remember, you are not out to kill everyone off.

Thus, designing a module can be as easy as following these steps:

- a. Select a geographical location;
- b. Create a situation;
- c. Create a list of people involved;
- d. Draw up maps and floor plans, if needed;
- e. Make up a chronology, so you know who is where and when;
- f. Set the objectives for the agents, and write up their briefing;
- g. Whip up a series of nice twists and complications (since things are never as they seem); and,
- h. Invite the players over and enjoy!

Books and movies can be good sources of adventure, as long as you are careful that your players are not reading or watching the same things you are. Take one of those plots, and ask yourself what you would change if you'd written that book, or directed that movie. Watch “The Avengers” “Mission: Impossible,” “I Spy,” and “McGyver” for visual inspirations, and read books by Ken Follett or Robert Ludlum for literary inspirations.

While we are at it, movies like *Rambo*, *The Terminator*, *Dirty Harry*, or *Commando*, while nice to watch (I suppose), are terrible excuses for a TOP SECRET adventure. Besides, you could go crazy rolling all of those gunshots to see if they hit, and where, and how severe the wounds are, and so on.

### Personalities

A good adventure can combine an exotic setting with a tough challenge. You can weave plots and sub-plots, with clues strewn about for your agents to find and piece together. But if you don't have good, realistic non-player characters, you are wasting your time as well as that of your players. Since many missions involve human targets and contacts, it is incumbent upon the Admin to come up with NPCs that the characters can believe in and relate to.

Every good story has an antagonist, and what is a TOP SECRET adventure but a story in which characters participate? An antagonist can be anyone from a basic lackey who guards a target to a wily KGB colonel who seems to slip through the agents' lingers time and time again, to return and befuddle them in the future. Obviously, the Admin would spend more time developing the latter NPC, though most NPCs deserve some minimal fleshing out.

Languages known, high AOKs, a physi-

cal description, and a short personality sketch should be included for all but the most insignificant characters. It also helps to throw in detailed, ad-libbed descriptions of a few random passersby. It makes the players suspicious of them, since they probably think you would not bother describing the NPC unless it means something important. It sure does mean something, all right. It means the players will go crazy. This can be fun. More on this later.

Remember, these NPCs have origins, goals, motivations, and a few ingenious ideas of their own. They, too, have been trained and outfitted by their respective organizations. They are not just clay pigeons waiting to be blown away by trigger-happy agents — at least, not all of them are. Even the lowly guards should be alert, suspicious, and competent. Otherwise, they wouldn't be guards in the first place!

Of course, the greatest temptation for the Admin is to allow the NPCs to act upon knowledge that they would have no way of knowing. The Admin has to put himself in an NPC's place, and ask what he would know and do in a particular situation, limiting your responses to what can be allowed based on the NPC's statistics. One frustrating hazard the Admin faces is when some of his prize NPCs are wandering into a brilliantly planned trap, courtesy of the players, and there is no way NPCs could know anything about it. You have to sit there and let it happen.

Give the NPCs a three-dimensional quality. A particular assassin may be fond of classical music (give him a Fine Arts AOK of 100), or a jewel thief may have a personal distaste for killing and thus not carry a gun (this would be a perfect character to give a high Evasion rating to, for making easy escapes!).

Not every confrontation with an enemy agent need be fatal. Nothing injects a little color more than a healthy rivalry with someone who can be a challenge. This lends continuity to the campaign. The players get a sense of accomplishment in foiling and outwitting an archenemy. Perhaps the rivalry will ultimately end with one side or the other dead, but at least both can be satisfied that each gave a good account of themselves, and the victory will have been well-earned.

Write down the stats of your NPCs on 3" x 5" cards, and file them in alphabetical order to keep everything organized and quickly accessible. This is perfect for those NPCs that always pop up at the most inopportune times.

Another matter entirely concerns the brief contacts, the faceless cut-outs, or the horde of 100 angry Iranians that the agents have brought down on themselves due to sloppiness. Life stories, relatives, and what flavor ice cream they enjoy are moot. These people need only the briefest detail, since they are only cannon fodder. Concentrate only on the NPCs that you think the agents will most likely get involved with in one way or another.

Case officers and other members of the players' organization may also be fleshed out, with satisfying results. For example, if your spy organization has two case officers — one who happens to be very easy-going and another who is short-tempered — notice how differently the players act towards each in situations like debriefings. Once again, the players get a sense of continuity. They will get to know and come to expect certain behavior from certain NPCs. Needless to say, agents who act disrespectful towards a grouchy superior can expect the worst missions imaginable.

In short, make your NPCs human.

Agents will be less prone to kill if the characters they face seem real. When running an NPC, play the part well. Ham it up! That's what role-playing is for.

### **Just because you're paranoid . . .**

In the AD&D game, a DM can strike terror in the heart of the stoutest players simply by rolling dice, deliberately glancing at certain charts, then smiling wickedly. This is known as a paranoia roll. The TOP SECRET game allows the same opportunity, but it must be more subtle.

What a wonderful world we live in! Such variety, such excitement. So many people, each with their own story. People can be peculiar — even normal people. Reflect this in the game. Observe: You and your three friends are agents in Vienna, Austria, trying to track down a dangerous GRU agent. The following description is read to you.

"You four are seated at a sidewalk cafe. At the table on your right are two men dressed in badly tailored suits. They are furtively looking around the cafe, and one man keeps adjusting his tie. The waitress seemed extremely friendly; she asks your names and where you are staying. Twenty feet down the street is a parked Mercedes in which a man appears to be listening to a Walkman. At the fourth table behind you is a man in an ill-fitting suit drinking vodka and chain smoking smelly thin cigars. He looks arrogant. The waitress arrives with your order. The dishes are not prepared quite to your liking. The waitress explains that the cook is new. At the street corner sit four people at a bus stop, two men and two women. They are not traveling together."

Does anyone have any idea who the enemy is? There are many possible leads, and the situation certainly looks threatening. That is the idea! In the world of espionage, *everyone* is suspect. It is a world where each mistake could be your last. Let the players know this. Use your voice to your advantage. Stress mundane facts. "The man in the car *appears* to be listening to his Walkman." Of course he does! He *is* listening to it. Players, however, will kick their imaginations into high gear and suspect that the Walkman is a gun or something. This could lead to some very amusing (or horrible) results.

This is a big world with an even bigger population. Try to have as many people as possible in a starring role. Don't make all

KGB agents alike, wearing ill-fitting suits and having Coordinations of 30. These people are experts. Avoid stereotypes.

Incidentally, the two men looking uneasy are trying to pick up girls, hence their unease and furtive glances. The waitress is merely a flirt, the man in the car is on vacation, and the arrogant vodka drinker is a man who happens to be arrogant, drinks vodka, and has poor taste in clothes. And the cook? Oh, he's just new, that's all. The GRU agent is one of the women who even now is taking a seat on the bus which has just pulled away. Better luck next time.

### **. . . doesn't mean they won't get you**

"Don't get mad; get even." It's not really the best way to live, unless you happen to be an Administrator. The complications tables given in the TOP SECRET rules, as well as in the Companion volume, are exactly what the Admin needs to drive home the point that actions have consequences — sometimes fatal ones. This is especially true when the complications call for an assassination attempt against the PC agents.

When such an action is called for, by all means, give the agents a fighting chance. In fact, the attempt itself can be the basis for a whole adventure. The agents just would not know that for a fact. Take the following example.

A long while ago, the agents in my campaign broke up a nest of Exterminators (a group of assassins mentioned several times in early DRAGON issues; I made them a world-wide assassins' network) in Paris. Unfortunately, a few of the enemy agents escaped with a good description of my agents. All was forgotten and other missions followed, until one day a London tabloid came out with a story hinting at the existence of an ultra-secret Western spy agency based in England.

The description fit "my" agency to a T, and the higher-ups, who were positively livid at these uncomfortably accurate allegations, immediately dispatched the intrepid agents to find out where the leak was. They visited the reporter at his office. So far, so good.

What they did not know was that the story was a tip given by an Exterminator. The Exterminator then rented an office directly across the street from the reporter's office window, set up surveillance equipment, and watched to see who would nibble at the bait.

By the time they realized what was going on, several of the PC agents were killed and the killers had escaped, to return someday to plague the agents again. An archenemy is born, and a contest of survival begins.

In that particular scenario, the agents did have a few chances to guess at what was happening. It was not a hopeless situation. In fact, the mission in Paris that started the whole thing in motion was very sloppy, hence the vendetta's generation. Had loose ends been tied up a bit tighter, the enemy would have less information to go on and

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less of a chance to strike back.

Thus, retaliation by enemy agencies is not always certain; when it is, there is still a chance the agents can find a way to survive it. Be creative in the actions of your NPCs, and your players will enjoy the challenge, even if they do manage to get their characters killed in the process.

#### Administrator style

The beauty of the TOP SECRET game is the low margin of error allowed to the participants. In AD&D games, if three-fourths of the party gets wiped out, the *resurrection*, *wish*, or *alter reality* spells are trotted out, and POOF! All is well. On the other hand, if four out of six agents on a mission get gunned down by the Red Brigade — well, it was nice knowing them. This makes TOP SECRET gaming very, very exciting, knowing that each mistake could very well mean the end — unless, of course, you have a Fame and Fortune point to spare.

Fame and Fortune points are all that stand between an agent and the enemy's Uzi. They are very potent and should be carefully played. Fame and Fortune points are the players' only chance to alter your reality and change the flow of events in your game.

The Admin, like the DM, has the last word in any situation. There may be times when a player could expend every Fame and Fortune point he or she had, and it would still do no good. Obviously, such times should be few and far between, and should have a rational explanation. A fanatical assassin or sentry who is determined to dispatch an unconscious agent may in fact be able to do so, regardless of how cleverly the player uses his points. The TOP SECRET Companion recommends that the players give an explanation for how the point is to be used. Personally, I feel that this opens the door to too many bizarre explanations, as well as forcing the Admin to keep track of which agents used which excuse, and it should be avoided.

If the agent failed at some non-combat maneuver and expends a point in order to succeed (such as for leaping a chasm, jumping off a speeding train, etc.) then let the attempt succeed. In projectile combat, saying things like "I resemble the shooter's brother," or "The bullet ricocheted off my belt buckle," seems a little silly. Why not just alter the effect the bullet had, changing a serious wound to a light wound? Simply explain that the wound was not as bad as originally feared.

One final suggestion. If an agent has just committed severe premeditated stupidity (e.g., rushing at a loaded AK-47, dropping a vial of nitroglycerine across the room, wandering into a critical nuclear reactor), then, for heaven's sake, kill off the fool. Points should be used to bail an agent out of a jam not of the agent's doing, not as a cover-up for deliberately bad playing.

Disciplining unruly players in the game is another tricky thing. In AD&D games, the DM can bring in "bolts from the blue,"

divine intervention, and other things that can make fantasy life interesting. In the modern-day world of TOP SECRET gaming, however, an Admin's options are limited, and even in the context of those options, he or she must be careful, for TOP SECRET characters are not as resilient as their AD&D counterparts. A hit squad that gets too effective could conceivably create the TOP SECRET version of a party-killer.

Once again, this is where a bureaucracy comes in handy. Any decent bureau should be keeping tabs on the psychological status of its agents, as well as their performance. It further stands to reason that the agency would encourage other agents to report signs of erroneous behavior to their case officers. (Admins should use caution when exercising this privilege, or the game winds up resembling a certain other humorous role-playing game involving traitors, The Computer, and many laser blasts.)

Agents found to be abnormally violent or prone to fits of wanton vandalism could possibly be transferred to husky-cleaning duty in a Yukon branch office. Withholding experience points or payment (perhaps even leveling fines), giving forced leaves of absence without pay, or getting chewed out by a case officer in front of everybody are some ways of dealing with out-of-control agents. If these measures fail, consider locking them up for psychiatric observation, enforcing dismissal, or the ultimate trouble-ender: termination. It is recommended that you not assign the latter duty to PCs; things may get personal.

As an Administrator, you must be ready for whatever off-the-wall solutions your players come up with. Try not to force your players into doing things the way you want to do them. A player in our campaign tried his hand at Administrating and became frustrated while the players got bored. He wanted to see the players take a very specific course of action — and, like any good players, we refused to be placed in rigid confines.

Perhaps one of the disadvantages of TOP SECRET gaming is that it takes place in a society in which, if one has the money, one can go anyplace, buy anything, and do anything one wishes. Admins must be prepared to ad-lib like crazy when the players decide to rent cars, go to a restaurant, or demand to see the Soviet ambassador even though you never "wrote one up!"

Props can add a very nice touch to a game. The above-mentioned player who tried to control the agents had the best briefing I have ever seen. He had glossy photos of people who were supposed to be our targets, as well as a news magazine article related to the mission. Part of the briefing was tape recorded. We were also supplied with a road map and other such materials. Despite the problems, much of the adventure was very impressive.

This list of suggestions is by no means complete. Hopefully, they may help make the chore of running the game a bit easier and fun for the Admin. Of course, should

you reject these suggestions and get captured by the Regiment of Aggravated Top Secreters (R.A.T.S.), this agency will naturally disavow any knowledge of you.

Author's note: For anyone who wishes to use I.C.I.C.L.E. in a TOP SECRET campaign, here are its statistics, using the format given in DRAGON issues #93 and #97-99.

#### I.C.I.C.L.E. (InterContinental Investigation, Confiscation, and Law Enforcement)

*Nature of agency:* International Western and neutral agent pool

*Governing body:* Private individuals with numerous governmental connections

*Personnel:* Unknown; possibly in the low hundreds

*Annual budget:* Unknown; possibly in the tens of millions

*HQ:* Coventry, U.K. (front: Excalibur Investment Firm)

*Established:* 1975

*Activities:* Worldwide intelligence/counterintelligence, defection protection/prevention, law enforcement

*Policies:* Secrecy and subtlety are our best weapons. Keep the peace. Do not kill if unnecessary.

*Objectives:* Keep the world from blowing itself up. Calm down trouble spots. Prevent undesirable elements from getting too powerful. Remove anyone who resists said objectives. Maintain a strong international force of agents that any single country can draw upon, and not have their activities traced to them by their adversaries.

*Areas of involvement:* Worldwide

*Allies:* Mossad, FBI, Scotland Yard, and Italian anti-terrorist units

*Additional data:* The public has no idea of this agency's existence. It was founded by a group of wealthy ex-spies from six Western nations. There are sub-stations and branch offices in selected countries (not to be confused with safe houses). The KGB, CIA, CON, and the Exterminators suspect that some sort of private organization exists, but they have no details.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-94/07-94/01-94 8

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way, Lonn, into the sky," she cried, and her golden Lonn, fleet of hoof and wing, leapt into the morning air with equine joy to join the ride. The wind whipped at Fria's hair and robe and at Lonn's silky mane, and the tinkling of fetlock-bells rang clear and high. Fria cried out for the joy of flight and life and unsheathed her long, slender sword, cutting arcs of light to greet the rosy dawn.

Down Bifrost, the Rainbow Bridge, past vigilant Heimdall and the sea of space, and into the margin of the world they did glide. Across the early morning sky charged the ride of the Valkyries, swift Lonn along the lead, as always. Fria could feel his powerful strokes beneath her and the quiver of pleasure when he soared on the strong, icy breeze, and she smiled, for she knew he was the best of them all, a true son of his incomparable sire. She called him Lonn for his color and maple-sweetness, and no care was too great for her charger of the air.

She watched the land creep up beneath them as they swooped in high over the mountains, wondering how many folk looked up to see the northern lights in the gleaming of the sun off the Valkyries' pearly armor. That is all they would see of the Father's warrior maids, or at least all they would tell, for to meet one was death itself.

Down across the land they swept in long arcs of opalescence, sliver, and feathery wings, with hooves and swords and winged helms to punctuate the symmetry. She looked back across the sweeping ranks and barely suppressed an unwarrior-like giggle of glee. The ground passed more quickly as they descended, until rushing by were rocky earth, ragged limb, clutching blade of brown, and at last the glint of rising sun on shield and blade.

The battle was already joined, and the first stalwart souls already rose to right and left, to be plucked away by her shield-sisters. Her own warrior yet struggled below, and she would have to wait, but she would not let even that spoil such a glorious day. He would die well, she knew, and she would find him by the ring of his great ax.

Yes, there he was, tall and proud. Ah, she had never seen a warrior more mighty or manly. No, no, not him, beside him, the smaller one. Yes, he just felled the dark chieftain in a valiant rush, and then there was the spear, from behind, for none would dare to face those two, after such a victory.

The barest nudge sent Lonn gliding in a circle down to land nearby, and she dismounted and approached slowly. He looked up, and she knew his name: Baldan, a most worthy name for one whom the similar-named Brave God of Beauty would be proud.

"Ah, Gunalf," he said, blood at his lip and pain as much as awe in his eyes, "she comes."

"Who, Baldan? Who comes?" cried the other, larger man, holding his friend and pushing the hair from the paling face. "We are alone now. You have blown the fight from them."

"Gunalf, she is there, do you not see her?"

Gunalf looked up, obviously more for his shield-brother's comfort than from expecting to see anything. Fria's breath caught, for he was indeed a fine man, this

# Valkyrie

by W. J. Hodgson

Illustrations by Janet Aulisio



Gunalf the Mighty.

"Yes, she is tall and shapely slender and perilous and lovely, is she not, Baldan?" he asked, though his eyes betrayed him. Perhaps he saw as much as a pearly gleam. Probably not, lest his time was near as well, and it did not seem so.

"Tall and beautiful as a golden sunset touched with a blush of dawn and the warmth of afternoon," Baldan said. Then he clutched the other's arm as tightly as he could. "And there behind her is her mount, with wings of white and rose and eyes as bright as a man's. But they come for me, do they not, old warder?"

Gunalf choked on his words but finally managed to speak. "Aye, old ward, she knows a mighty one bound for Valhalla when she sees one, this lovely wench. She will bear you gently, for you are a good man and have been a precious friend."

Baldan died in his arms, satisfaction on his face.

Gunalf looked about, as though searching again for the vision he could not see. "Yes, take him. Feed on the death of a good man, then go, and plague the land of the living no more, foul wraith of the Endless Hall."

Fria stopped short in her reaching out toward Baldan, stung by the words. Why should this man — any man — resent her for bearing a soul to far greater glory than Hela's cold grasp would give? She wished to speak with him, but he could hear her no more than see her, and all she could do was listen.

"Death-monger," he spat, peering closely a moment before huddling over his friend's body. "I cannot stop her, Baldan. She will take you and leave nothing behind but an empty shell of blood and bone for a futile, Viking burial. I should have guarded your back, but I have failed." His light hair hung down to conceal his face, but his shoulders betrayed his weeping.

Troubled, she took Baldan and fled, amidst the host of the Valkyries, into the northern sky toward Asgard and Valhalla.

Baldan fit in as well as any there, and Fria was proud to loose him into the great host. She remained troubled, though, by words of a mortal man far away within the margin of the world. Why had he been so cruel? And — could there have been a modicum of truth to his surly words?

She tried to forget him, throwing herself into the supervision of the men and her care of Lonn and the Hall, and she might have succeeded as she had whenever troubled before, if not for the dreams. A mortal's strong body stalked them, and a mortal's face haunted her, lingering even after waking. The brightest light of the high sun could not wash away his angry eyes, nor could even the frigid blasts of the waste of north Asgard blow away his accusing words. She rode, she fought in the trials, and she collected seven souls from the war against the little lord of Sjorvik, but still she had no peace.

She missed an appointment, and nothing was said. She let a hero suffer on the field when she ought not, and there came only the slightest of questionings. She struck out in anger, killing a dozen before being quelled by a sister — small moment, since any falling on the enchanted field rose at day's end to laugh in the Hall with their slayers

and prepare for yet another day of trial and skill-sharpening for the great fight to come — and many a cold stare stung her back as she limped from the grounds. She would search out Lonn, for he, as always, was her only comfort.

Halfway to the grazing hills, she came across a cloaked man, tall and broad but bent and seemingly old beneath his heavy cloak. "Hail, grandfather," she said and made as if to pass.

The hooded head straightened a bit. "A moment of your time, pretty one," said a voice from the shadows, a strong voice but obviously old.

She could not be impolite, though she wished no company but her fleet, kind Lonn. "A moment is but a small request," she said, swirling the fur-trimmed bottom of her long, blue, enchanted robe away so that she could sit near him on the broad stone. For some reason, she was suddenly weary, and she took off her helm, shaking her glorious gold-blond hair loose from its braids and down about her shoulders, then resting her tired hands in her lap. She noticed blood stains on the one, her sword hand.

"So you have killed today," the old man said, not in question. Glancing toward him, she saw how very much bigger than she he was. One of the older Gods, then, undoubtedly due more reverence than she was showing. "Does it trouble you, child?"

She got the impression he already knew any answer she might have given. "Life and death trouble me. It is my lot to take souls, and I mistreat none — or had not until today — but how do I have the right?"

"Does not the duty of the Valkyrie come by birth and by the will of He who rules them?" Something in the old man's voice troubled her almost as much as that other voice, but she tried to find a suitable, respectful answer.

"Aye, we serve the Father and love Him dearly — I at least as much as any, which any would testify to."

"But?"

She did not wish to answer. She should not burden the old fellow with her trivial problems, which were to her intensely personal and indeed difficult to share. His voice, however, held her, compelled. Yes, this one was a God. "But I have been accused of death-mongering and wraithdom, and I did indeed take much pleasure in the riding of the host and the ringing song of battle."

"Did?" Funny that he should question only that portion.

"A cruel mortal he was, for I have no more pleasure in anything. Even the nagging vision of his beautiful face haunts me, ruins all the little joys the Blessed Realm once held."

"Of what account the words of a cruel man? To give them heed is to give them weight. To falter in your duty thanks to them is to give them authority. To betray your liege because of them is to make them a God in His place."

She shrank back, her eyes widening and filling with tears. "I would sooner be crushed under Mjolnir or thrown to the bed of Loki or Garm than so much as give Father the wrong time of day. Please, say no such thing, lest some ill wind damn me for causing their utterance, as well it should."



The old man's pose seemed to soften. "Fear not, pretty one. You are stronger than you think. You need not be haunted by a mortal spectre. I give it leave to go, for you are lovely and innocent, and harsh words are unworthy of your ears. I allow it here never again, as I allow no ill winds in My realm."

Then it was that she caught the glint of a single eye deep within the shadows of the hood, as the slumped shoulders straightened to their full height. She slid from the rock and abased herself at the All-Father's feet. "Strike me down, Father, lest I betray You and be beneath hatred, scorn, and even damnation."

Strong hands, infinitely strong, lifted her gently to her feet as though she were less than a feather. A long, kind finger lifted her chin as the other hand eased back the hood to reveal the gleaming helm and white-bearded, one-eyed visage of Odin. "Go to your little pony, Lonn, foal of Sleipner, and fear not for yourself. Your Father will watch your steps and catch you if you fall. Did you not know?"

He wiped the streaming tears from her fair, downy cheeks and wiped the very need to cry from her heart with a warm smile.

"To be smiled upon by my Father is to make all the length of my existence worthwhile, whatever I might do."

He smiled again and started her on her way, and she resisted the urge to call him anything as familiar as *Daddy*.

Lonn was as ecstatic to see her as ever, and the day passed swiftly and in joy, with only a dim memory of a warrior's face which held no sway over her save a vague hint of a woman's yearning. That was not unpleasant for the passing of the day, and then another, and another, until the fourth day, when a mighty blizzard swathed the margin of the world and the summons came.

Into the teeth of a storm no doubt raised by the thrashing of world-long Jormungandr himself, they flew, Lonn whinnying his disquiet as he sought for the easier currents. All the world was darkness and slashing snow, for night had come by the time they reached down to the northern mounts. She would find her charge, though. It was impossible for her not to, storm or no. Thor the Thunder God might revel in such mucky murk, but she wished the whole of the host were there so that together the magic of the wing might cut a clearer way. Such aid was far from hand, though, leaving naught for it but to forge ahead through the night.

Once they burst from the reek nearly to slam into a ribbed wall of rock, but Lonn knew his business, and on they went, carried racing forward by the rush of wind. within the narrow canyon they had dropped into. It occurred to her suddenly that this solo foray on the heels of her troubled heart probably was no coincidence. A test, then, a test of her desire to do her duty. A simple test, and one she would complete whatever else might arise. Her palms began to tingle with anticipation of the soul she must bear, and she knew they were close upon their charge. Lonn furlled his wings and hit the ground at a run, charging into a grove of — thank Father for a fair sign — a stand of maples.

A small clearing opened out, and there lay the lone warrior she had come to find. About him was the evidence

of his prowess and doom. A score of bodies lay strewn across the lawn, lit with gruesome starkness by ruddy torches in the hands of twelve more men. They all wore armor of close-fit leather, with wooden shields and broad-bladed axes at hand. Just then, though, they fought over their hard-won spoils. The fallen warrior had been richly clothed, and they argued over who was to have what gem or which weapon even as the storm beat down into the clearing, setting the torches to hissing and smoking from the striking snow. Two still picked over the vanquished valiant, yanking from his neck a tiny jeweled hammer.

Fria clenched her anger, slipped off Lonn, and stepped across bodies. The two men abruptly stood up. The fallen warrior, wounded in many places and with a badly broken leg, had opened his eyes to gaze at his killers. As the two reached for their weapons to finish him once and for all, save his journey to Valhalla and the great battle at the end of time, he caught sight of her standing there some ten paces away. As their eyes met, she knew his name: Gunalf the Mighty, bearer of a jeweled hammer, which is a symbol of Thor the Mightiest.

His eyes blazed in anger and a hint of impossible recognition — but nothing to compare with her rage. Out swept her blade and a cry of battle. Lonn reared and screamed his accompanying wrath, and his neigh shook the very ground.

The twelve started and fumbled for their weapons, for even they could hear the unveiled wrath of a Valkyrie and a foal of eight-legged Sleipner. Her blade swept through both of those nearest Gunalf, and the two meager spirits quailed and fled, leaving the empty, untouched bodies to collapse among their fellows. She cried again, filled with the lust of killing, and the villains fled before a nemesis that was naught to them but an angry pearly glow and a whisper of wings.

Turning, the desire to kill rushed from her as she saw her Gunalf fighting to keep open his eyes. She rushed forward to kneel before him.

"So," he said, none too strongly, for while all his wounds were in his limbs, she could tell that any move or effort caused him much pain. "So you have come for me now. You are she who took Baldan, are you not, wench?"

She nodded. "But why speak harshly to me, one who does only the will of her Father?"

He tried to laugh. "An easy excuse. Just do your job now, as well. I tire of the pain."

"I am sorry. It is not for me to hasten a hero's first end. I must wait."

He laughed again, with even less vigor. "Hand me my knife, then, that I might let you get on with your pleasant task."

"I find no joy in this, mortal, less even in this taking than that other, and I have never liked the death, though some do. I try to see only the glory of the heroism, and the need and right of the readying in field and Hall for the great fight to come."

He said nothing, but his look was sour. She wondered how he had gotten in such a difficult situation, far in the harsh north, alone against so many ill folk. He seemed to wish death, and perhaps that is why he had ventured alone and fallen. She would not have been sent for one

whose spirit had broken, though, even if it had been broken at the death of so valiant a friend as Baldan. She looked at his bleeding, broken leg, the worst of his wounds, and she knew he would not live long unaided.

"And have you found what you sought in the frozen waste, Gunalf the Mighty?"

He humphed, then grunted in pain. "I failed, of course, just as I failed before. I hadn't even the hardiness to reach the thief's — murderer's — strong place, but fell to his lackeys ten leagues from the door. I had no way to guard my back, and these are unhampered by qualms about striking from behind — not even savagery, just cowardice and cunning." He tried to gesture at his fallen enemies but failed in his weakness.

"Methinks you have won a victory of sorts here, warrior, and you have won a place beside your friend among the Einheriar of Valhalla. For what more could one ask?"

"Revenge for a slain brother."

She nodded a second time, slowly, understanding at last. He had cursed her for his own failures. And she was the one who had taken young Baldan from his very arms, the arms of the older brother who had no doubt held him in swaddling, warded him through childhood, been appointed by their mother to protect. Fria lowered her head and fought the desire to cry. A Valkyrie would not cry for her charge. To give heed would give weight. She could not help it, though: she did feel responsible, somehow, and she could not bear his sore plight. With the blade of a nearby dagger, she cut her white bear-fur muff into strips and bound his wounds. He said nothing, for which she was glad. When she realized he was shivering with the cold of the storm and blood-loss and harrying death, she removed her robe and covered him with it. Enchanted warmth would ease him.

And then she sat back. Her eyes widened, and she cried. The tears froze on her cheeks, though, for now she felt the cold as it was, fierce and deep-biting. Unlooking, she groped for the hilt of her long sword. She had betrayed her Father after all, and no end could be swift or cruel enough.

Glancing up into the storm, she commended her fate to the lowest of Hela's pits and raised her blade. Above her, though, the murk swirled and shaped itself into a huge, bearded, helmed countenance, in which only one eye could be seen.

She dropped her head and wept more icy tears as the words of the All-Father settled about her. "So, child, you know you have sinned, and you think you have but to slay yourself to right matters." It was not a question, but neither was it a statement of indisputable fact, which from Odin would have indeed been indisputable.

"Father, I have sunk lower than is worthy of Your gaze. What course is there for me but ending my unworthiness?"

"And give Hela the victory? She's an attractive-enough wench when she wants to be, but hardly worthy of the innocent likes of you."

"Innocent?" she asked, though if the All-Father said it, it must be so.

"Until this decision, when your innocence must fall away in a choice of faith or disrespect. Will you abandon

your duty and responsibility for one man's short life?"

She could not answer. She could never really disobey her Father, but every fiber called out against letting this wronged man die.

"And withal, will you defy Me for any man?" Neither His voice nor His gaze hardened, but his words nonetheless shook her to the ground.

"Never," she whispered into the frozen earth, wishing He would destroy her utterly. In so short a time, existence had decayed to this.

"Rise, then, child. You are by birth the chosen of the God of the icy north, and your soul is Mine to dispose of, not your own. How say you?"

She stood slowly, then turned to Gunalf, who was watching her with utter awe. He obviously neither saw nor heard any God, but her words and manner had been unmistakable in the circumstances. He made no protest when she pulled her robe away, spat no accusation when she reached to untie his bindings while wiping away icicle tears that quickly grew again. Whatever happened now, she wished no more existence. Nothing. She had betrayed her Father, and now she betrayed her — love.

"Hold," boomed the voice from the sky, and even Gunalf froze and looked aloft. She could have done nothing but obey, regardless of her own desire. Even the storm had died, stilled by a single, omnipotent word of command.

"Look at me, child."

She turned her head up to her Father and, through strength of will, forced her tears to stop. She could not put defiance in her eyes, but meekness would not come, either.

"A bargain," He said. "Will you suffer his mortal fate to save him?"

"Yes," she said without hesitation.

"No," Gunalf muttered, evidently now hearing all that passed. He was ignored, though, for it was not really his fate at stake.

"Done," came the now-tremendous voice.

She looked down at Gunalf. "I regret not my love for



you, nor this small sacrifice. Live for me, Gunalf." She swept her robe over him once again.

She expected some bolt to strike her down, and the storm did begin to rage about them again, but neither bolt nor death came for her. She stood in the wind, listening to the receding tinkling of the bells tied into the long hair of Lonn's fetlocks as — as he left her there. At last too long had passed, and she knew she was to live. Of course. They would be mortals together, she and her Gunalf, and when he died, so would she.

Shivering, she crept over beside Gunalf and snuggled into the robe beside him to pass the cold, stormy, fateful night.

And even so they lived and loved and fought, side by side, until they became a legend in the north. She tasted his vengeance at his side, and tasted his victory and lust for life, and joy walked with her as well. Still her heart yearned for her Father — and how could it not? — but she loved and lived with Gunalf the Mighty, seemingly a very scion of Thor, and she had always trembled at the sight of the God of Thunder.

In the end, he fell to save her life in battle on the sea, and she emptied the raiders' ship in retribution, though it did not assuage her pain or anger or loss. Fires raged fore and aft, but she let the ship burn, knowing she must die, too, to fulfill the bargain. For the first time in seven years of mortality, she cried, for she had been caught in Gunalf's love of life, but she let the ship burn in the age-old Vikings' funeral.

The wind picked up, whistling about her as it fanned the flames. She listened to the wind, remembering days she soared above it, and days she lay in a man's arms within it on a summer height or hidden away beneath it in front of their own hearth — at least there were no children to leave behind, though she was not altogether pleased by even that, despite Gunalf's never once complaining. The

wind seemed to be calling to her, and she listened to its voice.

"What do you, daughter?" and she dropped to her knees. "I thought we had a bargain."

"I — I am fulfilling it, Father."

"Oh, so lovely and valiant, courageous and sweet, strong-willed yet soft, brilliant yet innocent still and missing her Father's mark again."

She seemed to hear bells on the wind then, and that brought more memories and one last tear.

"You are alone here, and there is a stalwart warrior who must rise forth to Valhalla. We will need such heroes on the day of Ragnarok, but even now Hela reaches for his valiant heart. By your oath of birth, pretty one, My precious child, bring him and delay not, or I shall reconsider My decision to have you be his special overseer."

"But," she called, daring to dispute, "but Father, I am no longer maid, and I have questioned."

The wind seemed to chuckle. "No, no longer innocent in some ways, yet still sweet, now fine as steel. Will not gentle good be needed for the rebuilding after Ragnarok takes you old Father? I knew as well as the Norns that one day one would grow, mature, evolve to lead for Freya's ease in the long wait and in the days beyond her. Your Father is pleased that it is you."

And then the wind was but wind, though the tinkling bells still approached from on high, the sweetest music she had ever heard.

Turning, she shivered, but the day was warm and the fires hot, and it was joy she felt. She looked about and said, "Let me see now. Somewhere amongst all this rabble is a man."

She picked her way daintily across the smoldering deck, turning up her little nose at the reek of burning blood, and soon reached Gunalf.

"Father wants him," she said, reaching out, her fair face alight with a glowing smile, "and so do I."





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# Ares™

## SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION



Artwork by Janet Aulisio

Hunted by Imperial forces, feared by their fellow men, and possessing powers beyond imagination: this is the lot of those who possess "The Double-Helix Connection." See the TRAVELLER® game article on page 82, by Michael Brown.

# Fighting the Good Fight

©1986 by Stefan Jones



## Combat variations in the SPACE OPERA™ game

The close-combat system in the SPACE OPERA™ game, adapted as it was from a set of miniatures rules, lacks a certain authenticity despite its complexity. The give-and-take maneuvering of melee combat is missing, as are rules governing parrying, facing, and shields. This variant introduces some of these elements in

order to make melee combat in the game more exciting and skillful. With these rules, fighting primitives on a backwater planet and tussling with rowdies in a starport bar become tactical exercises rather than die-rolling contests.

All or part of this variant may be used to add some spice and realism to your SPACE

OPERA melee battles. Persons more familiar with the fighting arts should feel free to correct the systems used above to more accurately simulate the "real thing." I've tried to present systems which give a good fight, rather than simulate actual brawls.

To properly use this variant, it is necessary to mount 25mm miniatures of the combatants on 1/2"-square pieces of balsa wood, thick cardboard, or plastic. If you're using cardboard counters or figures instead of figurines, no base is necessary. The front face of the base or counter should be indicated with an arrow or dark line. This base is used to determine when the figures or characters are in contact (able to use melee weapons), and it helps determine facing. A facing diagram is below:



The front of the character is the area in which he can use a melee weapon in his primary hand against opponents. The shield arc is the area in which the character can use a shield or other device in his secondary hand to parry attacks. If a character has no shield, the area to his side within the shield-use arc becomes undefended. The side and rear areas of the diagram are those in which weapons and parrying devices may not be used to attack or defend — *i.e.*, they are blind spots.

### Combat procedure

In this variant, a character is engaged, or in contact, when the bases of the character-figures involved are touching. (Note: If a figure has an extraordinarily long weapon, such as a pike, the GM may wish to allow the figure bearing the weapon to engage enemies at greater distance.) When a close-combat situation has been initiated, the following sequence is followed for each HTH combat phase:

1. The facing of the engaged characters is noted.
2. Using the initiative chart in vol. II of the SPACE OPERA rule books, page 48, the initiative of the characters involved is computed. Facing can affect this score, as noted below.
3. Players declare what actions the characters will take (*i.e.*, stand and fight, parry, turn to face enemy) in reverse initiative order, going from the lowest score to the highest.
4. Characters perform their actions with the highest initiative figures going first and lowest initiative figures going last. Effects of combat results are applied as they are resolved.
5. HTH combat phase ends for this turn.

If a character is engaged by an enemy in a rear arc, the character's basic initiative score (without the, 1d20 random factor) is halved. The character may turn to face the engaging figure when his turn to act





# Patriots, Terrorists, and Spies

More Frontier cults for  
STAR FRONTIERS® gaming

by Kim Eastland

As noted in *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space*, Volume 1, *cult* is the term used for any radical political, terrorist, religious, or other self-interest group in the STAR FRONTIERS® universe. Some cults are legal and some are not, but too often they present a real threat to the harmony of the Frontier and provide extra work for law enforcement and security personnel.

The year FY 111 marked the Grand Celebration of the Frontier. Social events, political rallies, fund raisers, and so forth were planned for all the planets on the Frontier that year to celebrate the 111th anniversary of the signing of the UPF treaty. What was not planned was the sudden appearance of dozens of new cults that decided the year of the Grand Celebration was the perfect time for them to make themselves known to the public. Though hundreds of cults "went public" in FY 111, the following ones seem to have grown the fastest and have the most clout.

The **Alliance for the Rights of the People** is a legal, liberal, political organization dedicated to upholding the rights of the citizens of the Frontier. While this appears to be a noble cause, the ARP has recently enacted a policy of political pressure to limit the authority of Star Law and other local law-enforcement groups. This campaign includes holo-vid promotional advertisements portraying law-enforcement agents as looming shadows that are always waiting for the average citizen to slip up.

The ARP also feels that the practice of maintaining penal colonies (currently located on asteroids) is cruel and that criminals should at least be kept planet-side, within the influence of civilization. On the other hand, ARP also has been the leading organization defending Rim immi-

grants who wish to live in the UPF space against those cults who want them deported.

The ARP has its headquarters on Laco. It sometimes allies itself with the Frontier Peace Organization.

The **Defenders of the Divine Will** is a unique conglomerate of various religious groups that believe that the divine will of their individual deities formed and evolved planets perfectly. They are vehemently opposed to GODCo's terraforming practices, and some members have even threatened violence if it does not cease. Currently, they are considered a legal organization. Mega-corps are worried that the DDW's beliefs may spread to eventually encompass any business that alters the original form of nature (including mining, forestry, and other operations that alter a planet's surface; cosmetics, plastic surgery, and other products or services that alter the body's appearance; etc.).

The **Supporters of Mechano** is a growing political organization that includes members of all the Frontier races. The Mechanites, as they are called, believe the Mechanons are a sentient, sapient race (though of artificial origin) that deserves full citizenship in the UPF. Though the Mechanites began as a completely peaceful organization, their many encounters with the Sliver Death Cult and the Anti-Satharian League have resulted in the death of many Mechanites and the formation of their own security forces. It is rumored that some extremists within the organization are forming a radical splinter group that believes the end justifies violent means.

Since one of the charges constantly being leveled against the Mechanons is their cooperation with the Sathar in subversive activities, many Mechanite investigations are aimed at discovering the truth behind these terrorist activities, with an

eye on clearing the Mechanon name.

The Mechanites have centers on every civilized planet. Their leader, a human named Mathias Pritchard, is extremely charismatic (PER/LDR = 99/99) and the driving force behind the cult.

The **Liberators** is a terrorist organization that is dedicated to "liberating the oppressed masses from the chains of mega-corporate tyranny." This is an extremely violent, illegal, quasi-political/economic cult that has already taken credit for hundreds of deaths due to bombings and terrorist raids, usually on mega-corporation headquarters. Star Law suspects the Liberators are backed by a few rich individuals or another cult, but they have no leads yet on who or what finances them. Though the identity of the leader of the Liberators is also unknown, certain terrorist members have been identified and their faces and descriptions are broadcast regularly throughout the Frontier.

The **Clear Thinkers** is a reactionary political group with militant leanings that seek to banish (or destroy) Mentalists and enlightened characters in the Frontier. They have strong financial backing and fund projects that will develop items, drugs, and robots designed to thwart mental disciplines or seek out discipline users. This group has the most political savvy of all the cults, has been careful to stay inside the law with its public activi-





ties, and is starting to run Clear Thinker candidates for various political positions, including seats on the Council of Worlds. The leader of the Clear Thinkers is a smooth Yazarian politician named Hased Kor. He is one of the most powerful individuals on Yast/Astor and expects to be President of the Council some day.

The **Free Thinkers** is a new cult that has grown in response to the Clear Thinkers movement. This non-profit organization is made up of various races and individuals, both psionically gifted and non-gifted. The organization fights its battle in a legal, honest, and public manner. It funds promotional campaigns aimed at educating the masses about the benefits of having psionically gifted individuals in society. It has established legal aid clinics, educational grants, help lines, and other programs to aid both Mentalists and enlightened characters. It works with the authorities whenever possible to aid in the location of psionically gifted individuals who can help solve crimes. The Free Thinkers have recently begun to open small offices in every major city, but their headquarters is on Morgaine's World.

The **Zenk** (Vrusk for "family") is a Frontierwide criminal organization that currently is responsible for most high-credit criminal activities on the Frontier. The Zenk sells its services to anyone, but it nearly always operates in its own best interests. There is no criminal activity that

the Zenk cannot perform, though it prefers to stay away from anything directly related to Star Law, Spacefleet, or Landfleet. No one knows who governs the organization, but referees should create NPCs who run local operations, as player characters may want (or be forced) to tangle with them at some time.

The Zenk is divided into eight different sections:

*Acquisitions:* robbery, forgery, embezzlement, etc.

*Administration:* executives, crime planning, accounting, etc.

*Eliminations:* murder, arson, body disposals, etc.

*Enforcement:* strong-arm activities that do not usually involve killing, security, etc.

*Information:* blackmail, hugging, spying, computer crimes, etc.

*Leisure activities:* providing illegal intoxicants and entertainment, etc.

*Research and development:* creation of new items or methods that help the other sections, maintaining the Zenk's equipment, etc.

*Support services:* activities that support the other sections but that are not included in the definitions of those sections, such as fencing stolen goods, buying off the authorities, etc.

An interesting note on the Information section is that it supposedly has personnel working within most law-enforcement agencies. On the other hand, most law-

enforcement agencies, especially Star Law, have personnel working within the Zenk. Consequently, information obtained by both sides is sometimes planted or altered in efforts to flush out spies on either side.

The **Firsters** is a quasi-political/terrorist faction that believes all of the Rim races should be sent back to the Rim. Their slogans are such cliches as "The Frontier for the Founders" and "Kick a Rimmer Today." At first this organization was not taken seriously by most habitants of the Frontier and became the butt of many a joke, but recent militant activities aimed at members of the Rim races and their businesses have sobered the public to the reality of violent racial prejudice. The ARP organization is the greatest opponent of the Firster movement.

No Firster headquarters is known to exist, as its operations are completely covert. While none of the leaders are known, a rallying figure is known to be a dead Vrusk named G'rch B'on. B'on was a member of the Firsters when they were still a tiny cult. He attacked an Ifshnit couple one night, but died in the assault. The coroner's findings indicated B'on tripped over his own feet and broke his neck in the fall. The Firsters insist that witnesses (other Firsters, incidentally) saw the Ifshnits pick the fight, then kill B'on. B'on is now a martyr for the Firster cause and a rallying symbol for anyone who dislikes beings from the Rim.



# The Double-Helix Connection

*Mutants in TRAVELLER® gaming*



©1986 by Michael Brown

In almost any advanced technological society, there is usually some type of power source used that is self-sustaining to some degree and gives off great amounts of energy. More often than not, this energy is in the form of hard radiation from nuclear sources.

Everyone knows the effects of radiation on the human body in reality and in science fiction. In reality, radiation can incapacitate or kill, and there is often genetic damage to worry about. In science fiction, the immediate effects range from physical incapacitation to total atomization (actually being vaporized or eaten away). Genetic changes range from birth defects and embryo deaths to the most unexpected and unpredictable of all radiation effects: mutations.

A mutation is a radical change in the information contained in genetic material due to some sort of outside influence, such as chemicals or radiation. The result is an offspring having one or more traits not associated with either parent. The very word "mutant" conjures up visions of horribly deformed victims driven mad either by their condition or society's reaction to them. For the purposes of science fiction, mutations may take many forms; some are beneficial, some are not. A mutation usually manifests itself as some marked psionic or physiological change far beyond the normal parameters of that ilk. Though mutations are usually a result of exposure to radiation, advanced genetic engineering techniques are responsible for them in some cases.

Mutants in TRAVELLER® campaigns can be of any race and from any world, although most tend to be human or humanoid in appearance. When a character is generated, the player should roll two dice; a roll of 2 indicates that the character is a mutant. Alternately, the referee may impose a different system for determining the presence of a mutation, such as a roll of 3 on three dice. Whatever the method used, bear in mind that mutants are extremely rare among populations in general. They should be rather more common among player characters, however, so that the concept is of use to gaming.

Most mutations manifest themselves early in the character's life — certainly by the end of the second term of prior service. Usually, by the time the character enters the game, he is well acquainted with the mutation and (if it is a beneficial mutation) has it under control. If the character enters the game having served only one term, roll 2d6, on an 8+, the character has learned to control the mutation. Until the end of the second four-year period, a mutant with an uncontrolled power may have to make an "activation roll" to use the power. This roll is deter-



mined by computing the average of one's endurance and intelligence ratings, rounded down.

For example, a character with 12 endurance and 7 intelligence is discovered to be a mutant (a roll of 2 on 2d6). As the character only managed to serve a single term and hasn't yet learned to control his power, an activation roll must be computed. The endurance, 12, is averaged with the intelligence, 7, to get 9. The power activates on a 2d6 roll of 9-. Activation may be attempted only once during any situation in which the power would be needed.

### Mutants in the Imperium

Certain powerful mutations could conceivably be used in the pursuit of criminal activities. Doubtless the Imperium has learned to locate and monitor those who possess such mutations, perhaps creating special branches of their anti-psionic patrols to handle unusual mutants. Of the following mutations, *advanced psionics*, *psionic enhancer*, *telencephalic illusion*, and *suggestion* would be considered the most dangerous and worthy of Imperial attention. Of course, there may be mutants who work for the Imperium with these powers.

The following is a random determination chart for the type of mutation gained. Only one roll should be taken on this chart, using two separate 1d6 rolls. The number rolled on the first die is taken to be a "tens" number; and the number on the second die is a "ones" number. Thus, a roll of 1 and 6 would be read as 16.

This table may also be useful for characters receiving "special" psionic disciplines, if the obviously nonpsionic mutations are discarded. This may be easily done by reading rolls of 1-3 on the first die as being "1," and rolls of 4-6 as being "2". The first twelve mutations on the chart may then be read as special psionic attributes.

The letter P indicates that the power is a psionic or psionic-related one. The letter D indicates that the power could be regarded as a defect. The letter X indicates that the power is considered a dangerous one (from an Imperial viewpoint) if used in an uncontrolled and criminal manner.

### TRAVELLER® Mutations Chart

Die roll	Mutation gained
11	Danger sense (P)
12	Directional sense (P)
13	Intuition (P)
14	Photographic memory (P)
15	Probability understanding (P)
16	Psionic damper (P)
21	Psionic enhancer (P,X)
22	Psionics, advanced (P,X)
23	Stress perception (P)
24	Suggestion (P,X)
25	Telencephalic illusion (P,X)
26	Temporal awareness (P)
31	Albinism (D)

32	Alcoholic resistance
33	Alcoholic susceptibility (D)
34	Altered physiology
35	Chemical addiction (D)
36	Disease resistance
41	Epilepsy (D)
42	Extended lifespan
43	Genius capability
44	Heightened dexterity
45	Heightened endurance
46	Heightened intelligence
51	Heightened senses
52	Heightened strength
53	Hemophilia (D)
54	Infrared vision
55	Intensifier vision
56	Mute (D)
61	Narcolepsy (D)
62	Phobic impulse
63	Physiological resistance
64	Physiological susceptibility (D)
65	Poison resistance
66	Regeneration

**Danger sense** — The mutant has a highly-developed sense for danger which alerts him to impending harm. These individuals are very difficult to surprise; throw 11 + to surprise a mutant with this power at all. Note that although the mutant may sense danger, he may not always have time to react to it.

**Directional sense** — The mutant's mind functions like an inertial locating device, enabling him to determine direction after passing over any terrain automatically.

**Intuition** — Normally-endowed people have a certain amount of intuitive insight; when one makes all the right guesses or successfully follows their hunches, that is a good example of well-developed intuition. A mutant with this power has such well-developed intuition that it falls somewhere between deductive reasoning and outright precognition. In game terms, the mutant may ask the referee one question per game session pertaining intimately to the situation at hand. The referee is obligated to answer this one question truthfully as long as the mutant indicates that he is utilizing the *intuition* power. The answer then becomes part of the mutant's available information pertaining to that adventure. (The referee must carefully consider all questions asked by the player in case a few "progressive" questions slip through and cause him to divulge more information than necessary.)

**Photographic memory** — The mutant has near-total recall and can remember even minute details if given one combat round (15 seconds) to do so. Of course, the mutant must have actively seen an object or heard a conversation to remember details about it. This power does not function while the mutant is under the influence of mind-altering substances. On a throw of 9 +, any information stored while under the influence of drugs is forgotten entirely.

**Probability understanding** — The mutant instinctively understands the law of probabilities and can mentally compute such probabilities. This power is sufficient to allow the mutant a rating equivalent to gambling-2 or an extra two skill levels if a gambling skill is already possessed. The probability of a planned action being successful may also be computed, with a roll of 6 + indicating that the mutant has determined whether or not the action succeeds. The time required to compute the probabilities varies according to the complexity of the problem. A good range is one minute for a simple problem to as much as five minutes for a complex one. Note that this power may get the mutant in quite a bit of trouble with gamblers of a more criminal nature, if they suspect him of being a professional gambler or an outright cheater.

**Psionic damper** — This mutation prevents all psionic characters from using their powers within three meters of the mutant, regardless of the level of psionic talent being performed. This is due to an alpha-wave "jamming field" emitted by the mutant's brain. It always functions and cannot be ended. An activation roll is not required. Note that the power functions against any psionics, friend or foe, within the area of effect. Anyone possessing this talent cannot be psionic, and a psionic character who rolls this talent loses all psionics forever.

**Psionic enhancer** — Any psionic powers used by a psionic within three meters of a mutant with this power are performed as if the psionic strength rating were 12 and 12 strength points were possessed. If the mutant is himself psionic, his own rating and strength are unaffected. Note that psionic powers directed against the mutant by hostile forces within range are also enhanced.

**Psionics, advanced** — The individual dices for psionic strength ratings and training as per Book 1, *Characters and Combat*, as though he had undertaken formal training. The ability, however, is inborn, and the mutant performs at his maximum rating.

**Stress perception** — The mutant is able to sense the most stressed and weakest points in constructed objects. This power is done by touch and takes 10 minutes to perform. On a roll of 10 +, the power is purely mental, and thus requires only 60 seconds to perform. Since the power requires concentration, any loud noise, physical harassment, and so forth prevent it from functioning. *Stress perception* cannot be used in combat situations.

**Suggestion** — This mutation allows the mutant to plant a posthypnotic suggestion in another's mind. The time required to do this is one minute. Due to the inherent individuality of a sentient mind, the victim is allowed to roll against his intelligence rating; i.e., the recipient must roll his intelligence score or less to remain unaf-

fectured by this power. Of course, individuals with an intelligence of C + are immune to this ability, as their subconscious minds have developed superior defense techniques. "Suggested" individuals still disobey any orders contrary to their nature, such as killing themselves or friends, committing crimes, etc.

**Telencephalic illusion** — A very rare and powerful mutation, this is one of the only mutations that can be actively used in an offensive capacity. The mutant can cause a very realistic illusion to appear in an opponent's mind. The time required to exercise this power is one minute, and the victim must throw his intelligence or less to escape the effects and see the illusion for what it is. Note that individuals with an intelligence rating of C + are totally immune to this power.

If the saving throw is unsuccessful, the victim is affected by the illusion as though it were a real and tangible thing, though he will take no damage. The mutant can use this power only once per day and can maintain the illusion (if necessary) for as many combat rounds as he has endurance points. The mutant may perform no other action (except evading) while maintaining the illusion. The victim must be in sight or his exact position must be known. If this power is used against a telepath of rating 5 or better, the illusion is reflected back at the mutant with appropriate results. Mutants with telencephalic illusion cannot become telepaths themselves.

**Temporal awareness** — The mutant has a sense of time as accurate as if he had a chronometer in his head. Time can be stated to the utmost accuracy, even to the second, and the passage of time while asleep or unconscious (but not in low berths) can be determined.

**Albinism** — Albinism means the mutant's skin is totally devoid of pigmentation. The mutant suffers greatly from exposure to ultraviolet light, which causes severe sunburn (one point of damage per ten minutes).

**Alcoholic resistance** — The mutant with this power is truly a champion drinker for he cannot get drunk! Due to a hyper-efficient waste-management system in the body, alcohol does not affect a mutant with this power at all.

**Alcoholic susceptibility** — As per *alcoholic resistance* above, but the mutant's waste-management system is flawed. The result is that even one shot glass full of any sort of alcoholic substance puts the mutant under the table and out for 1d6 + 2 hours.

**Altered physiology** — This category covers a lot of different physical mutations, which should be discussed between the player and the referee. As a rule of thumb, these are mutations which would normally be difficult to conceal without elaborate measures being taken. A few examples are wings, an enlarged brain and skull, antennae, extra limbs, and so forth.

There are many possibilities. Any of these mutations may or may not have a distinct function. It falls to the referee to devise any limitations to the mutation or any weaknesses due to it. The general guidelines to determining the exact result should be the character's Universal Personality Profile and the player's whim.

**Chemical addiction** — Due to an inborn chemical imbalance in the mutant's metabolism, he has become addicted to some type of chemical or another, including drugs, and must have a certain quantity of that chemical each day. Without the substance, the character loses one point from his endurance score every day until it stabilizes at a score of 1. The chemical in question can be mild and common, like caffeine and food preservatives, or powerful and illegal, such as hallucinogens and narcotics. It should be discussed between the player and the referee as to what addiction the mutant has and in what quantity he must take the substance.

**Disease resistance** — As the name implies, this is a near-immunity to all forms of disease. Even the deadliest of diseases may be cast off on a roll of 11- on 2d6. Note that even if the mutant does not contract a disease, he could still become a carrier.

**Epilepsy** — More a genetic disease than a straight mutation, epilepsy still retains enough of the criteria of a mutation to be included among them. The mutant is prone to epileptic seizures. During any stressful situation, throw 8 + to have an epileptic seizure (severe on a roll of 9 +). During any one-week period involving normal nonstressful activity (except for being in a low berth, of course), roll 11+ to have a seizure. Seizures last 1d6 minutes. An attending doctor (Medic-3 or better) can treat this condition with drugs, reducing the chances of seizure to 10 + in stressful situations and 11 + per month for non-stressful.

**Extended life span** — The mutant with this coveted power has such superior metabolism and body-repair abilities that he or she is basically a walking anagathics factory. The aging throw for the mutant's fourth term of service is ignored and all subsequent ones are made with a + 2 die modifier. The mutant's life span is also much longer than most members of his race. Note that a blood transfusion or anything else of the sort from this mutant does not benefit any other individual in this way. (The hapless mutant may still be hunted and hounded anyway on this premise.)

**Genius capability** — This mutation covers a wide variety of special situations. The mutant with this ability has a genius capacity that grants him a level 5 ability in one non-weapons skill of his choice. Alternately, the mutant can learn skills in only half the required. The referee may wish to limit the choices to those skills which the character would learn in the particular

service in which he has enlisted.

**Heightened dexterity** — As per heightened strength above, but the mutant's dexterity is automatically F.

**Heightened endurance** — As above, except that the mutant's endurance ratings automatically becomes F.

**Heightened intelligence** — Due to the superior structure of the cognitive and learning centers of the brain, the mutant's intelligence rating is automatically F.

**Heightened senses** — One of the mutant's senses has been genetically heightened to a superhuman degree. The parameters are as follows:

**Sight** — Due to a special dual-lens system in the mutant's eyes, he can see as though he were using binoculars or a telescopic sight (see Book 3). The effects of bright light on the mutant are the same as that as if the mutant had *intensifier vision* below.

**Hearing** — The mutant's ears have a superior internal structure. The result is as if the mutant were using a shotgun microphone (see Book 3). If a mutant with this power is subjected to high-intensity sound, he is deafened for 1d6 x 5 hours.

**Touch** — Due to increased numbers of nerve receptors in the mutant's skin, the sense of touch has been enhanced to the degree that, for example, the mutant can feel an article of clothing and tell (by its temperature) whether or not it had been worn recently.

**Taste** — This is much like *heightened touch*, except an increased number of taste buds is possessed by the mutant. The result of this is that he can actually determine the separate ingredients in a culinary dish merely by taste. On an additional roll of 10 +, the mutant can also taste-test for poison. All consequences of this action must be taken into account.

**Smell** — The mutant can detect even the most minute odors because of a hyper-developed olfactory center in his brain. A mutant with this power can even track or identify by scent. Extremely powerful odors, such as strong chemicals, deaden the mutant's sense for 1d6 x 10 minutes.

**Heightened strength** — The mutant's physical makeup has been genetically altered to a near-superhuman degree. As a result, the mutant's strength rating automatically becomes F (15). Note that this score can be affected by aging.

**Hemophilia** — This is a very dangerous mutation. A mutant with the "bleeder's disease" bleeds to death as the result of even the tiniest cut due to a flaw in the body's blood-clotting mechanism. An injury to a mutant with this defect requires treatment by a doctor (Medic-2 minimum) with the proper drugs and massive transfusions of blood on hand. Otherwise, one point is lost each round from the character's endurance, strength, and dexterity scores in turn, until all three reach 0 (zero) and the character dies.

**Infrared vision** — Due to specialized heat receptors located in the mutant's



eyes, the mutant has *infrared vision* as though he were wearing infrared goggles (see Book 3). Of course, this power does not function in an area of great heat nor does it function in the presence of a reasonably warm light source.

**Intensifier vision** — The mutant's eyes have a special light-gathering receptors in them, making them function as light-intensifier goggles (see Book 3, *Worlds and Adventures*). Note that bright light sources blind a mutant with this power for 1d6 x 5 hours. Special goggles or sunglasses must be used in bright sunlight.

**Mute** — The mutant has been born with no vocal apparatus whatsoever, and thus cannot speak. Electronic devices can compensate, however, with availability beginning at tech level 8 and prices going from Cr 5000 on up.

**Narcolepsy** — This is also a very dangerous mutation. *Narcolepsy* is a serious condition wherein the victim is prone to suddenly fall asleep despite anything he is doing at the time, including combat. Roll 1d6 for the number of times this will occur throughout a character's day, assigning random times to each. Sleep comes for 1d6 x 5 minutes, even if friends try to awaken the mutant. Drugs used to control *narcolepsy* are available at the tech level C+ and cost Cr 400 per bottle of 30 tablets

(one per day). While on this medication, the chance for the mutant to fall asleep at a given "sleep time" is 12 + on 2d6.

**Phobic impulse** — This is a phobia harbored by the mutant which is far worse than the usual phobia. A mutant confronting the object of his phobia *immediately* moves away at double normal speed for as long as possible. This always occurs unless the mutant is unconscious or bound. In the event that the mutant cannot get away, he immediately enters a catatonic state and won't come out of it for 2d6 hours. The player and referee should discuss what phobia the mutant would reasonably have, taking into account the mutant's birth world, prior service, and personal quirks. If listings of phobias are needed, psychology texts and other such reference works are helpful.

**Physiological resistance** — Due to the superior structure of the mutant's homeostatic regulatory factors, the effects of any one of the following adverse conditions can be resisted: heat, cold, or radiation. The choice should be up to the player. Damage up to the character's endurance score in amount may be resisted; any damage greater than that amount will be taken. Thus, a mutant with an endurance of 11 would take only 3 out of 14 points of heat damage, if this was the resistance he possessed.

**Physiological susceptibility** — As per *physiological resistance* above, but the mutant always suffers twice the amount of damage from the chosen condition.

**Poison resistance** — The mutant is able to resist the effects of even the deadliest poisons due to a super-efficient waste-management system in his body. A mutant with this power who is poisoned must throw 6 + to successfully ward off the effects. If successful, the mutant does not die, but instead suffers 2d6 damage. Note that a mutant with low scores may still be killed by the shock to his system.

**Regeneration** — This functions as the level 9 psionic *awareness* power, except that no strength points are expended. *Regeneration* occurs automatically beginning 10 minutes after the injury was sustained.

The preceding table of mutations is by no means hard and fast, and referees may alter or expand the list to suit their own tastes and campaigns. Always respect the bounds of playability and semi-realism, however. Entire adventures can revolve around mutants and their powers. The referee should devise these, but one suggestion is the search for the Psionics Institute — there is no reason to believe that they cannot aid mutants with uncontrollable powers.

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# A Change of Diet

by Tom Adams



*A new mutational defect  
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**Effects:** Characters with this physical mutation must sustain their nutritional needs with nourishment of a very specific and potentially troublesome variety. This nourishment is absolutely required in place of food of more normal varieties. Roll 1d6 to determine which nutritional requirement the mutant has on the following chart. Types of nourishment other than the ones below will not be eaten by the mutant, and they will be both foul-tasting and mildly poisonous. If nourishment other than the allowable type is eaten, roll 2d4 to determine the intensity of the poison; this is done immediately after the mutant eats any foods other than that which his body can properly digest.

## DIE ROLL RESULT

- VAMPIRISM:** The blood of any warm-blooded creature is required for the mutant's daily diet. Water is still needed, though only half the amount normal for a creature of the mutant's size is necessary. Blood can be drawn by cutting the victim's flesh or by sucking it in through small fangs in the mouth, hollow talons on the fingers, suckered tentacles on the mutant's body, etc. The GM and player should decide how blood will be drawn and how often each day the mutant must feed.
- CARNIVOROUS DIET:** Only meat may be eaten by the mutant, and such meat cannot be older than 24 hours. Also, there is a 25% chance that the mutant has latent cannibalistic tendencies.
- HYPERCARNIVOROUS DIET:** Again, only meat may be eaten, but this is a more demanding defect. The meat can be no older than 1 hour, and there is a 40% chance that the mutant has active cannibalistic behavior.
- RADIATION DIET:** The mutant must absorb an Intensity Level of  $1d6 + 2$  radiation at least twice a day, for at least 10 minutes each time. The mutant will not suffer any mutations or damage from the radiation intensity it requires, or from radiation of lesser intensity. This immunity applies to all forms of radiation exposure, but the mutant takes full damage from radiation of greater intensities.
- VEGETARIAN DIET:** Fresh, live plant life must be eaten, but — because of the lower levels of energy gained from vegetable matter — large quantities of food ( $2d4$  kg per sitting,  $1d4 + 1$  times per day) are required. Optionally, the mutant must have a very rare type of plant matter for its survival (like eucalyptus leaves or bamboo shoots).
- POISON CONSUMPTION:** Poisons of normally lethal sorts are required for the mutant's diet. Either poisonous liquids, solids, gases, or poisons from organisms that carry venom can be digested. Roll  $1d6 + 2$  to determine the intensity that the mutant needs. He is immune to the effects of poisons of equal or less intensities, but not to those of greater intensities. Note that if nourishment of other types is eaten by a mutant with this defect, it must still check for poisoning (as above), even if the intensity is equal to or less than the tolerance level for true poisons that this mutant can withstand.

**NAME:** Abnormal sustenance dependency (D)

**RANGE:** Body

**TYPE:** U P

**DURATION:** Constant

**USE:** Constant

**NUMBER:** Self

**DAMAGE:** None

Each GM should decide when and if this defect is to be used in a campaign. I suggest that when using the PC Mutation Table (page 26, GAMMA WORLD® Adventure Booklet), humanoids should choose this defect on a roll of 14, and mutated animals on a roll of 13.



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## The Second Annual Roster of Heroes!



by Jeff Grubb

With this month comes the second anniversary of both this column and the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ role-playing game. Last year at this time, I set out to list all the heroes in the products to date and to clear the air on a few other matters. A repeat performance wouldn't hurt.

Item: Back in issue #106, I gave a date for the release of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Advanced Set, noting that this

was the kiss of death for any product. True to form, the date was shoved back a month to make way for other product. What is more important is that this is a shipping date — when we sent the set out to the distributors. Depending on the distributors' networks and priorities, it may take a month or two for the Advanced Set to make it from our shores to your doors. That's the price you pay for a free-market economy. Don't badger your local retailer too badly; he's caught in the

same system. Advanced Set for summer - honest.

Item: I also mentioned that the Advanced Set was the return of the team supreme of Designer Grubb and Editor Winter. After carrying the design through the critical early stages, Sterling Steve Winter has passed the Marvel editing baton to newcomer Karen Martin. This points up the danger of letting anyone into management — they can't have any fun anymore. Welcome to the swamp, Karen



Item: Yes, I'm still interested in what you have to say about the Original (and, when it comes out, the Advanced) Set of MSH, and I want to know what heroes you want to see here. I've tried to respond to letters as they have come in, going with the more popular characters as well as those that would not see the light of day otherwise. (I got a real rouser of a letter from the president, chairman, and treasurer of the Doctor Doom™ Fan Club, Latveria chapter). However, under the agreement with Marvel Comics, we are not normally allowed to do characters that are licenced to Marvel by other companies. Thus, Transformers, Shogun Warriors, Godzilla, Micronauts, and G.I. Joe are not currently available for this column. [We do have permission to use Rom™ from Parker Brothers, however. — Editor]

Item: We mention it in every product that has a city map, but not a lot of people know that the various city maps that have appeared in our MSH products actually fit together. With the map from the Original Set in the center, the map from *New York, New York* borders on the north, the one from *Faultline* on the south, and the one from *Secret Wars II* on the east. The Advanced Set map will attach to the western edge of the Original Set, and as we need more cityspace to stage our fights, we'll add more maps.

Item: Enough with the items! On to the catalog of heroes! Each hero has all of his or her appearances listed following his or her name. Note that many heroes are cataloged according to their current group affiliations; the groups concerned are the Enforcers™, Guardians of the Galaxy™, Hellfire Club™, Hellions™, Morlocks™, Omega Flight™, Power Pack™, Soviet Super Soldiers™, and Wrecking Crew™.

A number indicates a DRAGON® Magazine article. The letter P, followed by a number, indicates a recent issue of POLYHEDRON™ Newszine. The abbreviations are:

OMSH ..... MARVEL SUPER HEROES  
Original Set  
BB ..... MH-1, *The Breeder Bombs*  
TT ..... MH-2, *Time Trap*  
MW ..... MH-3, *Murderworld!*  
LW ..... MH-4, *Lone Wolves*  
CP ..... MH-5, *Cat's-Paw*  
TJ ..... MH-6, *Thunder over Jotunheim*  
LR ..... MH-7, *The Last Resort*  
FL ..... MH-8, *Fault Line*  
AA ..... MHAC-2, *Avengers™ Assembled!*  
PV ..... MHAC-4, *Pit of the Viper™*  
PW ..... MHAC-5, *Project: Wideawake™*  
NY ..... MHAC-6, *New York, New York*  
CJ ..... MHAC-7, *Concrete Jungle*  
WL ..... MHAC-8, *Weapons Locker*  
RM ..... MHAC-9, *Realms of Magic*  
SW ..... MHSP-1, *Secret Wars™*  
SWII ..... MHSP-2, *Secret Wars II*

All in all, an incredible track record for two years.

Abomination ..... P 25  
Absorbing Man ..... AA,SW,SWII  
AgentAxis ..... 104  
Anaconda ..... CJ  
Andromeda ..... SWII  
Angel ..... PW,SWII  
Ant-Man ..... AA  
Arcade ..... MW  
Ariel (see Shadowcat) ..... BB  
Armadillo ..... SWII,103  
Arnim Zola ..... CJ  
Arsenal ..... AA  
Asp ..... 105  
Attuma ..... AA  
Aurora ..... CP  
Avalanche ..... PW  
Bamfs ..... 108  
Banshee ..... PW  
Baron Blood ..... 104  
Baron Mordo ..... RM  
Baron Strucker ..... 104  
Baron Zemo I (Heinrich Zemo) ..... 104  
Baron Zemo II (Helmut Zemo) ..... CJ  
Battroc the Leaper ..... NY  
Battlesuit, standard (Fenris) ..... WL  
Beast ..... AA,PW,SWII  
Beetle ..... CJ,OMSH,WL  
Beta Ray Bill ..... SWII,101  
Beyonder ..... SWII  
Black Cat ..... CJ  
Black Knight ..... AA,FL,SWII  
Black Mamba ..... CJ  
Black Panther ..... AA  
Black Tom Cassidy ..... PW  
Black Widow ..... AA,CJ,LW,WL  
Blacklash ..... NY,WL  
Blake,Becky ..... CJ  
Blastaar ..... MW,SWII  
Blizzard ..... CP,LR,WL  
Blob ..... PW  
Blue Diamond ..... 104  
Boomerang ..... NY,WL  
Box ..... WL, 97  
Brood ..... PW  
Brother Voodoo ..... RM  
Bucky ..... 104  
Bullseye ..... CJ  
Bushmaster ..... 105  
Caliber ..... WL  
Cannonball ..... PW,SWII  
Captain America ..... AA,FL,OMSH,SWII,TT,WL  
Captain Mar-vell ..... AA  
Captain Marvel ..... AA,OMSH,SW,SWII,TT  
Cascade ..... CP  
Chambers, Mister ..... MW  
Cheney, Lila ..... SWII  
Clea ..... RM  
Cloak ..... CJ,SWII,91  
Cloud ..... 100  
Cobra ..... CJ  
Cody,Gary ..... CP  
Collector ..... AA  
Colossus ..... BB,PW,SW,SWII  
Constrictor ..... CP,WL  
Cooper, Valerie ..... PW  
Cottonmouth ..... 105  
Count Nefaria ..... 103  
Courtney, Delphine (Dark Guardian) ..... 106  
Credit Card Soldiers ..... WL  
Crimson Dynamo ..... BB,CJ,WL  
Cyclone ..... NY  
Cyclops ..... PW,SW,SWII  
Cypher (Douglas Ramsey) ..... PW,SWII  
Dagger ..... CJ,SWII,91  
Daredevil ..... CJ,LW,SWII,WL  
Dazzler ..... PW,SWII  
Deadly Ernest ..... 107  
Death ..... SWII  
Death Adder ..... CJ  
Destiny ..... PW  
Devastator ..... WL

Diablo ..... RM  
Diamondback ..... 105  
Doctor Doom ..... MW,RM,SW,SWII  
Doctor Druid ..... RM  
Doctor Octopus ..... CJ,OMSH,SW,SWII,WL  
Doctor Strange ..... RM  
Dominus ..... P27  
Dormammu ..... RM  
Dragon Man ..... TT  
Drax the Destroyer ..... TT  
D'spayre ..... RM  
Electro ..... NY,SWII  
Elektra ..... CJ  
Enchantress ..... SW  
Enforcers ..... NY  
(Fancy Dan, Hammer Harrison, Snake Marston, Montana, and Ox)  
Eternity ..... SWII  
Executioner ..... TJ  
Falcon ..... AA  
Firelord ..... SWII  
Fixer ..... OMSH,WL  
Fly ..... CJ  
Flying Tiger ..... NY  
Forge ..... PW,WL  
Frog-Man ..... 96  
Fury,Nick ..... AA,94  
Galactus ..... SW  
Galactus's Cat ..... SW  
Gargoyle ..... SWII,100  
Geirrodur ..... TJ  
Giant-Man I (Henry Pym) ..... AA  
Gladiator ..... CJ  
Goliath I (Henry Pym) ..... AA  
Goliath II (Clint Barton) ..... AA  
Graviton ..... AA  
Green Goblin ..... CJ  
Grey Gargoyle ..... AA,TT  
Grim Reaper ..... AA,FL  
Guardian (Weapon Alpha, Vindicator I) ..... WL,97  
Guardsman ..... WL  
Guardians of the Galaxy ..... 100  
(Vance Astro, Charlie-27, Yondu, Martinex, Starhawk, and Nikki)  
Gypsy Moth ..... NY  
Gyrich, Peter Henry ..... PW  
Hammer,Justin ..... CP  
Hammerhead ..... CJ  
Hand ..... NY  
Hate-Monger ..... SWII,WL  
Havok ..... PW  
Hawkeye ..... AA,SW,SWII,WL  
Hellfire Club ..... PW  
(Emmanuel Da Costa, Emma Frost, Harry Leland, Donald Pierce, Selene, Sebastian Shaw, and Tessa)  
Hellions ..... PW  
(Tarot, Empath, Thunderbird II, Catseye, Jetstream, and Roulette)  
Hercules ..... AA,SWII,P25  
Hobgoblin ..... CJ,94  
Howard The Duck ..... 96  
Hudson, Heather MacNeil (see Vindicator II) ..... CP  
Hulk ..... AA,SW,P25  
Human Torch ..... MW,OMSH,SWII  
Hunter, Stevie ..... PW  
Hydra ..... NY,94  
Hydro-Man ..... CJ  
Hyperion ..... 103  
Iceman ..... PW,SWII  
Impossible Man/Woman/Kids ..... 102  
Invisible Woman (Invisible Girl) ..... MW,OMSH,SWII  
Iron Cross ..... 104  
Iron Fist ..... CJ,LW,SWII  
Iron Man, golden avenger armor ..... AA,SW,WL,95  
Iron Man, original gray armor ..... LR,WL,96  
Iron Man, space armor ..... WL,96  
Iron Man, stealth armor ..... WL,96  
Iron Man, new red/silver armor ..... WL,SWII  
Iron Monger armor ..... WL  
Jack Frost ..... 104  
Jack O'Lantern ..... NY

Jameson, J. Jonah	..CJ	Omega Flight	.....107	Super-Skrull	..... TT
Jarvis	..AA	(Flashback, Diamond Lil, Smart Alec, and Wild Child)		Supreme Intelligence of Kree	..... AA
Jeffries, Madison	106	Owl	..... NY	Swarm	..... CJ
Jester	..CJ	Paladin	.....CJ	Swordsman	..... AA,FL
Jocasta	..... AA	Parker,May	.....CJ	Talisman	..... RM,97
Jones, Rick	.....AA,LR	Patriot	.....104	Taskmaster	..... AA,CJ,LW
Juggernaut	..... FL,PW,SWII	Phoenix I (Jean Grey)	..... PW	Terrax	..... 92
Kang the Conqueror	..... AA,SW,TT	Phoenix II (Rachel Summers)	..... PW,SWII	Thin Man	..... 104
Karma	..... PW,SWII	Pirate Kitty	..... 108	Thing	..... MW,OMSH,SWII
Killer Shrike	..... NY	Plantman	..... LR	Thor	..... AA,SW,SWII,TJ,TT,88
Kimara the Cloudstalker	..... CP	Polaris	.....PW	Thunderball	..... FL,SWII
Kingpin	..... CJ,LW,NY,SWII,94	Porcupine	.....CJ,WL	Thundersword	..... SWII
Klaw	..... AA,SW	Power Man	.....CJ,LW,SWII	Thundra	.....P27
Knight, Misty	..... CJ	Power Pack	..... NY,SWII	Tiger Shark	..... 89
Kraven the Hunter	..... CJ,LW,SWII	(Gee, Energizer, Lightspeed, and Mass Master)		Tigra	..... AA,SWII,P27
Kree	.....A A	Professor Power	..... CJ	Time Bomb	..... SWII
Kurse	..... SWII	Professor X	..... BB,PW,SW,SWII	Titania	..... SW,SWII,P25
Leader	.....CP	Prowler	.....NY	Titanium Man	..... CJ,WL
Lightmaster	..... WL	Psycho-Man	..... SWII	Toad	.....PW
Living Laser	.....AA,FL	Puck	.....CP	Torpedo armor	..... WL
Lizard	.....CJ,SW	Puma	.....SWII	Trapster	..... MW,WL
Locke, Miss	..... MW	Punisher	.....CJ,LW	U - M a n	..... 104
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Loki	..... AA,88	Radioactive Man	..... LR,OMSH,WL	Umar	..... RM
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Lucky Penny	..... P27	Rattler	..... 105	UnionJack	.....CJ
MacTaggart, Moria	..... PW	Red Raven	..... 104	Unus	.....PW
Machete	..... NY	Red Ronin	..... W L	Urlich, Ben	.....CJ
Machians	..... P27	RedSkull	.....CJ,WL	Valkyrie	..... SWII,100,P27
Mad Thinker	..... AA	Rhino	..... NY,SWII	Vanisher	.....PW
Madame Masque	..... CJ	Richards, Franklin B. (Tattletale)	..... MW,SWII	Vermin	.....LW
Maggia	..... NY	Ringmaster	..... AA,WL	Vindicator II (Heather Hudson)	..... 106
Magik	..... PW,RM,SWII	Robertson, Joe	..... CJ	Viper	.....PW
M a g m a	..... PW,SWII	Rock Trolls	.....TJ	Vision	..... AA,TT
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Mandarin	..... AA,LR	Ronan the Accuser	.....A A	Vulture	..... NY,SWII
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Man-Elephant	..... WL	Rosensthal, Bernie	..... CJ	Warlock	..... PW,SWII
Mantis	.....A A	Sabertooth	..... CP,LW	Warrior Woman	..... 104
Marinna	..... CP	Sandman	..... C J	Wasp	..... AA,FL,SW,SWII,TT
Marvel Girl	..... PW	Sasquatch	..... C P	Watcher	.....SWII
Master Man	..... 104	Scarecrow	..... CJ	Watson, Mary Jane	..... CJ
Mastermind	..... PW	Scarlet Witch	..... AA,TT	Whirlwind	..... AA,LR
Masters, Alicia	..... MW	Scramble	.....107	White Dragon	..... NY
Mauler	..... CP,WL	Scorpion	.....CJ,OMSH	White Rabbit	..... NY
Mean	..... 108	Secbots	.....WL	White Tiger	..... CJ
Melter	..... CP,WL	Sefton, Amanda	..... PW	Whizzer	..... 104
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Mephisto	..... SWII	Shadowcat (see Ariel)	..... PW,SWII	Willy Lumpkin	.....96
Mimic	..... PW,TT	Shagreen	..... 108	Wing, Colleen	..... CJ
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Mister Hyde	..... CJ	Shroud	.....93	Wrecking Crew	..... SW
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(Caliban, Callisto, Healer, Leech, Masque, Plague, and Sunder)		Soviet Super-Soldiers	.....99		
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Mystique	..... PW	Spider-Man	.....CJ,FL,NY,OMSH,SWII,WL		
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Nermani, Lilandra	..... PW	Starfox	..... AA,SWII,TT		
Nightcrawler	..... BB,PW,SW,SWII	Stick	..... CJ		
Nightmare	..... RM	Stilt-Man	..... NY,WL		
Nihilist agents	..... PV,98	Stingray	..... W L		
Nitro	..... CJ	Storm	..... BB,PW,SW		
Nomad	..... CJ	StormGiants	..... Tj		
Northstar	..... CJ	Sub-Mariner	..... SWII,89		
Nova II (Frankie Raye)	..... 92	Sunfire	.....PW		
Ortodroid robot	.....OMSH	Sunspot	.....PW,SWII		
		Sunturion	..... WL		
		Super-Adaptoid	..... AA,MW		

**Last item:** Okay, guys, who have we missed? Who else do you want to see here? Send your cards, letters, and suggestions to the ARES™ Section, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Until next time, let's be careful out there.

*In case you were interested, the following characters are original ones, created by the staff at TSR, Inc., for various MARVEL SUPER HEROES modules. They do not appear in any Marvel comics as of yet: Cascade™, Dominus™, Kimara the Cloudstalker™, Lucky Penny™, and the Octodroid™ robot. Additional creations (assorted robots, androids, aliens, and nonpowered human citizens, criminals, and police officers) are detailed in all eight MH-series modules, as well as in POLYHEDRON issue #27. — Editor]*

# The Keys to Good SF

*Some thoughts for novice science-fiction gamers*

©1986 by Sherri Gilbert

It appears that science-fiction games have begun to replace some of the older fantasy games in popularity in the last year. With that replacement, some problems have emerged. Science-fiction games have entire galaxies in which to play — yet, too often, the game master falls back on the old fantasy standards of “damsel in distress” and “kill the monsters” for the evening’s adventure.

This is not always the fault of the game master nor that of the game designers. It may be a general expectation resulting from watching science-fiction movies filled with shoot-em-up action and spectacular effects. We envision the average science-fiction character as a reluctant hero out to save his race from extinction and rescue the beautiful alien princess from the nasty Space Lord on his way through. A great movie, perhaps, but it lacks depth when it comes to role-playing game scenarios.

Role-playing is just that: playing out a role in a scenario set up by the game master. A player creates a character based on generic standards such as a merchant, soldier, scientist, or pirate for a science-fiction game campaign. Then, through various game scenarios, this character is built up and improved through his or her experiences, much as a real person grows and develops. Both game master and player must realize that even Han Solo and Luke Skywalker had a past, a background upon which they were based. A science-fiction game campaign must place emphasis on characters and not spectacular effects of intergalactic importance to stay alive. Everyday occurrences must be interesting, and they must attempt to build the character’s persona along the way. Scenarios should generally be based on people, not things. It is the human aspect that many science-fiction game adventures lack.

One can turn to the television series *Star Trek* for a good example of a sci-fi campaign. For “five years,” the starship *U.S.S. Enterprise* carried out her duty by patrolling space as an intergalactic policeman, diplomat, and military mega-force, as well as an explorer, detective, and goodwill

ambassador. The captain and crew were often called upon to make snap decisions, without the guidance of Star Fleet officers, when facing many strange forces and situations.

Looking back at the 79 episodes of that show, a game master can realize and utilize a very important lesson. The majority of the *Star Trek* shows dealt with humans and aliens who were very real and had distinct personalities. You felt for their cause, understood their motives, and believed in them. Even the crew members had little idiosyncrasies that made them very realistic. Many science-fiction shows have tried to follow in *Star Trek*’s footsteps, but most have failed, having stumbled only across part of the reason why *Star Trek* continues to survive after twenty years with a massive following of fans. *Star Trek* is the game master’s perfect campaign.

The recipe for a good campaign is relatively simple. First, add in believable, named, non-player characters. Next, sprinkle in alien flavor: the unexpected and the unknown. A little hardware goes a long way, so be careful not to overdo it. Last, interaction between player characters is very important. Mix and stir carefully. With a little help from references and other information sources, and you will have a great ongoing campaign.

## Getting started

When setting up an adventure for the evening, one must first plot the scenario in which the characters will interact. For example, there might be an ambassador requesting help for a planet facing civil war, or a merchant whose ship has been attacked by pirates, placing him and his shipments in peril. Perhaps there is an alien who knows little of standard business practices, and has gotten involved with underworld figures and now needs help. With a little work, standard plots can be alien-ized for any game system.

Try to involve the player characters in new adventures in creative ways. Game masters can create and use misunderstandings, garbled messages that fall into the wrong hands, lies, and outright deceit

transmitted by third parties. Information may be lost, and non-player characters may misdirect and confuse the PCs. Situations are often hardly what they appear to be. Don’t forget the element of surprise; a misguided letter or stray transmission can create an entire scenario when the characters can’t help but open and read the secret message.

After the basic scenario is set, the information must be fleshed out, and the main figures in the plot developed. It is wise to keep the number of non-player characters down to a minimum to avoid confusion among the players. When too many names and complex personalities are introduced too quickly, this information can become jumbled and lost.

## Alien flavoring: Worlds

Using Earthlike planets is fine, with humanoids and regular plants and animals and such, but in science fiction, space is full of oddities and unexplainable coincidences. Alien planets may range from the familiar to the downright unbelievable. Never forget the elements; rain, sleet, snow, and heat are a few of the fun things that can disturb a tricorder reading and create a real problem for the crew. Unidentified flying objects can liven up a dull night’s duty, as well as meteor showers, aurora displays, novae, and supernovae. Sub-space messages can be jumbled, sensor ghosts can stalk the ship, and drifting hulks of abandoned vessels can create mini-scenarios to fill time and give the game master a chance to create more detailed plotlines.

Planets should be distinctly alien in nature, with desert planets, water worlds, overgrown jungle planets, and ones totally covered with mountains or marred by volcanic activity. Not all planets the PCs encounter should be adaptable to human conditions; some might be methane-covered or have heavy gravities. The possibilities are endless. Develop different approaches to the classic scenario of landing, dealing with aliens that speak your language, and solving a problem quickly and efficiently. Nothing should be that easy!!

It is best to generalize when developing the planet, system, or race from which

each NPC hails. Unless the game is to be run on a certain planet, an adequate amount of information would be the world's location, local races, types of government, and special characteristics of the world or its people in general. On the other hand, if the adventure takes place on this planet, one should generate the planet's characteristics in detail.

Most game systems have rules, charts, and information on world generation, and it is worth taking time to complete this information. There is nothing worse for maintaining the flavor of a science-fiction game than to land continually on clone-copies of Star Base 7 or Luna City. In the fantasy games, every valley, mountain, river, and stream has a name and several legends to go along with it. Legends can exist equally well in space and are worth taking time to develop.

Basic government structures should be established, such as dictatorships, kingdoms, and democratic or communist powers. If the planet is inhabited by aliens, try to create unusual governments. One could have a minor race rule a large number of other beings (similar to the Indian caste system) or even a ludicrous system in which all red-haired, three-armed males rule on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday, and women with green-eyes and wings rule the rest of the days. Be creative — all planets were not created equal, and all cultures are not based on Earth's. Do not let characters anticipate scenario developments from their typical settings.

Keeping in mind your scenario design, develop and personalize a small section of your world on which your players may interact. Keeping these characters within this area can be difficult because of the speed with which characters can travel in high-tech cultures, yet there are subtle ways of manipulating the adventure to keep things running smoothly. If you present them with enough intrigue and information, player characters usually follow your lead. However, prepare a list of perhaps ten to twenty names worthy of your planet's geology on hand for those gaming emergencies that arise when your characters wander from the area that you have created in depth.

### **Alien flavoring Beings**

After the planet and system are created and located, the race or races that populate it must be considered. It isn't necessary to create page after page of information on the eating, recreational, and breeding habits of every creature encountered, yet basic information is important, lest you have copies of humans everywhere. Most game systems offer a generation system for aliens which supply good creation guidelines, or you may choose to operate with already-created alien races. Either way, you should know

the following of any alien around which your scenarios are based: racial or species name, brief physical description, life span, sexes, age of maturity, family structure, psychology, and any other important traits or talents. A quick example of this format follows.

RACE: Talamany

DESCRIPTION: A large, light-boned, horselike creature capable of flight, resembling the mythical pegasus except for a set of humanoid arms at the base of its neck. Can speak languages known to common man. Coloration is light, usually white or gray (though pale blue and green are known). Range up to 7' tall at shoulders, but weigh only 500-600 lbs.

GENERAL STATISTICS:

Life span: 125 Earth years

Sexes: Three (male, female, and androgynous)

Age of maturity: 25 years

Family structure: Very closely knit, extended family/herd structure

PSYCHOLOGY: The Talamany are stable personalities, very dedicated to the family, truth, and justice for all. Excellent fighters when provoked, battling fiercely (though with ranged weapons, as they are less effective in close combat from their light build). Sometimes hired as guards or police on Royal Arcretion Star Liners. Generally distrust most humanoid races because of negative past dealings with them.

OTHER DATA: Certain Talamany have psionic abilities such as telepathy or empathy. Young Talamany are very frisky and mischievous, often cruelly tormenting humanoids.

This can be used as a format to follow for races either generated randomly or created from your imagination. More information can always be added, making the race more complete, but try not to waste valuable scenario time on the gardening habits of a race when the characters will be spending only ten minutes on their planet before moving on. There are many more pertinent plans you could be developing.

### **Creating the NPCs**

After the planet and race are developed and defined, one should then turn to the non-player characters. A well-rounded NPC should be believable, realistic, and have a purpose in life, even if his purpose is to have no purpose — an intergalactic bum of sorts. If the character is an alien, make sure you bestow upon it an alien name. "Steve the Vulcan" is just not a valid alien title, nor is "Fred the Rejouni." But remember to keep alien names relatively short and uncomplicated. *Tlsoinemiwoi* is interesting on paper, but pronouncing it in the course of a game can seriously confuse your players as they attempt to communicate and interact with this fellow

A list of twenty or so alien names can help if players should like to know the name of the six-armed cabbie that escorted them off the starport base, and it makes you, as the game master, look very good.

Flaws or weaknesses add flavor to any character, and your NPCs should incorporate this rule. A physical or mental handicap can create interesting realism for a campaign, especially when this handicap isn't apparent to the eye. An Ergoan fish creature that is afraid of water or a deaf Vulcan can have interesting effects on your players as they must deal with these handicaps. Never present stereotypical characters *all* of the time. This can only hamper the campaign when the players anticipate your every move. Make sure that most characters have a hidden twist, a hairline crack in their personalities that may or may not appear. Every person you know has some little hidden facet of his or her personality that may take time to surface or may never be known. Style your non-player characters after people you know, and you may find them easier to portray. Don't be afraid to have the NPCs react emotionally or radically if the situation arises. Everyone has a pressure point.

Recurring non-player characters can provide a link to new adventures, such as the Empire official at some bureau who leaks information out to his favorite crew members, a rich old eccentric merchant who has his eye on a female crewmember and sends expensive (and possibly illegal) gifts every so often, or the love-sick barmaid (bored with her job and eager to take up a spacer's life) who calls on the captain whenever the ship is in port. This allows the players to get to know the NPCs and react to them as friends.

One of the most important non-player characters that you should have is the one the players love to hate — a nasty of some type who pops in and out of scenarios, fouling up missions and generally adding to the chaos. A rival merchant prince may have his eye on the PCs' vessel, or an intergalactic criminal with which one PC has accidentally crossed paths may now want revenge. This hated character, who may always seem to get away by the skin of his teeth, can unite the players to the single cause of vengeance!

### **Hardware wars**

Be careful not to overdo the hardware aspect of the science-fiction game. It is very easy to get carried away with the behemoth *Areclin War Cruiser* (with dual-mounted mega-laser turrets and twenty phased laser guns on each side) that can achieve warp 47 in 4.2 seconds and has phase, jump and every other type of drive system, including gasoline in an emergency. You can easily get over your head with hardware such as this, especially when arguments brew from: "You can't do



that! There isn't enough space for a megalaaser under the cabin!"

It generally seems that science-fiction role-playing gamers are divided into two categories: those who understand and enjoy the hardware of science fiction, and those who don't. Don't alienate those who don't appreciate the beauty of a space craft by dealing too heavily with things they may not understand. Keep the doses of hardware limited, and you will most certainly entertain those interested in hardware and keep those who aren't.

### Player interaction

Most important of all, player interaction is what people will remember most about a memorable game. "Remember the time Arcturis went and blew up half the planet with that alien ray gun?" Yes, we all remember that. Not the fact that the rest of the world was sent into an ice age, nor the fact that millions of people were killed — no, people remember what happened to Arcturis when the gun tossed him twenty feet into a bulkhead and he had amnesia for a bit.

If your players don't interact a great deal, draw them into situations in which group participation is required. Kidnapings of player characters may occur, or their starship may be forced down in a storm on an alien planet. Though players

cooperate with each other to some extent, it often helps to give players a little nudge towards the goal of group interaction.

In a scenario, you could have an alien take interest in a player character who generally remains in the background. Interactions like these can help bring that player into the game action. Sickness or injury can build bonds between characters. Promote romantic feelings between characters; after all, it is realistic to say that people who are involved in long periods of space travel may get a little lonely. Encourage the development of characters that involve themselves in hobbies or collections. This not only promotes player interaction, but also builds realistic characters. Occasionally slip a player a note and explain that his or her character is feeling crabby today or perhaps a bit depressed. We all feel this way one time or another; shouldn't a player character experience this? A player whose character has an accent or a strange speech pattern can be encouraged to speak as the character would while role-playing. In short, encourage people to delve into their characters and play these people as they see fit. It will only benefit your campaign in the end.

### End notes

Gather and use as much reference material for making snap decisions and to

satisfy information requests. Before a game, prepare lists of names and places that the characters may ask for. Good sources are phone books, or any kind of yearbook or manual with lists of employee names or places. In your public library, you can find reference materials such as co-op source directories, corporation listings, and industrial directories that will give you bundles of information on companies that, with a little twist, can easily be turned into intergalactic corporations. A complete atlas can give you thousands of little foreign towns that sound relatively alien to you or I. Create a notebook of non-player characters that you can use quickly when the need arises. One afternoon at the library and a roll of dimes for copies can satisfy your reference needs for many good games.

Novice SF gamers who follow these suggestions can improve their campaigns and make them more realistic and interesting. It is best to slowly work a few ideas at a time into your existing games, so as not to shock unsuspecting players. But, sooner or later, your campaign should shape up and run like the fantasy campaign that you have been running for the last few years. Science fiction is not so different from fantasy: both deal with possibilities and alternatives to our present-day life, and with a bit of effort the two games run with equal ease.

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# Convention Calendar

## HAVOC II, May 3-4

This convention sponsored by Battle Group Boston will be staged at South Middle School in Waltham, Mass. The weekend activities will feature 15mm WRG Ancients, Napoleonics (Empire Three), Napoleonic sail (Heart of Oak), and Avalon Hill's WWII and Modern microarmor. In addition to these minatures events, Circus Maximus will be played, using chariot models. For more information, contact: Al Garnache, 142 Clark Street, Waltham MA 02154.

## LITTLE WARS, May 9-11

This convention will be held at the Triton College Student Building in River Grove, Ill. This convention will focus on miniatures events only. Over one hundred historical, fantastical, and science-fictional miniature battles will be offered. Registration fees are \$6. For more information about this miniatures convention, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Todd Fisher, 6010 N. Maramora Ave., Chicago IL 60646.

## TECHNICON III, May 16-18

This convention will be staged at the Blacksburg Econo-Travel in Blacksburg, Va. Featured at the convention will be a gaming tournament, video rooms, an art show, computer games, a masquerade, and a Star Wreck play. For more details, contact: Technicon III, P.O. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24060.

## TRI-STATE CON '86, May 16-18

This convention will be held at the main campus of Southern Ohio College in Cincinnati, Ohio. Featured activities include an auction, tournaments, and a game-design seminar by professional designer Tom Moldvay. Registration fees are \$10 in advance, and \$12 at the door. Contact: Tri-State '86, P.O. Box 1754, Cincinnati OH 45201, or telephone (513)931-6028.

## CONJURATION III, May 23-25

This gaming convention will be staged at the Hilton Hotel in Tulsa, Okla. Gaming tournaments, open gaming, a video room, and a masquerade are among the scheduled events. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Conjuration, P.O. Box 690064, Tulsa OK 74169.

## AMIGOCON, May 24-26

This convention will be held at the Mid City Holiday Inn in El Paso, Texas. Guests of honor are Patricia McKillips and Robert Vardeman. Advance registration fees are

\$10; registration fees at the door are \$15. For more information about this event, contact: Tom Cagle, 3400 Polk, El Paso TX 79930.

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

The Military Interests and Gamers Society cordially invites all gamers to the society's seventh annual convention. This convention will be staged at the Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre in Cambridge, Ontario. This one-day event will begin at 10 A.M. and end at 6 P.M. Free tutorials, seminars, painting contests, board games, and adventure role-playing tournaments will be among the featured events. Registration fees are \$2. For more information, contact: Les Scanlan, President M.I.G.S., 473 Upper Wentworth Street, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L9A 4T6.

## DALLAS CON '86, June 6-8

This gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Hotel in Dallas, Texas. Events will include AD&D® tournaments, Cars Wars, Champions, Star Fleet Battles, and miniature games. For details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Dallas Con '86, 3304 Crater Lane, Plano TX 75023.

## GLATHRICON GAMEFEST '86, June 6-8

This convention will be staged at the Ramada Inn in Evansville, Ind. Guests of honor will be Bob Blake, Penny Petticord, and Frank Mentzer. Scheduled activities include RPGA™ tournaments, a variety of role-playing games, a painting contest, and a masquerade. Registration fees are \$9 until May 15, and \$12 thereafter. Preregistration fees for tournaments are \$2. For more details, contact: River City Science Fiction Association, P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737.

## METROPOLICON, June 7

This gaming convention will be staged at the Auraria campus of Metropolitan State College. Featured activities will include role-playing game tournaments, computer gaming, and videos. Preregistration fees are \$6, and registration fees are \$10. For more details, contact: Auraria Gamers' Club, Metropolitan State College, 1006 11th Street, Denver CO 80204.

## WARGAMERS WEEKEND, June 7-8

This wargaming convention will be held at the Disabled American Veterans Hall in Newburyport, Mass. Offering the finest in historical games, this event will also include many role-playing and board games. For inquiries on registration or on running game

events, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Newburyport Wargamers Association, P.O. Box 148, Newburyport MA 09150.

## ADVENTURE GAME FEST 86, June 13-15

This convention will be held at the Dolphin Beach Resort in St. Petersburg, Fla. Registration fees are \$15. For more information, contact: Adventure Game Fest, c/o Skirmishes, Inc., 2550 34th Ave. N., St. Petersburg FL 33713

## SEAGA '86, June 20-22

This gaming convention will be staged at the Airport Sheraton Hotel in Atlanta, Ga. Tournaments will be offered for a variety of fantasy and science-fiction role-playing games. Registration fees are \$12 until June 19, and \$15 at the door. Send your mail-in orders to: SEAGA '86, P.O. Box 16564, Atlanta GA 30321.

### Convention Calendar Policies

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on 8 1/2" by 11" paper. The contents of each listing must not exceed 70 words in length.

The information given in the listing must be prepared in the following format:

- 1) title and date (not to exceed 2 lines of printed matter),
- 2) site and location,
- 3) guests of honor (if applicable),
- 4) special events offered,
- 5) registration fees or attendance requirements,
- 6) address (telephone number optional) where additional information can be obtained.

### Sample listing:

#### EVERYCON, July 1-3

This gaming event will take place in Nowhere, Ind. Fred Smith and Jane Doe are guests of honor. Role-playing games and miniatures events will be featured. Registration is free. For details, contact: EveryCon, P.O. Box 000, Nowhere IN 46000.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for this column and will be discarded. We reserve the right to edit listings, but we are not responsible for updating them.

All listings must be accompanied by a cover letter which includes both an address and a telephone number. We are not, though, responsible for incorrect information provided to this office. If a cover letter is not provided, the listing will not be printed. No call-in listings will be accepted.

Foreign and domestic listings are welcome.

Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to Patrick Lucien Price, Convention Listings Coordinator, c/o DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example: The copy deadline for the July 1986 issue is the last Monday of May 1986.

For any questions related to the Convention Calendar, please contact Mr. Price at (414) 248-3625, ext. 376.

### RIVER CITY CON, June 28-29

This convention will take place on the Consumnes River College campus. Events featured will be a Car Wars and an AD&D® tournaments. There will be many other role-playing games and board games available. Other activities will include an auction and local vendors' area. Registration fees are \$5 per day of attendance; these fees can be mailed in until June 16. For more details, contact: River City Con, 3950 Mack Road #65, Sacramento CA 95823.

### COLONIAL CITY GAMEFEST '86, July 12-13

This convention will be staged at the Memorial Building in Mt. Vernon, Ohio. All types of games, miniatures events, and a model painting content will be offered. For more details, contact: The Mt. Vernon Gamers' Association, 205 W. Gambier St., Mt. Vernon OH 43050.

### SPOKON '86, July 18-20

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Ridpath Hotel in Spokane, Wash. For more information about this convention, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: S.A.I.F., P.O. Box 9582, Spokane WA 99205.

### SSC JERSEY DEVILCON, July 18-20

To be held at Stockton State College in Pomona, N. J., this convention will feature a costume contest and a trivia contest. Preregistration fees are \$10, and registration fees are \$13. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Don Glidewell, Office of Campus Activities G-202, Stockton State College, Pomona NJ 08240.

### DOVERCON II, July 19-20

This convention will be staged at the Dover Municipal Building Auditorium in Dover, N.H. Featured events will include D&D® and AD&D® tournaments and Diplomacy events. Artwork and miniatures will be judged, and winners will be awarded. Dealer inquiries welcome. Registration fees are \$5 for single-day attendance, and \$8 for the weekend. For more details about this convention, contact: DoverCon II, P.O. Box 622, Dover NH 03820.

### WINDSOR GAMEFEST IV, July 19-20

This convention will be held in Ambassador Hall at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario. Featured events include role-playing, miniatures and board games, free movies, and a dealers' area. Preregistration fees are \$10 in Canadian funds; registration fees are \$12 in Canadian funds for a weekend pass, and \$7 in Canadian funds for a daily pass. For more information about this event, contact: WRPA Head Office, 584 Brighton Road, Windsor, Ontario, Canada N8N 2L6.

### ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR XII, July 25-27

This comics/gaming/science-fiction convention will be held at the Omni Hotel and

Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Ga. Guests of honor include Ralph Bakshi, Boris Vallejo, Greg Hildebrandt, Stan Lee, Diane Duane, and Steve Jackson. 14 gaming tournaments will be offered. Other activities include a costume contest, films, an art show, and panel discussions. Registration fees are \$25 until June 30, and \$29 thereafter. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: A. F. F., P.O. Box 566, Marietta GA 30061, or telephone (404)662-6850.

### KAL-KON '86, Aug. 2-3

To be staged at Eason Hall in Westfield, N.Y., this convention will offer tournaments for the AD&D®, Traveleer, Star Fleet Battles, Car Wars, TOP SECRET™, and GAMMA WORLD® gaming systems. Dealers' tables will be available, and dealers are encouraged to attend. For more information about this convention, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Gamer's Connection, P.O. Box 822, Jamestown NY 14702-0822

### MADNESS '86, Aug. 9-10

This comic book, gaming, and science-fiction convention will be held at Middletown High School in Middletown, N.Y. Preregistration fees are \$8, and registration fees are \$10 at the door. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Madness '86, 9 Sheffield Drive, Middletown NY 10940.

### GEN CON® 19 GAME CONVENTION, Aug. 14-17

This annual gaming convention, sponsored by TSR, Inc., will be staged at the MECCA Auditorium and Convention Hall in Milwaukee, Wis. For further information or for preregistration materials, contact: Marti Hayes, c/o GENCON® 19 Game Convention, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147-0756, or telephone (414)248-3625.

### AUTUMN CAMPAIGNS '86, Sep. 6-7

Sponsored by the Lexington Historical Gamers Society and The Rusty Scabbard hobby shop, this convention will take place at the Lexington Hilton Hotel in Lexington, Ky. Events will include historical miniatures, board games, and fantasy and science-fiction role-playing games. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Lexington Historical Gamers, c/o The Rusty Scabbard, 513 E. Maxwell Street, Lexington KY 40502.

### EARTHCON VI, Sep. 19-21

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Holiday Inn at Rockside Road and I-77 in Cleveland, Ohio. Guests of honor will include Gordon R. Dickson and C. J. Cherryh. Videos, a masquerade, an art show, and an auction will also be offered. For details about this event, contact: Earthcon, P.O. Box 5641, Cleveland OH 44101.

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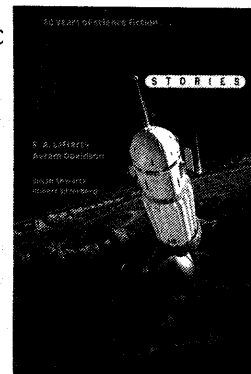
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## The forum

(From page 6)

Monster Manual slip out of your grasp for just a moment, just love to point out that "That's not in the book!" When you attempt to explain why you changed it, they simply misunderstand your motive again. *Very few players will work with you, because they don't like it and don't understand it!*

Mr. Armstrong has several small pieces of good advice which may work with some players. In addition to this, I have found some ways of handling player problems as well, but I'm sure that somebody out there could help me, and I would appreciate any advice. I have basically found two ways to handle most awkward situations and rule changes. The first handles most of the problems: Never let your players see the books! Ever! If they don't know the rules in the first place, then they won't even know if you changed them. If they want to know about a spell or the abilities of a character class, you explain it as you see fit. Secondly, if they've never seen the rules, they can't pull the "not in the books" routine.

If the players have seen enough to know when you change the rules, then the best way to handle the situation is to explain the change to the best of your ability. If they don't understand then, just tell them that you're not trying to make life rough for them, but, believe it or not, attempting to improve the game. If they still don't like it, and complain or get downright ornery, tell them very quickly just who the heck the boss is, and if they don't like it, then they can lump it! If you can, make a threat, but don't make it too harsh, and make sure you can afford to carry it through. If you have only one player, then you obviously can't threaten to kick him out of the game! I hope I have helped some beginning DM out there. Good luck!

Paul D. Ingraham  
Prince George, B.C.

I would like to make some comments about your reply to Mr. Uptis concerning guns in AD&D gaming ("Beware of Guns," DRAGON issue #107).

First, it seems to me that by labeling guns as "instant-kill" weapons, you have implied that non-firearms are somehow not "instant-kill" weapons. I found this misleading in the sense that guns really aren't any more of an "instant-kill" weapon than most human-powered weapons. I

seriously doubt there is any real difference between sticking a .357 revolver or a heavy crossbow in someone's ear and pulling the trigger. I think the real question here is not whether or not a particular weapon is "instant-kill" or not, but rather how to deal with any "instant-kill" situation.

I would define an "instant-kill" situation as one where a normal human (or any creature) is incapable of preventing a lethal wound due to circumstances. (We'll ignore the question of being resistant to things that would normally kill, such as creatures that can only be hit by magic, etc.). These situations can range from cutting the throat of a bound man to having a 10-ton weight fall right on top of someone.

Now I don't want to argue the "realism" aspect of the AD&D combat system, and I don't want to argue the properness of having guns in an AD&D universe, but I do think the question of "instant-kill" situations should be addressed in an unbiased manner. Guns, on the surface, seem to be qualitatively different than hand-powered weapons. But this does not mean that they can't be simulated under the AD&D system, just as long as it is realized that guns are inherently more lethal. Because of this increased lethality, it is much easier to put someone in an "instant-kill" situation with a gun. I don't find firearms particularly destabilizing (as long as everybody has the same chance of getting them) so much as I find them out of character for fantasy worlds.

As to the suggestions offered by the editor on how to control guns (misfires if put in one's ear, etc.), all of these seem to avoid the real question — do you allow guns into your campaign? If you do, then play guns as more lethal than other weapon types, otherwise don't allow guns into your game. I object to artificial limitations when they are applied to correct something that would be best left out of a campaign altogether.

As to handling "instant-kill" situations, this must be handled with care by the DM. It is the unequal application of rules between NPC and PC that leads to problems of play balance. Player characters should always be aware that things that they do may be done to them. If player characters cut the throats of helpless people, or drop 10-ton boulders on people, player characters should be reminded by the DM that they could find themselves in the same situations and shouldn't complain if they die because of it.

Remember, in "instant-kill" situations the real ability to survive is not really in how many hit points an individual has, but in not getting into the situation in the first place.

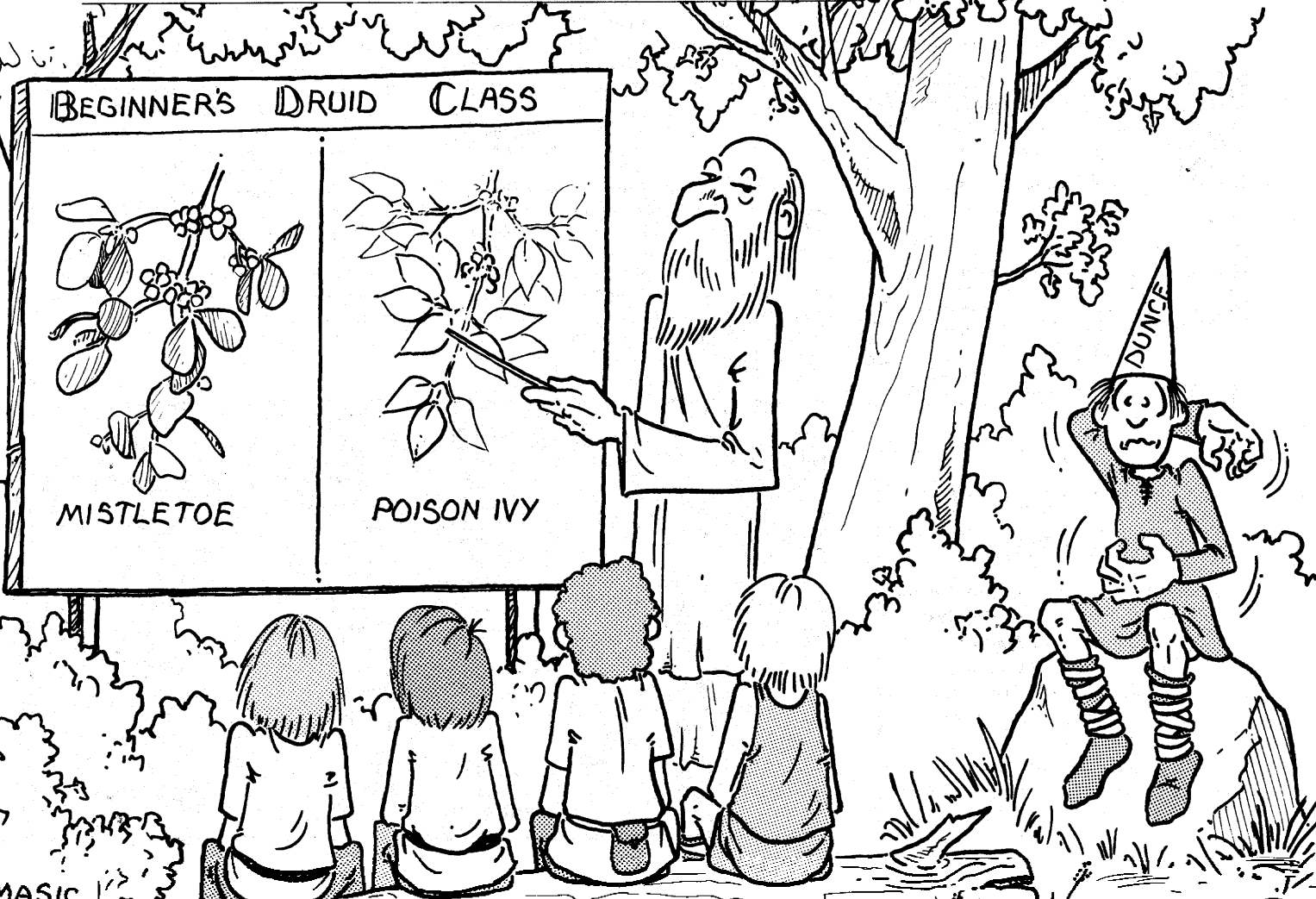
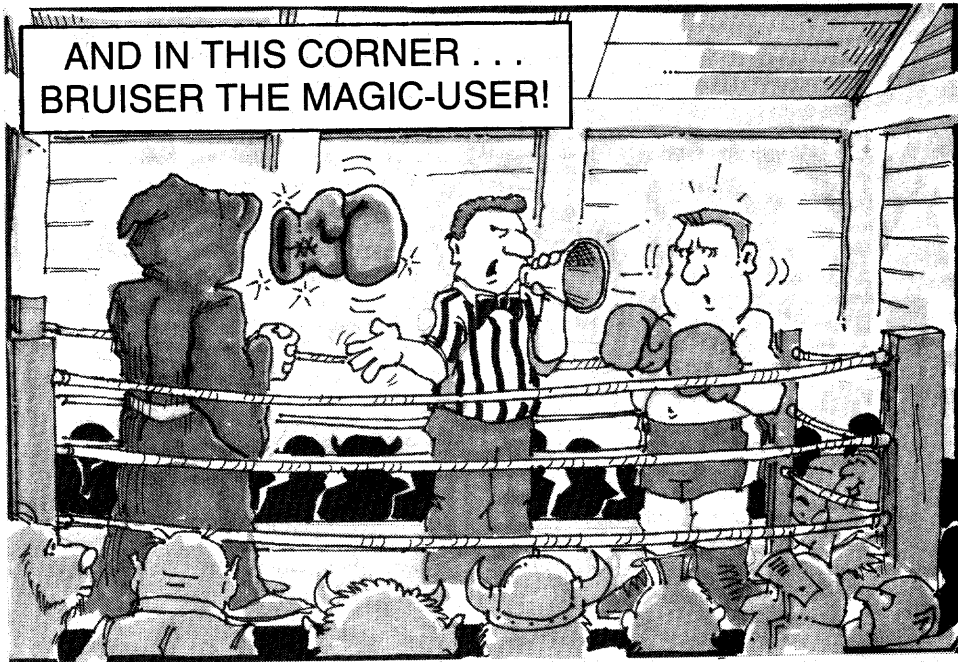
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# SNARFQUEST

BY ELMORE

#34

I AIN'T NO GUARD DA SHINEY MAN WAS WITH ME, WHAT'D YOU DO TO HIM!

DID YOU HURT THEM?

WHO IS SHE?

SHE'S WITH ME.

KLANG

AND IN A COUPLE OF SWIFT MOVES...

NOW, TELL ME SUS' WHO YOU ARE!

I'M JARP, DA BEST THIEF IN DA WORLD... BUT MAYBE NOW, ME IS A DEAD THIEF... WHAT ME IS.

SO WHERE IS AVEEARE, DA SHINEY MAN, AN' DA OTHER TWO.

WHAT SUKE SOUNDS LIKE A FAIR QUESTION... DA SHINEY DUDE WAS BLASTIN' DA GUARDS BUT MORE GUARDS COME FAST... SO ME SNEAKED DEM IN A SECRET PASSAGE... WHAT ME DID,

DEN ME SNEAK AWAY FROM DEM...

GOOD, THEY'RE SAFE.

MAYBE YOU COULD HELP US, WE'RE THIEVES TOO.

YEP.

YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE THIEVES.

WE'RE IN DISGUISE.

OK, ME HELP YOU... WHAT ME DO. ME FINALLY FIGURE OUT DAT OL' GATHGOR'S TREASURE HAS GOTTA BE IN HIS CHAMBERS... 'CAUSE ME HAS LOOKED EVERY PLACE ELSE, WHAT ME DID.

LEAD DA WAY— WE'LL FOLLOW!

LATER

'DIS IS DA DOOR TO GATHGOR'S CHAMBERS. WE STILL GONNA GO WIF YER PLAN?

YEP.

EVERYONE STAY COOL.

DON'T WORRY 'BOUT ANYTHING... ME CAN HANDLE OL' GATHGOR.

KNOCK KNOCK

YOU MAY ENTER!

NO!

HI, WE BRUNG YOU A FAIR YOUNG MAIDEN, WHAT WE DID!

(SHUDDUP)

OH OKE



...AHEM... WHAT DIS HUMBLE GUARD IS TRYIN' TO SAY, SIR... WE HAVE CAPTURED A MAIDEN, PERHAPS YOU CAN GET A GREAT RANSOM FROM HER WEALTHY FATHER.

IS THAT SO?

I KNOW MOST OF THE GUARDS, I DON'T REMEMBER SEEING THE TWO OF YOU BEFORE.

HUH?



OH!... WELL, DAT'S 'CAUSE WE ~GAK!

BECAUSE WE ARE NEW RECRUITS... DA GIRL IS DA RESULTS OF OUR FIRST LOOTING JOB, RIGHT JARP?

WHAT YOU SAY(CHOKE).



AND YOU, FAIR MAIDEN, WITH ARMS OF A FIGHTER, WHAT IS THE NAME OF YOUR WEALTHY FATHER?

LOOK, HE FLOATS!

I BET IT'S TOO LATE TO LEAVE NOW.



F-F-FRED... FREDRICK OF WILLOWGROVE.

DO NOT LIE TO ME, TELERIE WINDYARM, WHERE IS YOUR SWORD THAT SPLITS THE WIND? WHY IS IT NOT IN YOUR STRONG HAND?



HERE, GATHGOR... IT IS ALWAYS AT MY SIDE!!

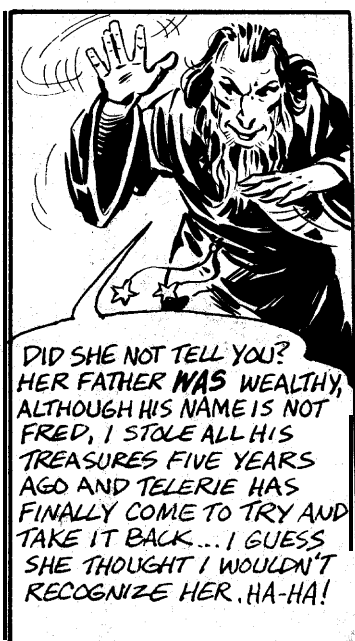


WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' TO YER GOWN?

I NEED FIGHTIN' ROOM, IT MAY TRIP ME UP!

AN' HOW DID HE KNOW YOUR NAME?

WELL...



DID SHE NOT TELL YOU? HER FATHER WAS WEALTHY, ALTHOUGH HIS NAME IS NOT FRED, I STOLE ALL HIS TREASURES FIVE YEARS AGO AND TELERIE HAS FINALLY COME TO TRY AND TAKE IT BACK... I GUESS SHE THOUGHT I WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE HER. HA-HA!



BEWARE, SNARF, HE WORKS MAGIC WITH HIS HANDS.

DO NOT HARM THESE TWO, THE FIGHT IS BETWEEN YOU AND ME!

TELERIE, YOU TRICKED ME!



NO SNARF, I AM HERE FOR ALL THE TREASURE THAT HE HAS KILLED AND DESTROYED FOR...

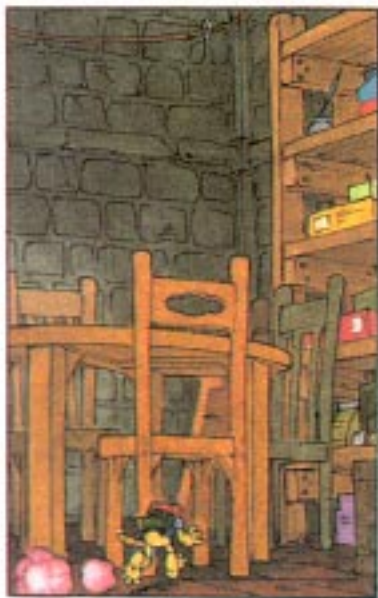
AND WE WILL SPLIT IT ALL EQUALLY!





NEXT ISSUE: THE BATTLE CONTINUES...  
UNAGON 101

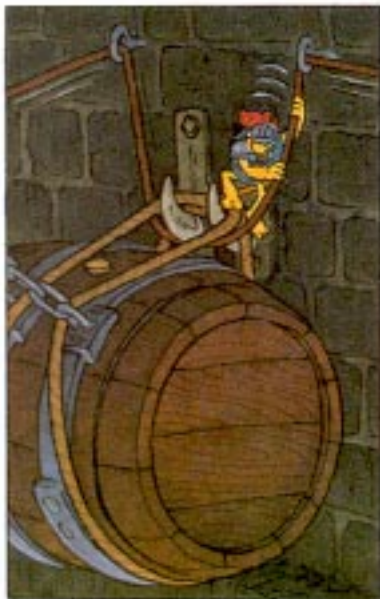
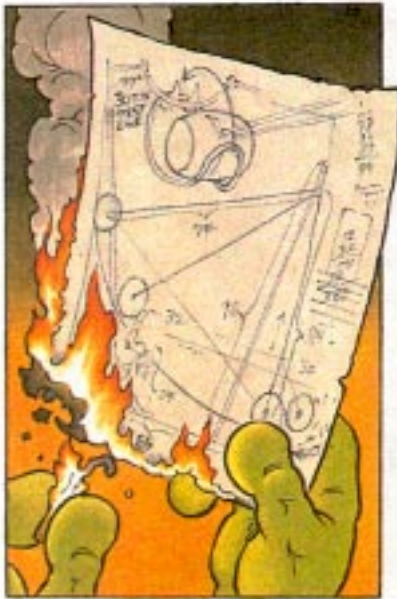














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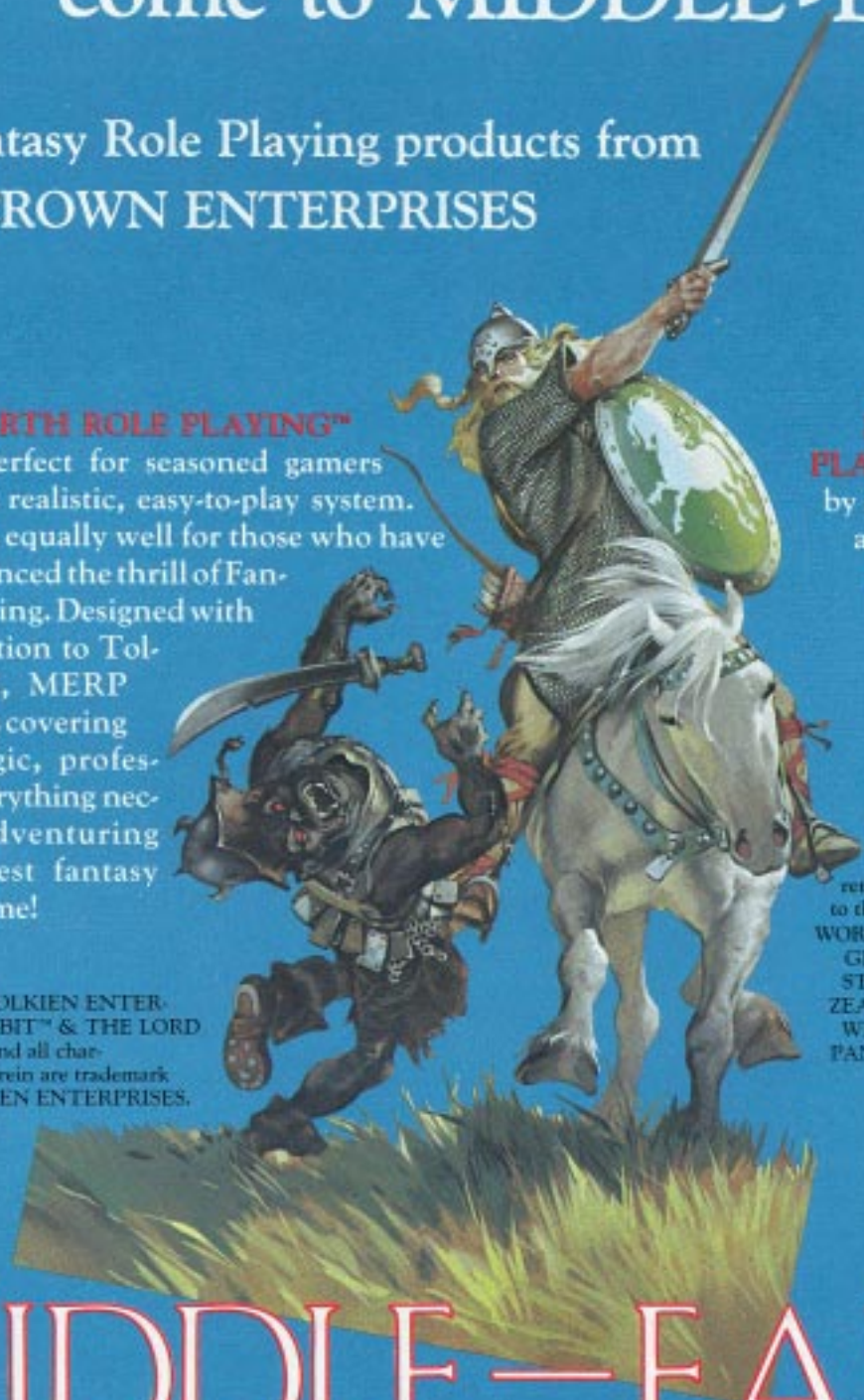
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